Glossary of Terms
Action Plan  A technique that documents everything that must be done to ensure effective implementation of a countermeasure or improvement (describes what, how, who and when).

Bar Graph  A graphic representation that compares items in non-touching bars of uniform width. The length of each bar is proportionate to the quantity being represented.

Barriers and Aids  Barriers are elements resisting change. Aids are elements pushing for change. Barriers and Aids Analysis is also known as "Force Field Analysis" and is performed prior to developing action plans.

Benchmarking  The continuous search for best practices that lead to superior performance and that are beneficial in establishing performance targets and improved methods.

Brainstorming  A technique designed to generate many ideas quickly within a team environment.

Catchball  Negotiating targets and budgets with facts among various levels of an organization in a spirit of "Win-Win".

Cause and Effect Diagram  A diagram used to relate cause and effect to help display possible root causes found in data. This tool is sometimes called Fishbone Diagram or Ishikawa Diagram (after its originator).

Checklist  A list of items or tasks necessary to complete a specific activity.

Checksheet (or spreadsheet)  A form used for collecting data from viewpoints of What, Where, When and Who.
Control Chart  A particular type of trend graph used to indicate whether or not a process is stable or “in control” (i.e., within specification or statistical limits).

Core Processes  The key, high level processes of an organization that create and / or deliver products and / or services to the EXTERNAL customer, and the success of which are judged by the customer.

Countermeasures Matrix  A matrix used to show the relationship between effect, root causes and countermeasures. It also facilitates the selection of which countermeasures should be implemented, considering effectiveness and feasibility.

Cross-Functional Team  A team whose members come from more than one functional group to work on improvement opportunities that span functional or organizational lines.

Customer  The person or group that receives the output (product or service) of a process. The customer may be external or internal to the organization.

Customer Next Process  A process used to identify a customer's wants, expectations, needs and requirements. The concept is used to promote the customer satisfaction orientation necessary for quality both for external and internal customers.

Data  Facts that may be in the form of charts, numbers, words or photographs.

Data Gathering Tools  Tools used to collect useful data, such as checksheet or survey form.

Empowerment  The investment in an organization’s people of authority and responsibility for making decisions and taking actions, particularly to satisfy customers and improve processes. Empowerment requires that people be enabled through training, information, resources, advice and an environment conducive to change.
**Fishbone Diagram**  See Cause and Effect Diagram.

**Functional Team**  A team that consists of members from a single work area or function. All members may share a common supervisor or manager.

**Golden Thread**  The known and understood link between the employee’s job activities and how they contribute to an organization’s end of process outcome indicators. The gold will be found on the company’s bottom line.

**Histogram**  A series of touching bars displaying process variation in a frequency distribution. All bars of equal width but proportionate in height to the frequency in a particular class.

**Interviewing**  A technique used to systematically obtain useful data and information from others.

**Ishikawa Diagram**  This diagram, known as the Cause and Effect Diagram, was developed by Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa to display the relationship between an effect (or problem) and its possible causes. Dr. J. M. Juran was the first to refer to it as the Ishikawa Diagram in 1962 (see Cause and Effect Diagram).

**Lead Team**  A team that functions as a non-problem solving steering committee comprised of management. Lead Teams may be formed at all levels of the organization and may also be called Quality Councils or Leadership Teams.

**Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award**  An award given by the U. S. Department of Commerce to American companies and/or business units that achieve business excellence and meet specific criteria in seven categories.

**Management Presentation**  An opportunity for a team to describe its use of the **DMAIC Story** process to managers and to seek management approval for implementation of
the team's solution. The **DMAIC Story** Process is the standard method used to demonstrate the seven-step approach used to improve performance.

**Multivoting**  A structural voting method of gaining consensus in list reduction. The purpose is to reduce a large list of possibilities to a manageable few. This technique is frequently used in selecting most likely root causes.

**Needs**  The customer's requirements. They may be spoken or unspoken, and often not even known by the customer. Nevertheless, they must be met. They are drivers of value perception.

**P-D-C-A**  Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle of continuous improvement. **Plan** using data; **Do** or implement the plan; **Check** your results; and **Act** upon what was found. This concept was adapted from Dr. F. W. Taylor's concept of Plan-Do-See by Dr. Walter A. Shewhart of Bell Laboratories in the early 1930s.

