



Emagineering: Enterprise Initiative Management for Six Sigma

Expanding the Power of Six Sigma

Six Sigma is a best-practices management approach to improving customer satisfaction and lowering internal costs through the improvement of internal processes. Emagineering improves the efficiency and lowers the costs of integrating Six Sigma into an organization's management fabric.

Six Sigma has provided outstanding benefits for companies that have whole-heartedly adopted its management principles. There is no question that applying Six Sigma techniques improve product and service quality, increase customer satisfaction, lower internal production costs, decrease cycle times, and focus management attention on improving processes of all types. The result is a significant strengthening of both a company's financial results and competitive market position.

But Six Sigma is not easy. For starters, it can take up to a year to educate a company's management team on what Six Sigma is as well as develop a critical mass of experts (Black Belts) who will actually conduct Six Sigma projects. Identifying the appropriate projects and working through the steps required to improve a process requires effective collaboration, extensive documentation, and excellent staff work. As a result, many organizations are reluctant to start down the Six Sigma path due to the short-term organizational disruption and investment cost. In addition, those companies that are using Six Sigma have identified a clear need for an enterprise initiative management tool to support their Six Sigma efforts.

Emagineering is the first management tool that provides comprehensive support for Six Sigma and expands the power of Six Sigma's core DMAIC methodology.

How Emagineering Supports DMAIC

A critical success factor in Six Sigma is selecting the appropriate projects to tackle. Emagineering's proposal function allows anyone to propose a potential Six Sigma project – and its enterprise-level repository ensures that these proposals are never lost. Emagineering's cross-functional collaboration capabilities encourage senior executives and Black Belts to prioritize and select projects.

1. Define. The Six Sigma team uses Emagineering's role based collaboration capabilities to identify

and document a process and its potential problem points. They can collaborate on the approach and agree on variables to be measured. The final decision on how to proceed is made using Emagineering's decision workflow function. Definition documents are published in Emagineering's "Deliverables" section to which senior executives may subscribe to be kept informed of progress. All documents, annotations to documents, discussions, and decision making workflows are stored in Emagineering's central repository for access by authorized users. Emagineering helps keep all the team members focused on the same objective during the Define phase and ensures that the primary research gathered can be reused for additional projects.

- 2. Measure.** The team collaboratively decides on the critical to quality (CTQ) factors in the process. All measurements are stored in Emagineering's repository for easy access and review by team members – no matter where they are located around the world. And since Emagineering is a Web service, all measurement reports that are compatible with Web browsers, (HTML, PDF, GIF, JPEG, etc) are accessible. The benefit is a significant reduction in the time to complete the Measure phase.
- 3. Analyze.** Emagineering's collaboration capabilities are critical as the team goes through reiterative hypothesis testing and brainstorming to understand the correlation between which inputs are actually affecting which outputs. Emagineering's documentation capabilities allow the team to go back and review its earlier work and make it possible for other Six Sigma teams to access and learn from their efforts. Most importantly, Emagineering's decision making process, which is based upon the best practice requiring decisions be made by a specific date to avoid analysis paralysis, will add the discipline necessary to move forward to the Improve phase.
- 4. Improve.** After collaborating to build a plan for improving a process by establishing maximum and minimum values on critical-to-quality outcomes, the team must obtain the approval of senior executives before it can proceed to implementation. Emagineering provides senior

executives with the ability to review both the documents and analyses that led the team to its recommendations as well as the contributions of individual team members. They then can easily provide their guidance, based upon their unique experience and knowledge, as part of the formal decision-making process, to ensure that the improvement effort will be successful.

- 5. Control.** Many companies keep their Six Sigma projects open throughout the Control phase for monitoring by the project Black Belt and other team members. Emagineering allows the addition of evaluation reports into the Six Sigma initiative workspace in a time-sequence for further analysis purposes. If the improved process has parameters that eventually fall out of the acceptable range, the manager responsible for controlling the process can alert the appropriate Six Sigma team members. And because the entire work effort is fully documented, the team, including new members, can review the past documentation to jumpstart their improvement efforts.

Planning Templates and Sequential Issues

Master Black Belts can put their Six Sigma methodology approaches, based upon their skill sets and knowledge base, into Emagineering. And they can share these best practices with Black Belts and Green Belts whom they are mentoring. This provides both replication and consistency as well as a means for Master Black Belts to oversee the efforts of less experienced professionals who are not co-located with them.

While standard templates are good starting points, every Six Sigma project is unique. Each previous phase of DMAIC defines the issues that must be tackled during the subsequent phase. Unlike other types of projects where project managers are expected during the initial planning phase to identify all tasks to be accomplished, the Define phase is by its very nature when the team members begin their effort to identify the project tasks to be tackled. And their findings in the Define phase are the basis for their efforts in the Measure phase, which establishes the work effort for the Analyze phase, which becomes the foundation for the Improve phase.

Emagineering Is Enterprise Initiative Management – Not Project Management

Emagineering is an enterprise initiative management system that allows senior executives to proactively lead and direct initiatives. Emagineering is built on a role-based collaboration model that encourages and requires executives to participate in initiatives. Its intuitive Web browser user interface makes it easy to use for any executive who can surf the Web.

Emagineering's powerful, disciplined issue identification and resolution engine allows Black Belts and senior executives to ensure that Six Sigma projects stay on track. Emagineering complements project

management systems. The outcomes of Emagineering's issue resolution process become the inputs for project management tasks.

By contrast, conventional project management systems are primarily designed to schedule tasks and resources. Most are designed for the departmental level and to be used only by professionals trained on the system. Project management systems support for senior executives is minimal – they only provide managers with progress reports and do not allow executives to directly give the project team instructions. While those systems are good for performing task scheduling in the context of a Six Sigma project – and are often marketed for this purpose – they do not improve the Six Sigma process like Emagineering does.

Technology Complements Six Sigma

Much of the statistical and analytical work that is at the heart of Six Sigma projects is performed with Excel or MINITAB and presented with PowerPoint. Emagineering incorporates the output of PC tools and make it available to team members for review and improvement. And because Emagineering includes an enterprise-level document management system, security is maintained through read-only and check-in/check-out/versioning facilities.

In addition, to promote best practices sharing, Emagineering has an integrated full text retrieval search capability built into it. Whenever a team member wants to reference documents used in other projects, it is a simple effort to put in the most significant words and Emagineering will search through every text document in the entire system and quickly return the results.

Finally, Emagineering is a multi-tier, J2EE-compliant Web-services application. This architecture allows it to scale up to support thousands of concurrent users who need only Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0+ and an Internet connection to take full advantage of all its functionality. Systems administrators do not have to install and maintain any Emagineering-specific software on end-user PCs.

About Obian

Obian is the first and only enterprise software company that offers comprehensive collaboration and issue management technologies that allow senior executives to lead corporate initiatives and drive strategic vision deep into their organizations.

With its role-based structure, Obian solutions facilitate real-time communication and reporting across the enterprise, draw out hidden knowledge and expertise within the company and provide a disciplined approach to issue resolution.

Using Obian solutions, Global 4000 executives proactively manage and substantially improve the success rate and ROI of strategic business initiatives. For more information, visit our website at www.obian.com.