



Review of the SMAS Yellow Belt Six Sigma Programme

Main Findings

SE Appraisal and Evaluation Team

May 2022

Methodology

- Series of 11 qualitative consultations were undertaken with the following during April:
 - Training Practitioners – Gillian Macleod and Gerry Borge from SMAS;
 - SE Staff – Three individuals from the two SE pilot cohorts; and
 - Companies – Representatives of six companies provided with training.

Project Rationale

- SMAS staff with a wealth of experience and passion for lean management / six sigma principles;
- Concern of a lack of consistency on green belt training provided by outside contractors;
- Pandemic provided the opportunity to develop an internal training programme;
- Focused on Yellow Belt level as the majority of industry demand at this level.



Reasons for Getting Involved

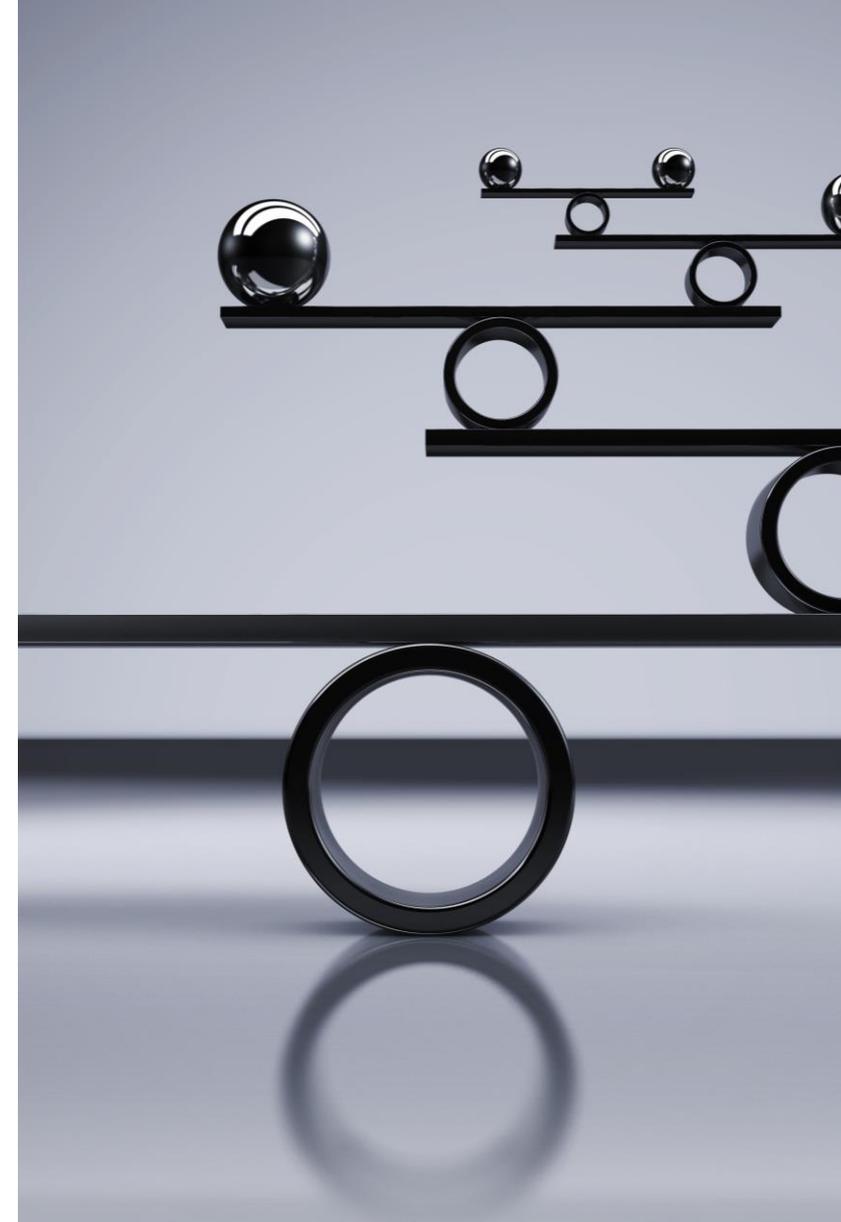
- All companies noted having both a prior knowledge of six sigma and/or lean management principles and an existing relationship with SMAS;
- Desire for more staff to employ continuous improvement principles to their working approach;
- From an SE perspective the reasons centred on existing projects that could benefit from applying Six Sigma tools and techniques and personal development.

Delivery Approach

- Some apprehension on receiving training online. Afterwards all respondents surprised and satisfied with how it went;
- ½ day sessions allowed for continuation of day job activities and time to digest the day's learning;
- Sessions all in same week provided the intensity of focus. Consensus that learning wouldn't have been as strong if spread over several weeks;
- Open Programme – Provided opportunity to see that similar issues can be faced by businesses in vastly different industries. Also good to see examples from elsewhere.

Training Providers

- All respondents noted the in-depth knowledge and expertise of the training providers as a key strength of the Programme;
- Having the three trainers allowed for variety of examples to be used and also aided with holding the attention of the learners – not solely one person talking at you.
- Support post training seen as invaluable by those who took forward projects. Ability to use trainers as sounding board for ideas/approaches helped bring through better projects.



Impact of Training

- Staff have developed new skills and are approaching problems differently. Focus not simply on solution, but understanding the cause;
- Bringing areas of business together. E.g. back office and manufacturing collaborating. Not working in silos;
- Three businesses noted productivity improvements due to reductions in wastage and/or time;



Future Direction

- No consultee felt the need to deliver such training entirely face to face unless requested;
- Hybrid system could be possible with F2F contact at outset or end of the week;
- Value in keeping at least two trainers delivering training;
- Open Programme a positive experience. Gives insight to similarity of challenges maybe not immediately obvious. Seen as good approach for smaller companies;
- Ongoing project support/mentoring key to ensuring projects deliver to their potential.

Questions for the Future

- How do SMAS continue to offer the service as demand for SE support ramps up post-pandemic?
- Format – F2F, online or combination of both?
- Green Belt provision. How is the original question mark over the quality addressed?