QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MADE SIMPLE... AND FAST!

MATTHEW J. MAIO

ASQ

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ASQ Mission: The American Society for Quality advances individual, organizational, and community excellence worldwide through learning, quality improvement, and knowledge exchange.

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Although the process for making incremental and fast improvements has been provided in this book, ASQ has created an online community* called *Simple Quality* (**http://community.asq.org/networks/simple_quality),** which can be used as a resource to share ideas, ask questions of the author, network with other users, download the forms from the book, and much more that will help you on your journey. The online community is another powerful tool to gain knowledge and continue the journey!

*ASQ online communities require registration with ASQ to participate. Registration is free.

ASQ

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all who ask questions and challenge themselves and others to do better. Those who think there must be a better way to do this or that, or solve a problem, can use the materials here to change how things are done, and to make change that brings positive results.

I want to thank my wife Janna and daughters Brianna and Hayley for their love, support, and dedication. They are always there to help me work through problems and keep things simple. To my parents, John and Marge, thank you for challenging me to do better as you raised me—maybe the biggest challenge of all—and for your support in interests that required me to think through problems and have fun!

Finally, I want to thank my employers, clients, and friends—past and present. The opportunities presented to me at Raytheon, JT3 LLC, and Honeywell have allowed me to apply these principles and have encouraged me to want to help others and continually improve. Hopefully, with the help of this book, you will be able to use these basic principles and a simple approach to make positive change!

Foreword

Most of us work in small and mid-sized businesses and nonprofit organizations. It goes without saying that we each want to deliver the best to our clients and customers. We carry with us a strong belief in the value of what we could be offering, if we just had the money...the time...the right people. Meanwhile, the daily job of just getting things done overwhelms our drive to do things better.

This book is focused on you. The money, time, and people probably won't change significantly soon, so it is fruitless to wait for a more auspicious time to talk about how to be the best, or at least better. This book is designed to capture the most important things you *can* do now, and what you need to know to get started.

Are you a teacher who wants to improve how you help children learn; a nurse who always has to work around obstacles to improving health, or the manager of a small business or nonprofit aspiring to be successful? This book offers what you need for the journey from "pretty good" to "a whole lot better."

In 25 years of work in quality management in the public, private, and community sectors, I have seen the power of using simple principles and practices to improve customer care, reduce waste, and ultimately strengthen the bottom line, while making the organizations better places to work. I have been part of hundreds of efforts in the boardroom, the workplace, or the community where ordinary people were able to make extraordinary contributions to improve results because they used these basic but powerful tools.

Read this book, pick up your new tools and get to work. Identify what is keeping you up at night, and use the practices outlined in this guide to get started. The learning will come from the doing. If you follow this simple guide, you will know whether the changes you make are, in fact, real improvements!

Go for it!

Tom Mosgaller
Director of Change Management
NIATx-University of Wisconsin
Past President and Chairman of the Board, ASQ

This Is Ridiculous (Introduction)

It is simple—all of us have experienced some service or product that has caused us to say, “This is ridiculous!” Our frustration could have been spurred by one too many confirmations, too many mouse clicks, too many forms to fill out, redundant information being requested, excessive packaging, long waits, poor service, a broken item, receiving the wrong item, poor or botched handoffs, etc. Although our frustration is usually summed up in “ridiculous,” it is more important to be able to answer questions like “How did this happen?” or “How can this happen?” These simple questions demonstrate our interest in and commitment to quality and improvement.

This interest in quality and improvement can be fostered and applied to any organization—small or large, for-profit or nonprofit. Here are a few basic quality and improvement principles that can help us foster our basic instincts to improve products and services. This book focuses on outlining basic quality and improvement principles and provides examples of how to apply them—with a focus on small businesses and nonprofit organizations. When progressing through the principles, two examples (one a small business, the other a nonprofit) will be used to show how these quality and improvement principles can be applied.

Chapter 1 – The Basics: A quick overview of the history of these principles.

Chapter 2 – The Customer: This chapter provides the foundation for understanding customers. Who are they? What is important to them? What are they experiencing? Are their needs, or more important, their expectations, being met? Goals and their relationship to the customer and organization are discussed.

Chapter 3 – The Plan: Explains the concepts of planning to move from current to future performance levels. The good news is planning can be simple or elaborate; it is up to you! Here change leader selection and empowerment are discussed.

Chapter 4 – The Do: This is where the rubber meets the road, when a difference is made! In most cases, this can—or should—be quick to get positive results with as little effort as possible.

