

Introduction

* Value and Impact versus Waste and variance

Why?

Action and Results Will it be perfect? No – way too many people spend hour upon hour trying to make something infallible – when there are humans involved it's never going to be perfect. And that is the point. This is not written for building an airplane – with over 3 millions parts and hundreds of lives on the line, yes, the concept of perfect, minimal variance, and zero defects is justified – this is where Six Sigma and Lean Six Sigma make perfect sense, but most small business or organizations are not building airplanes or launching spacecraft. We're providing routine services, selling products or goods, or performing administrative tasks. Is it worth spending tens of thousands of dollars to pay a consultant to make the process of making a cup of tea for a customer perfect? Probably not. But it is worth it for you to spend the time to understand the process, make it better in the most practical manner, so your staff learn how to do, do it consistently, and give the customer a product they value and are willing to pay for (and will come back and pay for it again).

We're lacking a practical methodology that anyone can do to get immediate results and value from process standardization and improvements. A methodology that does not requires days of study or classroom training and thousands of dollars. Most business owners and managers do not have a) the time, and b) the money to spend on a class to learn complicated methodologies and convoluted words and phrases when all they want and need are simple ways to effect change in their organization or business.

This is not a book of how to do a re-org or get rid of staff to save money

A process is a repeatable series of steps which produce a predictable result.

Change happens whether we like it or not. We can fight change which will create stress and tension not only for ourselves but also for the staff, or we can embrace change and lead it within our organizations.

We don't have time – demands from the business, staff, clients, family, etc.

We're trying to maintain some sort of stability or survive. Many leaders don't have the time to take these monumental and overly formal efforts to bring about change. They realize it is much needed, but they can't just hit 'pause' for a few days or weeks to get things in order.

What about your staff?

Your staff and employees crave simplicity, consistency, and stability. Many of your staff would appreciate some sort of empowerment to make improvements and help make things better. They may not be the owners or managers, but they are investing themselves in the organization, so recognize that they have a vested interest in success and making things better. Build that culture of trust!

Through the methodologies taught in this book, you are going to have the tools needed to bring about meaningful change as a team.

We also want to help change the mindset – instead of complacency, we want a culture of continuous improvement and one of taking action at all levels of the organization.

Bring on consultants? You already know what needs to be done and you, or your staff, already know how it needs to be done.

Outside consultants cost thousands of dollars and take weeks, but more likely months, to tell you what you already know or to suggest things that are impractical (a common 'solution' is to re-structure the organization).

You and your staff are in constant meetings that almost feel routine with few takeaways and little to no discussion or engagement – re-structuring is not going to help. This is just going to cause more frustration. Granted, there are times when we do need an outside or objective set of eyes, but give yourself some credit.

A final purpose of this book is to inspire you in to thinking about your own organization or business and taking action. You will find a 'Notes' section at the back of this book. As you are reading through the ASI process ideas will come to mind on what processes you need to work on, staff or team members that would fit specific roles or help improve certain processes, or idea in general. Write these down as they come to mind! It will pay off in the long run.

Let's begin and remember, keep it simple, and start with the basics.