

Case Study: Getting IT Right



The client is a leading agricultural, construction, environmental and industrial equipment manufacturing company. After realizing significant improvements and savings from applying LeanSigma principles to its manufacturing processes, the company sought to find those same benefits by applying LeanSigma principles to its IT department. To do so, managers tapped Guidon Performance Solutions' IT Assessment service.

For companies to operate most efficiently, IT services need to be aligned with the needs of the company. This client had always done well at aligning IT with the rest of the company, however, they wanted to complete an IT assessment to determine if there were any opportunities for improvement. A two-week assessment revealed new ways that the IT group could apply LeanSigma principles to integrate the IT function with the overall needs and potential service areas within the company. Such assessments are not product- or software-focused. Rather, the assessment examines such areas as work standards, project flow, transparency, bottlenecks, and other areas that may delay service delivery or cause inefficiency.

The Guidon consultant, through a series of intensive, one-on-one interviews and sessions with a cross-functional team, used an evaluation tool called SIPOC (Suppliers, Input, Process, Output and Customer) to frame discussions during the first week. In the second week of the assessment, the consultant focused on the IT department's critical services to the company, including infrastructure support, help desk, and software development. This research and collaboration revealed some challenges within the IT department in getting started with LeanSigma, including the fact even quantifying the department's value stream was challenging because of a lack of formalized work tracking. The department accepted many of its projects through informal requests or walk-ups, and had no real metrics to track volume, capacity, or staffing needs.

The department was aware of this challenge, however, and had already begun working on several internal projects to address them, including a Project Prioritization Matrix, continued definition of work standards, and better visual tracking of work-in-progress to manage project management. In addition, the Guidon team helped the company identify:

- More than a dozen high-priority improvements with suggestions for achieving them
- More than 50 lower-priority improvements
- Instructions for formalizing channels and improving work flow
- An improved vision of its Help Desk to service the IT needs of employees in a more timely and efficient manner, improving overall satisfaction with the department's performance

The first step in translating these improvements into possible savings in cost, staffing adjustments, or other improvements in productivity and work flow is to follow Guidon's recommendations for establishing work standards, including tracking types of projects and volume patterns. From there, the client can apply the dozens of potential improvements identified through the IT assessment and begin improving the department's efficiency and bottom line.

Client: A Construction Equipment Manufacturing Company

Industry: Manufacturing

Service: Information Technology (IT) Assessment

Challenge: This large manufacturer of construction equipment needed to:

- Formalize the methods the business uses to request IT services in order to provide a framework for tracking effort and metrics to assess overall efficiency
- Find ways to better align IT processes with the needs of the company
- Translate the LeanSigma benefits the company had achieved in manufacturing to the IT department

Solutions: Guidon Performance Solutions worked with the client to identify ways to:

- Formalize project management and improve work flow
- Standardize routing procedures to improve efficiency in service delivery
- Design a LeanSigma approach to the department's Help Desk
- Apply widespread efficiency improvements to eliminate waste

Results:

- Found more than a dozen high-priority improvements with a roster of solutions for each
- Suggested more than 50 other areas for improvement
- Designed a "vision of the future" and accompanying road map for implementing the vision for the company's Help Desk to improve both efficiency and employee satisfaction



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