

At the core of the Lean Six Sigma methodology is a disciplined five-phase roadmap known by the acronym DMAIC which identifies each phase: Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control. While it may appear to be a continuous process (one step following the other), in the projects you may end up jumping back and forth between phases.

## DMAIC Overview

**Define** - The define phase is about bringing a team together to brainstorm around the root causes of the problem/opportunity, understanding the current state by creating a current state map and deciding what needs to be measured.

Teams will naturally jump to solutions as you work to define the problem. It's important to keep them focused on the problem, not solutions.

**Measure** - The measurement phase is about working with the team and other staff members to collect the baseline measures and the voice of the customer.

The measurement phase can be the most difficult phase because you are asking staff to collect measures on top of their daily job so it is important that the measurement tools created are easy to fill in.

**Analyze** - The analyze phase is where graphs are created so the data story can unfold. By looking at the data in a variety of ways using tools such as trend charts and Pareto charts the data story emerges. It is important to ensure it aligns with the problem/opportunity that was developed during the define phase.

This could be the shortest of all five phases but it is the link between truly understanding the process and creating and implementing improvements.

**Improve** - By this point teams are ready to brainstorm solutions and improvements using the Lean tools and principles that best address the root cause(s) and test the improvements using the PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) tool.

**Control** - In the control phase teams validate the controls that have already been put in place and identify any other controls that need to be put in place to ensure the process does not slip back into the old way of doing things.