

“Speaking Out”

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Robert Skillman

Robert is a trainer, consultant, and coach who specializes in Lean/Six Sigma training and deployment. Since 1997, he has been certifying students as Lean/Six Sigma Black Belts and Master Black Belts,

Robert earned his Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in metallurgical engineering from EIP and is Certified as a Lean/Six Sigma Master Black Belt, Lean Sensei, Quality Auditor and Quality Engineer. Bob also serves as adjunct faculty at Kent State University.

Robert has worked in positions ranging from engineering to executive corporate management. His experience has brought him to the point where he now helps companies apply the methods proven to achieve true wealth, prosperity, impeccable quality and competitive positioning in world markets.



Lean Six Sigma

Lean Six Sigma During Downturns in the Business

(first in a series)

By Robert D. Skillman

In this time of economic uncertainty, Robert D. Skillman offers some Lean Six Sigma advice to companies and Black Belts:

1. Adapting to troubled times, versatility is the key
2. Black Belts need to recognize the economic climate as an opportunity to demonstrate the impact of Lean Six Sigma Projects
3. Black Belts need to adapt their skill sets to help navigate the troubled waters
4. Black Belts must be nimble and able to adapt quickly to the changing economic environment
5. Identify the gaps, understand the current profit & loss situation and launch projects with short-term benefit, no longer than 30 days
6. Accelerate projects that have hard dollar value
7. Use Kaizen methods to achieve quick results
8. Stay customer focused; this is not the time for loss of quality or delivery requirements
9. Communicate with your customers; they are seeing difficult times also. Look for joint cost reduction projects
10. Be flexible, but stay on task; focus on cost reduction actions
11. Precisely track project value in hard dollar impact
12. Hold people accountable for generating improvements and reducing waste
13. These are very challenging economic times, but this represents an excellent opportunity for Black Belts to demonstrate their technical abilities and leadership

Some of the points included come from an excellent article in Quality Progress Magazine, “Adapting to Troubled Times”, by Michael Nichols and Karim Houry. (Houry, 2009)

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Works Cited

Houry, M. N. (2009, January). Adapting to Troubled Times. *Quality Progress Magazine* , pp. 8-9.