

# HUMAN SIGMA



## APPLYING SIX SIGMA TO SELECTION, DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT & MOTIVATION OF EMPLOYEES

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From strategy to “black belt” certification, Six Sigma has become one of the most common business practices in the 20th century. Although Six Sigma as a “measurement standard” can be traced back to the 1920’s, it was not integrated nor recognized in the business world until the mid 1980’s. Motorola was credited with coining the term “Six Sigma” by significantly increasing its quality processes and implementation strategies. Since then, hundreds of companies worldwide have adopted this process to help them improve and manage the quality and efficiency of processes.

As the New Year begins, there is no question that Six Sigma initiatives will continue to be at the forefront of business strategy. While Six Sigma helps companies produce quality results, companies do not always spend as much time, money, or energy on the “human side” of the business which is even more important to strategy and growth. In an article entitled Manage Your Human Sigma, The Harvard Business Review discussed the importance of Human Sigma which they describe as “. . . reducing variability and improving performance” on the people side of the business. Focusing on Human Sigma helps a company improve the quality and efficiency of the processes used for assessing, managing, and improving the performance of people.

The importance of Human Sigma to business growth and sustainability has captured the attention of many senior executives. According to a 2005 Accenture Top Executive Issues’ article, the most important issue for these executives is “Strengthening the companies’ human capital.” In an article, The War For Talent, it is stated: “Companies that do a better job of attracting, developing, exciting and retaining their talent can boost their performance dramatically, showing on average a 22 percent higher return to shareholders than their industry peers.” Edward Michaels (et al), McKinsey & Co.

Over the past few decades, an abundance of statistics has substantiated that Human Sigma is as important as Six Sigma. Managers who do not know how to effectively lead, communicate, and retain their people, will not do a successful job (short or long term) implementing a Six Sigma process.

The key in helping these managers understand the importance of “Human Sigma” is to translate these terms into their own data driven language. Managers gravitate towards the Six Sigma process because it is very analytical and technical. They feel comfortable with Six Sigma since it speaks to their strengths. Therefore, when explaining and selling the importance of Human Sigma initiatives, you need to put these initiatives in a language which includes metrics and data. Assessment tools like the Predictive Index® can help you do this by bringing objectivity to the management, selection, development and motivation of people. This increased and objective understanding of people will motivate managers to buy-in to investing time, energy and money into their Human Sigma.

If managers see the benefit to them of learning their employees’ strengths, communication styles, and motivations, they will be able to better manage and motivate these employees and therefore more successfully implement any process . . . especially Six Sigma!