Chapter 5 – The Study: Explains the need to study the results of what is happening during implementation and what happened after completion. This is done to ensure progress is being made in the right direction. It's important because things don't always go as planned, but adjustments can occur. But, if "The Study" is skipped, then status toward goal achievement cannot be known.

Chapter 6 – The Act: This might seem redundant to "The Do," but it is different. The primary purpose of "The Act" is to make sure the results reviewed in "The Study" are addressed to help achieve the goal (with adjustment if necessary), or to determine how successful the project was. Without knowing where to go (the goal), the actions/adjustments cannot be made to ensure it is reached or, at least, the effort is moving in that direction. When the goal is achieved, decide if the improvement activity is done. Or, start a new plan and "raise the bar" to continue to improve.

Chapter 7 – Now What?: A quick highlight of what can be done from here. Other resources and principles that can be used—they take a little more effort—and what might be a reasonable next step. Or, the next step might be to continue to apply the basic principles and tools already being used to other opportunities.

Chapter 8 – Summary: A quick review of all you learned in the first seven chapters.

Chapter 9 – Tools: Provides blank tools (checklists, forms, etc.) for use; these can be copied to make your efforts easier.

Before starting, let's introduce two fictitious organizations that will be used throughout this guide. First is *Services for You,* a nonprofit organization that provides persons with disabilities vocational training and employment opportunities. They have several locations within a small regional area and provide both on-site services at their customers' locations and in-house opportunities at their locations. Training is done in-house and the employment opportunities are service and product related. Second, *Castle Remodeling,* is a local home improvement small business that provides services ranging from "handyman" to complete remodels and additions; it only provides residential services.

Our goal: Make simple changes, focused on customers, to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction!

Chapter 1 – The Basics

The basics described in this book are rooted in decades of execution and success. They are based on the principles of quality and improvement from the founders of quality and customer satisfaction, including Dr. W. Edwards Deming and Joseph M. Juran—among many others—and pioneers like Henry Ford, John "Jack" Welch, and Taiichi Ohno. Dr. Deming (1900–1993) is recognized for his 14 points and is credited with launching the Total Quality Management movement. Joseph M. Juran (1904–2008), like Deming, worked with the Japanese after World War II to help them rebuild their manufacturing. He is recognized for his Quality Trilogy (quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement) and the establishment of the Pareto principle (80 percent of the problems result from 20 percent of the causes—or "the vital few and the trivial many").

Henry Ford (1863–1947) established the modern production line—gaining efficiencies in how automobiles were manufactured to lower prices and gain market share. His mass production principles are still used today. John "Jack" Welch (1935–), former chairman and chief executive officer at General Electric (GE), is one of the early adopters of Six Sigma principles. His efforts and commitment led GE to improve quality; reduce variation, scrap, and rework; and improve customer satisfaction while positively impacting growth and profits. Finally, Taiichi Ohno (1912–1990) is considered the father of the Toyota Production System (TPS), which evolved into lean manufacturing. Under Ohno's guidance, TPS implementation was focused on customers' needs, the elimination of waste, and continual improvement.

Companies like Motorola, Ford, Toyota, GE, Western Electric, and Allied-Signal have taken these basic principles and tools to new levels. They have used them to ensure customer focus while improving product and service quality. Organizations like ASQ are on the quest to make these principles and tools available to everyone—small and large, for-profit and nonprofit, and government and non-government.

There is a strong history behind these principles. There have been a lot of successes after applying these principles and tools. There have also been failures—usually related to the level of support and commitment from leadership. Applying these principles now may turn a struggling organization around or can help a performing organization be better. A focus on the customer and simple incremental improvement goals can help root out waste and improve productivity, quality, and customer satisfaction, resulting in keeping or gaining customers.

Critical success factors include:

- Customer focus
- Simplicity
- S.M.A.R.T. goals (defined later)
- The plan-do-study-act rapid cycle improvement model (defined later)
- Small incremental improvements

Understanding what our customers want and need, finding and using passionate change leaders, and looking at what and how things are done with fresh eyes are necessary. Avoiding the "we have always done it this way" or "we know better than our customer" mind-set helps ensure an open thought process and can enable change.

The will to make things better is the first step!

