



Productivity Series 32

SIX SIGMA FOR QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY PROMOTION

By Sung H. Park

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Six Sigma is a company-wide management strategy for the improvement of process performance with the objective of improving quality and productivity to satisfy customers' demands, reduce costs, and increase profitability. Motorola first launched a Six Sigma initiative in 1987, resulting in significant improvement in both quality and cost savings. In the wake of that success, leading electronic companies such as IBM, DEC, and Texas Instruments launched their own initiatives in the early 1990s. After GE and Allied Signal undertook Six Sigma programs as strategic initiatives in 1995, it spread rapidly in non-electronic industries worldwide.

There are several reasons for its popularity. It is a fresh quality management strategy that builds on previous ones like TQC, TQM, etc. It incorporates a systematic, scientific, statistical, and smarter approach for management innovation, suitable for use in the knowledge-based information society. The essence of Six Sigma is the integration of customers, processes, manpower, and management innovation. Finally, Six Sigma provides a scientific and statistical basis for quality assessment of processes. The method allows comparisons among all processes and demonstrates how well each enables top management to adopt strategies to achieve process innovation and customer satisfaction. Another important aspect of Six Sigma is employee involvement.

The first three chapters give an overview of Six Sigma, its framework, and applications. Relating the conceptual framework to experience, the book details the experiences of Six Sigma pioneer Motorola, GE, and ABB, the first European company to adopt Six Sigma. The author also includes the experiences of Samsung and LG in the Republic of Korea. Chapters 4–7 introduce Six Sigma tools and other management initiatives for successful application. A number of practical issues related to Six Sigma are examined, particularly those relevant to the knowledge economy. The final chapter focuses on the implementation of Six Sigma, with actual case studies of improvement projects in the manufacturing, non-manufacturing, and R&D sectors.

Although the book was written to give corporate managers and engineers in Asia a clear understanding of Six Sigma concepts, methodologies, and tools for quality and productivity promotion, it will also be useful to researchers, quality and productivity specialists, public-sector employees, and other professionals with an interest in quality management.

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