

A Consultant's View

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Six Sigma - Good Idea or Bad?

In "American Turnaround" by Ed Whitacre, he states that Six Sigma is a really bad idea as it puts all the responsibility of failure on the worker. Another person has stated that he thinks that Six Sigma destroyed 3M. So, why all the negative about Six Sigma? Isn't it a good program for quality? The problems come from using the "backward looking" parts when "forward looking" is needed. Secondly, a major process change like Six Sigma needs to be planned for and most of the procedural changes started prior to the major push.

Problems arise when any system is adopted by everyone. The system gets adopted by people who do not understand its limitations, what it is designed to do, and do not know how to overcome problems from any mismatch between the design and the new situation.

The Wall Street Journal reported that within 48 weeks, many Six Sigma efforts had reverted back to how things were prior to the start.

Six Sigma has a number of different aspects, tools, and techniques. It has both "backward looking" parts and "forward looking" parts. It is possible to get caught up in the "backward looking" part and not look at the "forward looking" parts.

When a company gets caught up in "backward looking" in any form, that company loses out on the future. Other indications of "backward looking" are large manuals of how to do things,

strong union work rules, and a focus on preventing problems rather than on looking for opportunities.

To have a "forward looking" organization that produces quality, the quality has to be part of the original design efforts and then, carried through the rest of the organization. Quality can never be added onto an organization.

Six Sigma was first advocated by Motorola as a way to have quality when ramping up a product from the design into large scale production. Where is that company today? All its efforts at trying to look back meant that it didn't see the future when it was in a very fast market and with strong competitors.

Looking Forward To Succeed

The biggest problem with any structured quality program is that the structure tends to stifle new ideas. That is why Six Sigma can be deadly to an innovative company. 3M used to be a hot bed of new ideas. Innovation is a chaotic process, not something that can be organized by accounting types into a process. Under Six Sigma, the ratio of new products to old fell from 1 out of 3 sales were of products introduced in the last five years to 1 out of four by 2007 and was dropping more.

MIT published a study suggesting that to get such major changes in an organization, the process of change needs to be designed. People's emotions need to be considered and the process modified to handle the situation as it really is.

Six Sigma can be good for a company or it can be a disaster. The people in the company will decide that, not the top management.

False Survey's, Spear Phishing – The pace of hacking is picking up

Hacking is picking up and the hackers are getting more and more money out of us and healthcare systems are very vulnerable. A recent attack on prepaid cards through ATM's got \$40 million. A stock market flash drop was caused by a phishing attack. One estimate is that a thousand people a day are getting their phones hacked. Right now, Android phones are the target of 79% of all attacks on mobile devices.

Over the last few months, a different way of getting at systems has become popular. The hacks happen when someone else's email has been hacked and the hacker sends an email supposedly from that "friend". When you open it on your phone and click on the link, it installs the virus. This type of hack is called "spear phishing". The problem is that many, many people are responding to these emails.

Over the last few years, a number of financial institutions have been attacked by those who wanted to steal credit card numbers and other such data. As the banks fight back with more and more sophisticated fraud detection software, the crooks are going after easier targets. For the last year or so, retail chains have been hit and hit hard. Now, the crooks are going after health care providers.

Health care has not worried about patient information security on the electronic level. They have worried about staff letting other people know about patient data but have not worried about their electronic systems being attacked. They are now being hit and hit hard with viruses and information stealing. For example, at a hospital in Boston, they are having to clean a couple of computers a week after they had been infected.

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Risky World Pirates couldn't succeed because of Piracy

Greenheart Games released a "game making game" and a "cracked" version that would fail because of piracy. Over 90% of the downloads were of the cracked version and people started complaining that they couldn't succeed because of the piracy. A person who did not pay for the game complained so many people pirating were ruining him.

Prairie Trail Software, Inc



3821 Beaumont Lane
Plano, TX 75023

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