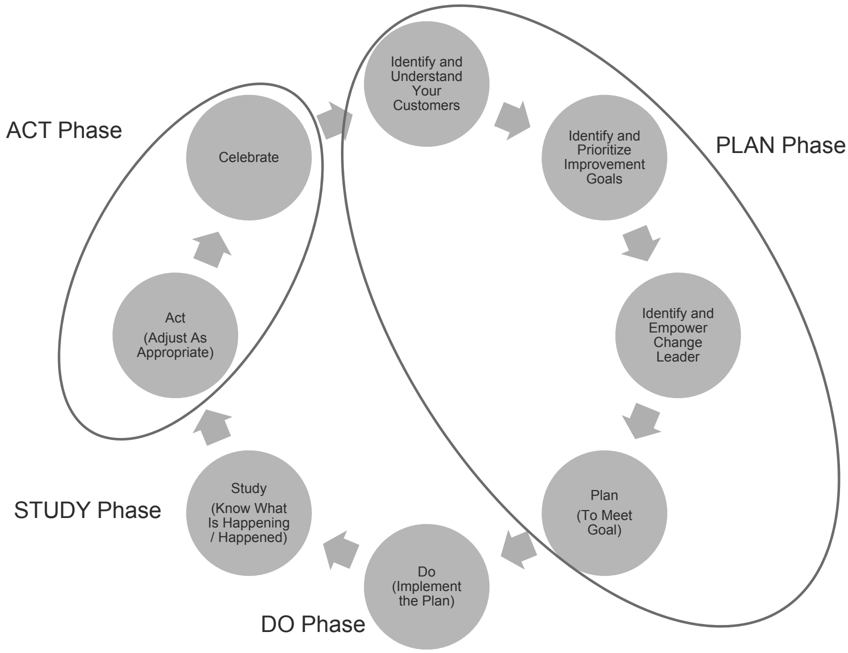


Figure 1: The plan-do-study-act process wheel: Aligning with our customers' needs to make simple and quick improvements!

Chapter 2 – The Customer

While working with a client, a Castle Remodeling worker stated, “I consider my customer the one who pays for my product or service.” This seems right, doesn’t it? But sometimes it is not quite this easy. For example, Castle Remodeling has customers who hire its workers to paint a room or remodel a kitchen. But it has other customers like neighbors of those having work performed who expect that their yards or parking won’t be impacted, or the city inspectors and planning departments that expect permits to be pulled, work to meet certain standards, or architectural drawings to be in a certain format.

So what does this mean? Simply, look at things differently. Take a step back and look at your organization through different eyes—those of the customer. Who gets anything of *value? Value* is defined as where you see a need fulfilled. This *value* can be an architectural drawing, a painted room, or a cleaning service completed.

When focusing on customers to better understand who they are and what they expect, ask simple questions like:

- Who pays for the product or service?
- Why do they buy from us?
- How often do they buy?
- Who else could they buy from?
- Who else (besides those who pay) receive a product or service from us?
- What do they get from us?
- What unique products or services are provided?
- What do they really want?
- Why do they want it?
- What happens if they are not satisfied?
- How does satisfying their needs help us?
- How is customer interface done (face-to-face, phone, Internet, etc.)?
- What is it like to be our customer?
- Can I walk in their shoes to determine how they see us?

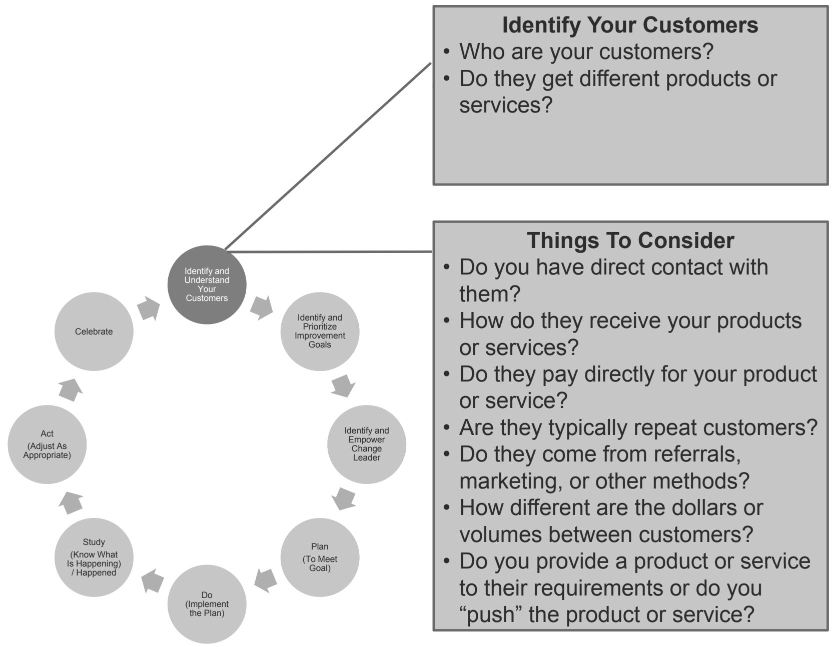


Figure 2: Identifying our customers and their expectations.