**Pareto Analysis**  A way of organizing data to show what major factor(s) compose the subject being analyzed. It is a search for significance.

**Pareto Chart**  A chart used to indicate the major factors of the subject being analyzed. Bars are arranged in descending value order. Named after Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian social economist who observed that most of the wealth in a society is controlled by a minority of the people.

**Performance Improvement Teams**  Teams established to address issues negatively impacting customer, worker or other stakeholder needs. They may be assigned or voluntary.
**Policy Deployment** (or Strategic Planning) A process used by management to provide organizational focus. By aligning resources on a few stakeholder driven priorities, significant results can be achieved in a relatively short period of time.

**Problem** A problem is a gap between an actual and a desired outcome indicator performance.

**Problem-Solving Process** A systematic approach to problem-solving that reinforces the P-D-C-A principle. The **DMAIC Story** methodology is a problem solving process.

**Problem Statement** A sentence that describes in simple terms the stratified data set that is the end of Step 2: Current Situation Process.

**Process** A flow by which material or energy is converted into a product or service. Processes are typically measured in terms of cost, quality and time.

**Process Outcome Indicator** A measure of how a process is performing with respect to such characteristics as cost, quality, time, safety or fairness. In-Process Outcome Indicators should link to End of Process Outcome Indicators that are measures of how customer needs are being met. End of Process Indicators measure the degree and/or frequency of meeting the needs of customers and other stakeholders. Quality Outcome Indicators measure the degree to which requirements are being met and usually thought of as End of Process Outcome Indicators.
**Process Management** The management of the conversion of material or energy into a product or service so as to continuously improve the outcome by making it better, faster and cheaper than before.

**QA** Quality Assurance. Assuring that customer requirements are designed and built into the product or service enabling the customer to confidently select and be satisfied with the product or service for a long, or specified, period of time. QA, Typically audits activities after completion to determine whether or not Quality was delivered.

**QC** Quality Control. Ensuring that products or services meet customer requirements. Checking may be required if processes are not capable.

**QI** Quality Improvement. The improvement of performance for the benefit of an identified customer or stakeholder need.

**Quality** Providing value to customers by meeting their requirements and those of other stakeholders through the provision of products, services and the consequences of operation.

**Quality Delivery System (QDS)** A complete description of all activities in an organization. The description answers 3 questions: 1) What do you do? 2) How do you measure it? 3) How do you evaluate and improve it?

**Recognition** Acknowledgement of improvement and praise, usually by external groups.

**Requirements** Specifications or standards that define expectations of a product or service or permissible consequences of operation.

**Root Cause** The verified primary driver of an undesired condition, or problem.
**Scatter Diagram**  A technique for investigating and visually displaying the possibility of a causal relationship between two variables.

**Selection Matrix**  A technique that allows the ranking of Problems (or Concerns) by considering the impact on the customer and the need to improve. It embodies elements fundamental to effectively prioritizing resources.

**Six Sigma**  A level of quality achievement equivalent to 3.4 defects per million through a reduction in variation (Sigma).

**Six Sigma Process**  A systematic method for improving a process to yield outputs that always meet the needs of customers. By effectively managing the process, defects can be prevented.

**Stakeholder**  A person or group with a vested interest in the products, services and the consequences of operations of a supplier.

**Sterling Award**  The State of Florida Governor’s Sterling Award is given to organizations that meet excellence criteria in seven specific categories. It is based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

**Stratification**  The systematic process of decomposing information according to What, Where, When and Who characteristics. This technique aids in understanding the nature of and the solving of a problem.

**Symptom**  A condition demonstrating the possible existence of a problem. If there is a problem, its cause may not yet be known.

**Task Team**  Members from one or more functional areas assigned by management to solve a problem. Members are chosen because of background, experience and specific knowledge.
**Team Leader**  A person who effectively guides the team through the problem-solving process.

**Team Member**  An active participant on a team to solve problems and implement improvements.

**Tracking**  A process to monitor the steps or phases of an action plan to determine if desired results are obtained in the desired time frame.

**Trial Implementation**  An initial application of a countermeasure to check for effectiveness and unforeseen events prior to a full-scale implementation.