

Lean Six Sigma Project – A Beginner’s Guide

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Lean Six Sigma Project – A beginner’s guide is a series that explains how to run Lean Six Sigma projects in detail. The biggest benefit of combining Lean and Six Sigma is to deliver more value to customers and business. In order for a Six Sigma Green Belt to be successful with a project, they must know what’s to be done, and how to accomplish them! This guide is a step-by-step procedure to execute the 5 phases of a Lean Six Sigma project.

Lean Six Sigma improvement projects follow 5 phase DMAIC approach. A six sigma project is not an academic exercise, but its primary objective is to impact customers, business, and employees positively. Thus stakeholder buy-in and sponsorship are very important factors for its success. Every project should have at least one project sponsor (One sponsor is just fine, two is OK, but greater than that is undesirable). The project sponsor is usually the process owner or a senior management executive who is accountable for the overall project and its success. They take the lead in identifying the project & its objectives, and in team formation.

The team composition should be cross-functional. The sponsor also has to decide whether this Six Sigma project should be led by a Black Belt or Green Belt. Once identified, the respective Six Sigma Belt plays the lead role in the project. It is their responsibility to complete the project on time, and deliver desired results. Now, for the remaining part of this beginner’s guide, let’s assume that it is a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Project.

The duration of a typical project should be between 3 to 4 months. The overall project plan for all Six Sigma improvement projects are mapped to Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control. There are defined deliverables for each of these phases which have to be accomplished before progressing further. At the end of each phase, a formal tollgate is used to stage a gate review by the sponsors. Various Six Sigma concepts and tools can be applied to progress and accomplish desired phase-wise outcomes.

In order to make sure the project meets the timeline, and set-out objectives; the Green belt and team members are to meet regularly. In addition to this, Six Sigma Green Belts are mentored by Black Belts or Master Black Belts.

In a nutshell, following are the broad outlines for each of the DMAIC phases of Lean Six Sigma Project:

- Define – Identify the project objective and define the problem to be solved
- Measure – Collect necessary data regarding the problem and establish current performance
- Analyze – Use the data collected to analyze and screen factors which are the root causes for a problem
- Improve – Identify suitable solutions to overcome the root causes
- Control – Implement the solutions and monitor its results

Next, as a part of this beginner's guide, let's understand how to accomplish the deliverable of the Define phase here. [Next >>>](#)