

Business Case for Continuous Improvement

Successful change efforts require unwavering leadership commitment and an ability to explain why the initiative is important to customers and staff. Below is information to help leaders describe why continuous improvement, including approaches like Lean and Six Sigma, are important.

Challenges We Face

- An aging population that is increasing demand for many public services.
- Increasing customer expectations for better, faster, cheaper and more customized services.
- Our workforce is aging. We will be faced with an unprecedented number of retirements in the next few years. There simply will not be enough people in the labor force to fill behind those who will be retiring.
- Declining or static budgets with increasing performance expectations.
- Public pressure for greater accountability and transparency of government services to citizens.
- Shrinking workforce and increasing need for a more skilled workforce.

The above challenges compel us to seek opportunities to enhance the quality and efficiency of our services.

Benefits of Continuous Improvement

The application of continuous improvement and Lean principles, methods and tool in our work can help us address the above challenge without undermining the value of the services we deliver to our customers.

Application of continuous improvement principles, methods and tools will help us:

- Reduce cost for providing public services by reducing defects/errors, overproduction, transportation, movement, waiting, inventory, over-processing and underutilized workers (i.e., process wastes)
- Improve quality by solving problems at the source, understanding the needs and requirements of customers, employing best practices, and identifying no cost and low cost creative solutions;
- Improve speed for providing services by eliminating non-value added steps, handoffs in the process, and leveraging technology to automate where appropriate;
- Improve consistency in providing services by standardizing forms, steps, and roles and responsibilities;
- Enhance customer satisfaction and reduce customer complaints;
- Increase worker engagement and morale because workers are involved in making the process better;
- Reduce process wastes (i.e., defects/errors, overproduction, transportation, movement, waiting, inventory, over-processing and underutilized workers);
- Stretch our budgets by redirecting resources to other high priority efforts;
- Reduce risk by creating safe, orderly high performing work environments; standardizing work within a process; and identifying and mitigating negative impacts of process changes;
- Reduce time to bring new employees up to speed because institutional knowledge has been documented in the form of standard work;
- Report performance measures and accomplishments;
- Build our reputation through networking and sharing best practices; and
- Foster a continuous improvement culture that attracts future workforce talent and expands our ability to enhance customer value.

Continuous Improvement Strategy

- Conduct educational awareness and methodology training, and eventually develop organization experts to conduct training and facilitate improvement projects;
- Facilitate and assist in initial projects to demonstrate leadership commitment and celebrate successes;
- Provide pre-designed project toolkits and materials;
- Consult with internal or external experts to identify, prioritize, and conduct improvement projects;
- Measure, track and communicate performance results; and
- Reward and recognize desired behaviors and celebrate improvements!