



MANUFACTURING COMPANY BRINGS IN PMALLIANCE TO REVIVE ITS LACKLUSTER HISTORY OF IMPLEMENTING SIX SIGMA PROJECTS AND TO INSTRUCT ITS SIX SIGMA EMPLOYEES IN FORMAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY.

A manufacturing company asked PMAlliance to provide project management training and instruction to its employees trained in the Six Sigma process. The company sought to utilize the Six Sigma process to improve operational performance and reduce costs by decreasing variation in its processes and products. Its ambitious process improvement goals faced several significant challenges including frequent schedule and budget overruns, inexperienced project management teams, and lack of project management software knowledge.

CHALLENGES

FREQUENT SCHEDULE AND BUDGET OVERRUNS

By the time PMAlliance was engaged, the manufacturing company's Six Sigma projects were being delivered behind schedule and over budget on a consistent basis. With Six Sigma methodology, the earlier an improvement is implemented into a process, the better the results. To ensure the highest return on investment, company management wanted advanced warning of any potential problems, unexpected expenditures, or delays with each Six Sigma project.

INEXPERIENCED PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAMS

The company's management realized it had overestimated the project management experience and skills of its Six Sigma Black Belts (professionals with second level expertise and experience in the Six Sigma methodology). The Black Belt employees lacked confidence and competence in their ability to develop realistic, accurate project plans, manage resources, and provide regular reports to key stakeholders.

LACK OF SOFTWARE KNOWLEDGE

In addition, the company's Black Belts lacked training in how to use Microsoft Project for project planning and management. After unsuccessful attempts to use the supplied Six Sigma templates for Microsoft Project, the Black Belts reverted to modifying spreadsheets and word processing documents rather than struggle with the complex project management software and templates.

SOLUTIONS

TRAINING

Our customized, structured approach for this company started with our two-day Duration-Driven® Planning & Control course for all Black Belts and Green Belts (professionals with first-level expertise and experience in Six Sigma methodology). Our Duration-Driven® Planning & Control course, based on PMAlliance's proven methodology, provided the Black Belts and Green Belts with an understanding of the basic concepts of Duration-Driven Project Management and the tools utilized to effectively implement and manage projects. The course also provided an opportunity to reinforce the importance of teamwork, strong communication, and collaboration for the success of any project.

FACILITATION

From the very first training session, PMAlliance's project management consultants served as the primary facilitators for the implementation and demonstration of formal project management techniques and technology. With their expertise in facilitation and our Duration-Driven® Methodology, our consultants helped the company's Black Belts and Green Belts learn to see the big picture and level of granularity necessary to create and implement a successful project plan. The company's Six Sigma teams learned how to act as an information clearinghouse to keep all stakeholders informed and accountable for the progress of the project via weekly status updates.

ADD-IN TOOLS

A major focus of our customized approach for this company was to train the Black Belts and Green Belts in how to use our proprietary project management software along with its customized add-in tools for Microsoft Project. The Six Sigma project templates became a valuable resource as the new software and training allowed the Black Belts and Green Belts to see, in real-time, a project's controlling path and updated activity durations. They could then identify and resolve critical areas or delays in the project and provide timely, detailed reports to team members and project stakeholders.

PMALLIANCE HELPED TEAM MEMBERS IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE CRITICAL AREAS OR DELAYS IN THE PROJECT AND PROVIDE TIMELY, DETAILED REPORTS TO TEAM MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

CONTROLLING THE PROJECT

Each project activity update would trigger a recalculation of the expected finish date, requiring the team to take specific actions if the expected and target finish dates did not align. PMAlliance's expert consultants explained how the dynamic control process could help identify potential issues that might arise during a project and determine the appropriate corrective actions to keep a project on-schedule. The dynamic control process would also provide weekly status reports to all team members and key stakeholders, keeping them informed of real-time progress.

COMPRESSING THE TIMELINE

The project management training continued with how to incorporate activity commitments into a dynamic, network-based project plan that calculates a project's expected finish date and critical path using activity durations combined with activity precedence relationships. Because multiple tasks could be carried out simultaneously, the project plan would be significantly compressed without sacrificing team member accountability and commitment.

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SOLUTIONS

DURATION-BASED ESTIMATES

Additionally, PMAlliance's project management consultant taught the Black Belts and Green Belts how to create a project charter that clearly defines a project's scope and objectives and serves as a top-level schedule to identify major phases, deliverables, and project duration. The completed project charter would be used to forecast and assign resources and project activities.

The Black Belts and Green Belts also learned how to determine duration-based estimates for a team member's in-progress and future activities. The estimates would visually display how project activities were connected and how they could impact milestones and deadlines. The estimates would also be used to determine the level of granularity (detail) needed in a completed plan as well as to assign single points of responsibility for a plan's activities.

PMALLIANCE HELPED THE COMPANY'S SIX SIGMA BLACK BELTS AND GREEN BELTS REACH THEIR FULL PROJECT MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL.

RESULTS

With all of its Six Sigma Black Belts and Green Belts trained in project management software and our comprehensive Duration-Driven® project control process, the company is completing the majority of its Six Sigma projects on time and within budget. Through PMAlliance's Duration-Driven® methodology, training and facilitation, the Black Belts and Green Belts report increased confidence and competence in project management and utilizing project management software. Company executives are satisfied with the tangible results of PMAlliance's involvement and continue to use PMAlliance's proven process and proprietary Duration-Driven® methodology, software, add-in tools, and web update system to manage additional Six Sigma projects as they arise.

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PMAlliance is a team of certified project management professionals who have years of real-world experience. We provide training, consulting, and project management office development services for our clients worldwide, from Fortune 1000 companies, to multi-national businesses, to entrepreneurial ventures.

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