



Organizational Improvement Brief Lean Six Sigma for Services Pharmaceutical

Business Problem

The Central Policy department at a major Pharmaceutical company was not meeting management expectations relative to service levels and quality of service. Policy development was taking too long. Analysis was substandard, and the end product was poorly written. Clients were generally unsatisfied with Central Policy services and frequently complained to management.

Jim Pickens was engaged as a business process consultant to perform a current state assessment, identify needed improvements, and quickly turn the situation around (90 days).

Action Taken

- Future state requirements, based on management input and consultant's experience, were quickly drafted and approved. This established management's vision and a best practice model for how the department should be operating.
- A "Current State Assessment" was performed to identify, evaluate, and quantify underperforming areas using Lean Six Sigma:
 - Department clients were interviewed to understand their concerns
 - Workflow and client communications were analyzed to identify process and communications problems
 - The department's mission, values, and organizational model was evaluated to identify and potential misalignment with management and client expectations
 - Individual member skills were evaluated to identify analytical, project management, and business writing weaknesses
 - Service levels were evaluated and analyzed by client type.
 - Document organization, document management, and document publishing was examined to determine if appropriate and consistent actions were being executed
 - Production analytics and management reporting was evaluated to determine if they provided any value.
- Current State weaknesses were identified:
 - The department lacked a structured workflow. The process was fraught with exceptions permitting projects to drag on forever.
 - Client communications were inconsistent and often misleading.
 - The department did not understand its mission and value proposition to the company. Nor did it fully understand the services it needed to provide by client type.
 - The team lacked the analytical, project management, and writing skills needed to produce high quality and timely policies and procedures.



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- Document organization, structure, and content were inconsistent. Nor did the team understand the value of consistency.
- There was no document inventory control system. Nor was there any version control system.
- Management and the team were never quite sure where they stood with “Work in Process.” Or how to revive stalled projects.
- There was nothing in the way of production analytics and consistent management reporting to help with a root cause assessment and support continuous process improvement.
- A plan was created, approved by management, and executed that addressed both short and long term changes that needed to be made.
 - A mission statement was developed that was in-line with management expectations
 - Skills requirements were redefined and the team was formally trained in process analysis, business writing, and project management. Significant mentoring was also provided by the consultant.
 - A service level document was created and published to standardize service levels for all clients
 - The client side work process was brought under statistical process control by redesigning and standardizing the workflow. This eliminated non value-add work, improved communications, and supported continuous process improvement. The workflow was fully diagrammed for continued reference.
 - Templates were created for every communication element in the work flow:
 - Statement of Work for every service engagement
 - Project Charter
 - Project Estimator Spreadsheet
 - Policy & Procedure document templates
 - Client communications and Client e-mails
 - Client Satisfaction Survey
 - Bi-weekly Reporting
 - A Central Policy Master Database was designed and implemented that provided inventory control and production analytics
 - Individual annual work plans were created and divided into quarterly goals. Standardized bi-weekly reporting was established to report individual performance against the annual goals
 - An automated process was created to extract and report on production analytics from the Central Policy Master Database.

Results

- Service levels and quality had significantly improved at the time of the consultant’s departure.
- Forecasted work load and work in process is predictable and manageable.



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- Management feels comfortable that it can efficiently run the department.
- Document inventory is well controlled in an enterprise managed database.
- High quality production analytics are available to support management reporting and continuous process improvement.
- Clients are now satisfied based on survey data and feedback.