In some cases, grouping customers might help to better understand them. Why? Well, it might help to better define their requirements and expectations because they receive different products or services—like full remodel versus painting or janitorial services versus event preparation. In some cases, the type of product or service provided requires different actions, skills, processes, etc., to happen. Knowing answers to questions like those provided above can improve our ability to determine what our customers really want and to meet or exceed their expectations.

For example, Castle Remodeling currently sends one person to quote all jobs. This requires a visit, a trip back to the office, and a couple of days to determine the cost and provide it to the customer. By identifying and grouping customers in four categories—painting, handyman services, remodel, and new additions—Castle Remodeling can have the right processes, forms, skills, and resources to provide a quote and meet customers' expectations in a timelier manner. Using this approach, painting quotes could be provided on the spot, handyman services could be quoted (in rough terms) over the phone, and only one or two days is needed for quoting remodeling or new additions.

Another way to group customers is by the amount of money they spend or their time as a customer. Why would this matter? There could be discounts to long-term customers or for the amount of work previously done. These approaches are used by many businesses, including hotels, airlines, and coffee shops (e.g., buy nine, get the 10^{th} free).

Take a moment to think about this and capture some notes. First, who are your customers? List between five and 10 by name. Based on your list, does it make sense to group your customers? Jot down the answers to some of the questions above. Are there any questions that can't be answered? Would getting information from the customer help answer the questions? The primary goal of understanding who our customers are is to understand what drives our customers—what do they want? When do they want it? How do they want it? Keep these notes; they are needed to start the improvement journey.

One challenge here is to avoid thinking you have all the answers. Make sure to find out what the customer wants and understand why they want it. This probably sounds a little odd because after all, our customers come to us for our products and services. But this is important! Sure, they use our products and services, but what do they really want? To know this, the customer must be involved; help them to help us understand. This involvement is critical to our success.

How are customers involved to gain information? There are many ways including, but not limited to, face-to-face discussions, surveys (paper, phone, and Web-based), and focus groups. In small businesses, local government, or nonprofit organizations where there is direct contact with customers it is easier to gain their involvement—especially with customers who work with you on a regular basis. Try to gain the involvement of infrequent or one-time customers, too. Do this to understand why they were either satisfied or dissatisfied. Remember, a happy customer will tell a few people; but an unhappy customer will tell many.

When customers are involved, consistency is important. Having the same people interface with the customer, asking the same questions, and using easy terminology will help bring consistency to our customer involvement and the information we gain. Asking two similar questions can yield drastically different answers. For example, "How pleased were you with the results of the work performed: extremely, adequately, a little, or not at all?" versus "What did you think of the work we performed?" will provide different responses and information. Be as consistent as possible when asking questions and gathering information or data.

