

BOOK REVIEW

# What Is Six Sigma Process Management?

ROWLAND HAYLER AND MICHAEL NICHOLS, MCGRAW-HILL, 2005

*By James Bossert, senior vice president, Bank of America*

**T**here are many books on Six Sigma, but *What Is Six Sigma Process Management* is unique—it is targeted at management and explores how business process management aligns with Six Sigma.

Hayler and Nichols use a folksy style to tell their story, keeping the book light and a good read. The authors look at understanding the hierarchy of processes in your organization. They show what a good infrastructure should look like and how that infrastructure has been used in a number of companies. The book is filled with examples to help drive the points home.

The authors begin by defining Six Sigma process management. It is the foundation of not just the book but also, as the authors explain, “the foundation needed to support and really sustain new improvement methods.” They talk about skills needed to manage a company and discuss culture change and what it means to organizations, cautioning that driving change is not easy, or everyone would be doing it. They make it clear Six Sigma process management begins with the customer. It links to the strategic plan and helps an organization obtain a focus to drive improvement, which is essential for sustainability.

In looking at what differentiates companies from one another, Hayler and Nichols emphasize tools or methods are important but are only a means to an end. The use of information and change in management are what drive excellence. Potential for success comes with understanding the critical process-

es that drive the business and how well they are managed. Part of this is understanding the various roles people in the organization play as well as defining and measuring the process at all levels.

The authors also discuss process maturity, a roadmap that enables the organization to get from where it is to where it wants to be. It is a variation of a multigeneration plan that is geared to help an organization focus on the critical processes. Linked with a communication plan, it provides a means for improvement. It assists the organization in defining core processes and is the beginning of the development of a process hierarchy.

The weakest part of the book is the chapter on Six Sigma methodology, which is oversimplified. Many Six Sigma professionals would cringe at how the authors explain the phases of define, measure, analyze, improve, control. However, for managers, it is a way to get an idea of not just what the phases are but also what is expected of them.

The book ends extremely strong—the chapter on the future of Six Sigma process management makes the book worth its price. If I had to give a senior manager one chapter to read to see how to run an organization with a process improvement strategy, it is this chapter. I have seen organizations use only half of what the authors suggest and find extreme success in the marketplace. Just imagine what our economy would be like if most companies did most of what the authors suggest. It is an energizing end to this thought provoking book.

## SIX SIGMA BESTSELLERS\*

1. *The Lean Six Sigma Pocket Toolbook: A Quick Reference Guide to 70 Tools for Improving Quality and Speed*, Michael L. George, John Maxey, Mark Price and David T. Rowlands, McGraw-Hill, 2004.
2. *Six Sigma for Dummies*, Neil DeCarlo and Bruce Williams, For Dummies, 2005.
3. *Six Sigma for Managers*, Greg Brae, Roger A. Formisano, McGraw-Hill, 2002.
4. *Lean Six Sigma for Service*, Michael L. George, McGraw-Hill, 2003.
5. *The Certified Six Sigma Black Belt Handbook*, Donald W. Benbow and T.M. Kubiak, ASQ Quality Press, 2005.
6. *What Is Six Sigma?* Peter S. Pande and Lawrence Holpp, McGraw-Hill, 2001.
7. *Applied Statistics for the Six Sigma Green Belt*, Bhisham C. Gupta and H. Fred Walker, ASQ Quality Press, 2005.
8. *Customer Centered Six Sigma*, Earl Naumann and Steven Hoisington, ASQ Quality Press, 2001.
9. *Six Sigma Demystified*, Paul Keller and Thomas Pyzdek, McGraw-Hill, 2005.
10. *Design for Six Sigma*, Greg Brue, McGraw-Hill, 2003.

\* Compiled using data from Amazon.com, ASQ Quality Press and BN.com.