



SIX SIGMA ONLINE
Aveta Business Institute

Six Sigma Certification Program

White Belt Lesson 3: Six Sigma Teamwork; Roles and Responsibilities

The Six Sigma Training and Certification Levels are organized into a hierarchy of individuals (named according to martial arts convention). As this process is deeply rooted in teamwork, it is important for each certified Six Sigma Professional to know his or her role and responsibilities within an organization. Lower level individuals will report to higher level individuals with problems, and higher level individuals are responsible for mentoring lower level individuals.

Six Sigma Certification Level Hierarchy:

- Executive Leadership/CEO
- Six Sigma Champion
- Six Sigma Master Black Belt
- Six Sigma Black Belt
- Six Sigma Green Belt
- Six Sigma Yellow Belt
- Six Sigma White Belt

Each of these ‘belt levels’ of certification correspond to varying degrees of Six Sigma knowledge and skills gained through training and experience. It is called a ‘hierarchy’ because there are the least number of more highly-trained individuals at the top, while there are the most number of individuals at the bottom who are trained with the most basic Six Sigma knowledge. An employee’s six sigma belt level has nothing to do with their value to the company, because for this process to work as it is intended, all levels are necessary, and all must work together.

Of course, with more training usually comes a larger salary. Although it varies greatly, in order to be Six Sigma Certified at the lower levels, a candidate must go through some sort of training, and then is tested on what they have learned. At the higher certification levels, a candidate must usually demonstrate their mastery of the concepts through a Six Sigma Project of their own. Here is an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of Six Sigma Certification starting from the bottom and working up.



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Six Sigma White Belt

The controversial White Belt (WB) was seemingly created out a need for a less rigorous training course than the Yellow level. Traditionally, the Yellow Belt served as training on the basic overview of the Six Sigma program for support staff not fully involved in the Six Sigma Process. It is the foundation of Six Sigma knowledge for those who may be unsure if the program will work for them, or who want an introduction to its most basic principles. Note: The White Belt level is not fully recognized by the entire six sigma community. Many consider the Yellow Belt to be the lowest “official” six sigma level.

Six Sigma Yellow Belt

Six Sigma Yellow Belt (YB) certification provides an overall insight to the techniques of Six Sigma, its metrics, and basic improvement methodologies. A yellow belt must know how to integrate Six Sigma methodologies for the improvement of production and transactional systems to better meet customer expectations and bottom-line objectives of their organization. A Yellow Belt typically has a basic knowledge of Six Sigma, but does not lead projects on their own. They are often responsible for the development of process maps to support Six Sigma projects.

A Yellow Belt participates as a core team member or subject matter expert (SME) on a project. In addition, Yellow Belts may often be responsible for running smaller process improvement projects using the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) methodology. PDCA, often referred to as the Deming Wheel, enables Yellow Belts to identify processes that could benefit from improvement. These smaller Yellow Belt projects often get escalated to the Green Belt or Black Belt level where the DMAIC methodology is used to maximize cost savings using Statistical Process Control.

Six Sigma Yellow Belt training provides an introduction to process management and the basic tools of Six Sigma, giving employees a stronger understanding of processes, enabling each individual to provide meaningful assistance in achieving the organization's overall objectives. The Yellow Belt is traditionally seen as the most basic introduction to the theories of Six Sigma. Individuals who undergo a Yellow Belt Training Course are considered support staff within a Six Sigma Organization. They are given an overview of the Methodology so that they are on board with the goals and intentions of the company overall. They have enough knowledge so that they can assist Green and Black Belts with projects.



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Six Sigma Green Belt

Six Sigma Green Belt (GB) training provides participants with enhanced problem-solving skills, with an emphasis on the DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control) model. Six Sigma Green Belt certification helps an employee serve as a trained team member within his or her function-specific area of the organization. This focus allows the Green Belt to work on small, carefully defined Six Sigma projects, requiring less than a Black Belt's full-time commitment.

The Green Belt has two primary tasks: first, to help successfully deploy Six Sigma techniques, and second, to lead small-scale improvement projects within their respective areas. As a support population, Green Belts can do much of the legwork in gathering data and executing experiments in support of a Black Belt project. They are practitioners who are very much 'team players', focusing most of their Six Sigma work-time on projects of their own or in support of Black Belt projects. People within the level are spread throughout the organization; they incorporate quality language and tools in the daily operations.

Six Sigma Black Belt

A Six Sigma Black Belt (BB) embodies a thorough knowledge of Six Sigma philosophies and principles (including supporting systems and tools). A certified Black Belt exhibits team leadership, understands team dynamics, and assigns their team members with roles and responsibilities. They have a complete understanding of the DMAIC/DMADV models in accordance with the Six Sigma principles, have a basic knowledge of lean enterprise concepts, and they can quickly identify "non-value-added" activities.

Black Belts are 'change agents' who primarily focus on project execution, whereas Champions and Master Black Belts focus on identifying projects and functions for Six Sigma. A Black Belt's role within a company includes being the project team leader, allowing them to be directly responsible for projects within their organization. They are held accountable for the results.

Six Sigma Master Black Belt

Another important belt level within this Methodology is the Six Sigma Master Black Belt (MBB), who is a Black Belt with additional training and experience. He or she has been able to gain experience managing several projects and has a deep expertise and knowledge base in the tools and methods of Six Sigma.



