

THE LEAN SIX SIGMA RAPID IMPROVEMENT METHODOLOGY by Owen Ramsay, ASQ Fellow

A Series of Articles – Article #1: Overview of LSSRIM

Enhancing the performance of key business metrics is always on the minds of corporate leaders.

Management control, operational control and effective strategic planning give assurance to corporate leaders that objectives of the organization are determined, needed resources are defined and key metrics are effectively monitored as barometers of performance.

With market pressures that impact an organization's competitive position along with shareholders demanding greater profits, an approach that provides insight to the business growth and operating cost improvement opportunities is required. The approach must also lead to culture changes that permit an effective alignment of quality objectives with the performance expectations espoused by top management. One such approach is the Lean Six Sigma Rapid Improvement Methodology (LSSRIM).

Over the course of the next six months, ASQ-LI will be releasing a series of articles on LSSRIM and its components that will provide our members with information and examples of its applications.

What is the Lean Six Sigma Rapid Improvement Methodology?

The Lean Six Sigma Rapid Improvement Methodology (LSSRIM) draws from Lean Six Sigma precepts, a business environment evaluation in the form of SWOT and PESTLE analyses, the Balanced Scorecard principles, and the Core Values of the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Award program (see Fig. 1).

The Lean Six Sigma component has the triad of Leadership Engagement, Customer Driven Strategic Goals and Infrastructure Deployment where the critical-to-success engagement and buy-in of the organization's top management to a customer-centric, team-oriented business strategy is emphasized. Delivering timely, high-valued results through the appropriate and timely use of resources is achieved by the triad of Selecting the Right People & Projects, Process Cycle-time & Error Elimination Management and Results.

The processes and principles associated with value-based management as defined in complexity value stream maps (CVSM), when combined with the structured improvement opportunities available with the DMAICS (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control, Sustain) model, provides the data-driven inputs to the Lean Six Sigma process which are then used to achieve breakthrough performance in the journey towards the realization of customer driven strategic goals.

At organizations where the LSSRIM was successfully applied, the methodology was executed in two phases over several months.

In Phase 1, the organization's top management engaged in activities that developed the strategic direction where the Vision, Mission Core Values and Business Environment Analysis along with a commitment to the Balanced Scorecard approach were key inputs to the activities based learning exercises and became the key driver in the development of strategic objectives needed for Phase 2.

Phase 2 was conducted over a period of six months. The target audiences were mid-level managers and supervisors. The strategic vision for the organization along with inputs from the Phase 1 activities were flowed down through the mission and goals for each division, and finally cascaded as important projects for each division or department to work on. The key objective of this phase was to achieve alignment of priorities throughout the organization as defined by top management in Phase 1.

The LSSRIM toolset for the Phase 2 activities included Process and SIPOCCE diagrams, Complexity Value Stream Mapping, the Cost of Poor Quality, the application of Lean principles, DMAIC, and Voice of the Customer (VoC).

The importance of top management's values and philosophies within the organization's culture, their managerial style and work ethic were defined and made part of the top-down workshop discussions.

In keeping with the Lean Six Sigma ethos, emphasis was placed on the expectations of top management making continuous business improvement part of the culture by setting the necessary rules and exemplary behavior for employees to follow.

Next article: [Setting the Stage for the Business Environment Analysis with SIPOCCE](#)



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About: Owen Ramsay

Owen is a ISO 9001 QMS Lead Assessor at Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA), the world's leading provider of independent assessment services. He served as the chair of ASQ's Section 303 in 2008 and was the Gold Medal Award recipient for Excellence in Leadership; Past Quality Management Division's Global Outreach Chair and is a current member of ASQ's Diversity & Inclusiveness team

Prior to working for Lloyds, he spent approximately 20 years as a Lean Six Sigma and ISO 9001 consultant, successfully applying Lean principles, Six-Sigma concepts and the Core Values of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to achieve significant improvements in the efficiencies and effectiveness of systems in government agencies, food processing and mineral processing industries.

Owen holds a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), an MS in Electrical Engineering from Arizona State University (ASU). He has demonstrated his quality professionalism through many quality certifications including RABQSA Certification and ASQ Certifications as a Quality Manager of Operational Excellence, Quality Engineer, Quality Auditor and Six Sigma Black Belt.

Owen was named as one of the 18 Fellows in 2016 for his contribution and achievements within the quality arena.