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This individual's responsibilities mainly lie in offering mentorship or coaching for those within the Black Belt level. He or she also helps the Six Sigma Leaders and Champions keep the entire initiative on track. Master Black Belts are renowned for their situation handling ability and leadership skills. This proves that they are in a position to deal with increased responsibilities. They apply the appropriate methodologies to attain results which are tangible. They have expertise in identification of project deployment opportunities. They have higher level of skill compared to Black Belts, and their level of skill ranges from communication, coaching, and project management to statistical analysis. They are also able to train and certify others in the Six Sigma Methodology.

Six Sigma Champions

The Six Sigma Champion (SSC) is a senior or middle level executive whose role is choosing and sponsoring specific projects. He or she ensures the availability of resources. A champion is the person on the team who knows the business at hand inside and out as well as the Six Sigma Methodology. They are responsible for ensuring that whatever projects are undertaken mesh well with the goals and intentions of the business or corporation overall.

Removing Roadblocks is also a role that this individual will be responsible for. One of the biggest roadblocks to success includes employee resistance to change. In this case, the Six Sigma Champion will work closely with a Six Sigma Black Belt to create a plan for 'change management' within their organization. The speed at which a project is deployed is also the responsibility of a Champion, as well as its implementation in the long term. In other words, a Champion is responsible for the overall Six Sigma Picture within an organization acting as practitioners mentors, guides and facilitators, while Master Black Belts and Black Belts are responsible for more specific projects.

When defining the Six Sigma roles and responsibilities, financial factors are also a key consideration. The Champion has to make sure that the implementation project's primary purpose is improvement. Financial success is not often an overnight result, and Six Sigma Professionals may often receive criticism from business owners whose complete focus is on achieving financial results quickly. Each organization has a unique structure and those organizations that have implemented Six Sigma have successfully capitalized on the success of the individual projects. This leverages improvement throughout the business. It also enhances the synergistic relationship among the various belts.



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The key success factor in this concept is leveraging, which leads to extensive communication. Cultural change within an organization can only be achieved by exposure of the entire work force to the principles, publicizing projects which are underway and also sharing in the success achieved subsequently. Six Sigma training, certification, and investments should be looked at in this perspective; as an investment into the future success of the business overall.

Operating in small teams is a core concept that is practiced by businesses using Six Sigma. These teams are often created with like-minded and experienced professionals as well as opposite departments to help ensure output is as inclusive and as perfect as possible throughout the organization. The benefits and importance of teamwork within this process should be understood to ensure output is performed in the most effective and successful manner possible.

One of the most noted factors of importance placed upon this process is the ability to achieve any and all goals of the group. Group-made Six Sigma goals that are established and maintained are commonly more effectively striven toward and achieved when groups are more aligned and cohesive. This helps create a much more balanced approach to the end goal of quality products and services through operational efficiency.

Higher levels of teamwork also often create higher levels of employee morale within the group as well as the entire company. People who are part of groups that are successful and more productive are generally happier. This provides a basis by which production is increased and the workplace is considered fun and happy. General productivity of the workforce is known to increase when teamwork is present. Groups that operate as a whole and are focused on the same goal are often considered to be much more productive and able to operate more effectively. This helps ensure that output from each Six Sigma Team is able to be increased over time.

The ability to problem solve as a group is much better when teamwork is increased overall. Working cohesively helps lead to an increase in idea flow and openness of the group which helps provide an increased layer of appeal to anyone interested. The idea of an open-minded team helps provide the ability for all teams to solve problems in a more creative and successful manner. The sharing and gathering of ideas is also made much more common and successful when teamwork is increased. People who work well together are often able to help each other openly express their ideas in a much more accepting format which leads to greater success.



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This often leads to even further business-wide enhancements and improvements as people learn to grow and trust each other.

Six Sigma is also a process that allows a much better format for developing leadership skills among the leaders of each team. Leaders of each group play a vital role in helping to guide the team toward success and keeping them focused on the overall initiatives they have been tasked with. The more cohesive and open the team is translates to the skills that are developed by each team leader. This will lead to better company managers in the future.

The end results or goals that the teams are working on are also known to improve with better teamwork. The Six Sigma principle is such that an idealized and perfected product base with less standard deviations from perfect will increase the bottom line for the company overall. Operating more effectively as teams helps ensure that the products created are much more toward the level of perfection that is aimed for.

A healthy dose of competition among smaller work groups is also known to increase with better teamwork. Groups are often tasked with specific assignments that directly impact other work groups and their production efforts, leading to a healthy rivalry in many cases. This rivalry could have positive impacts on production and efficiency when teamwork is strong and built upon a successful foundation. Businesses that focus on increased levels of teamwork within the Six Sigma model of operations are known to provide a better level of customer service. Companies are servicing some type of end result customer that hires them to provide a product or service to suit their needs. Businesses that implement this process within cohesive teams are able to ensure that the customer is able to receive their product in a more successful, continuous and lucrative manner.

Enhanced teams also help the Six Sigma learning process for individual members. This is a process that has varied levels of expertise that are able to be studied and mastered by individuals. Those who work through this process are able to become much more efficient and productive workers, as well as mentors for those that come after them. Finally, the importance of Six Sigma teamwork reaches outward toward enhanced profit levels. Businesses are now looking for more ways to generate profit as an end result. Operating in cohesive and effective teams helps increase overall profit levels in most cases.