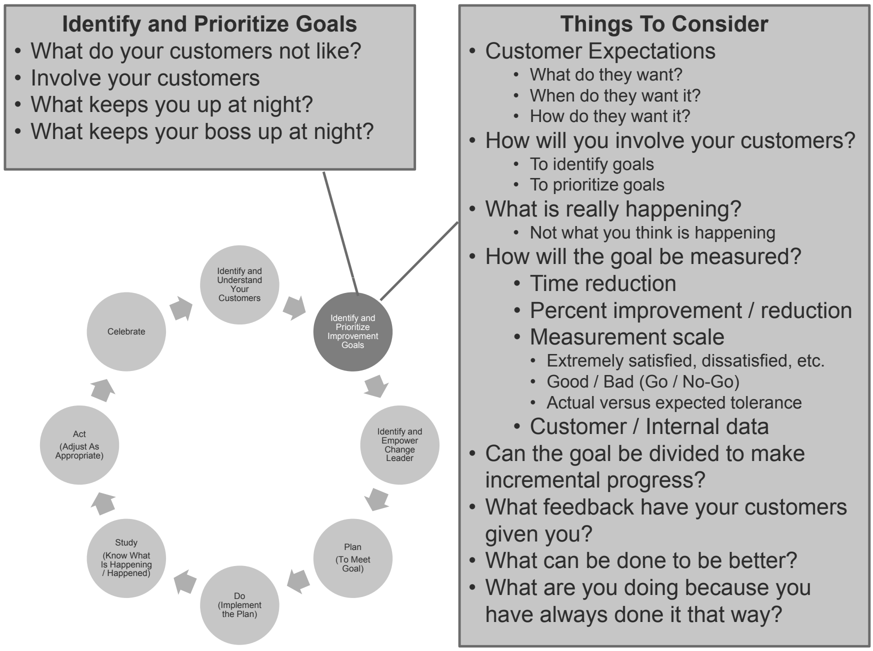


Figure 3: Identify and capture goals based on customer and organization needs.

Using the information gained above, an improvement goal can be set. Is the goal realistic? Having a realistic goal is not setting the goal low. It is setting a goal that stretches for improvement, but the goal is not so far out that there is a low probability of success. The primary concern here is to make sure gains are seen. Several small gains are better than none. To help with goal setting, use the S.M.A.R.T. goals (reference example below) approach:

- **S – Specific:** The goal description clearly identifies what is to be accomplished.
- **M – Measurable:** We define how the goal will be measured (time, units or production per hour, customer satisfaction score levels, scrap reduction, revenue growth, etc.).
- **A – Attainable:** We aim for things that can be done—several incremental goals that stretch the organization some are usually better that one. For example, improve order processing time by 15 percent is more attainable than 100 percent.

- **R – Relevant/Realistic:** The relevant check ensures the goal applies to our customers' needs and our organizational vision. Ensuring a goal is realistic helps validate that the goal is within the organization's ability to control (a goal to be the biggest painting company in the state might not be realistic for a small 14-person business, but to grow revenue and personnel by a specified percent this year would be realistic).
- **T – Timely:** Simply the date the goal is due to be completed or accomplished. Without a date, assigned goals may never be reached.

Goal Name: Improve Service Request Time	**Date:** March 20, 2010
The goal description should answer questions like: What are you going to do? Why is this important? How will it be done (not a full plan, just top level)? How much do we want to improve (e.g., reduce order processing time by 10 percent from last year's average)? **Goal Description:** Reduce the time to process vehicle service appointment requests by 50 percent from the 2009 average of 13 minutes.	
Measurement: How will this goal be measured? Examples include measures based on time (reductions in processing), waste (elimination of redundant information, waiting, unused data, etc.), and quality (reductions in rework or scrap, improvement of first time acceptance, improvement in customer satisfaction levels, etc.). How often will the goal be measured (event or time based) and for what duration? Remember, once we attain a goal we still want to sustain our gains and may want to improve further.	
Measurement Description: Capture service appointment time processing and obtain an average time by service writer.	**Measurement Frequency:** Weekly
Attainable: List resources, etc., needed to achieve this goal. 1) Call logs 2) Service writer ID	**Relevant/Realistic:** List things like why this is important to your organization and customer, what are you doing now to make this happen, etc. This goal is important as it helps save our customers time and allows our service writers additional time with the customer when receiving or delivering their vehicles.

Figure 4: S.M.A.R.T. goal example.

A needed part of the S.M.A.R.T. goal is measurable. As noted in the form, how a goal is measured needs to be defined. There are many ways to measure something—time, good/bad, measurement scales (inches, meters), weight, etc. A quick tool to gather data is the tally sheet or histogram. For example, Castle Remodeling's customers complained the time from initial phone contact to receiving a quote was too long. Castle Remodeling used a simple tally sheet/histogram to gather data. This initial use of the tally sheet/histogram helped Castle Remodeling confirm that quotations usually took longer than four days to get to the customer. This data is used to establish current performance and the improvement goal.

<table>
<tr><th>Customer Wait Time (Days)</th><th>Individual Counts</th><th>Total Count</th></tr>
<tr><td>0 - 2</td><td>| | |</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 - 4</td><td>| | | | |</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>5 - 6</td><td>| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>7 - 8</td><td>| | | | | |</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>8 -9</td><td>| | | | | | |</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>10 or more</td><td>|</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 5: Tally sheet/histogram example.

In the example above, most customers waited five or more days for a quote. Based on this data, Castle Remodeling can establish a goal to reduce customer response time to four days or less. This would be a great goal, but as discussed, what do the customers expect? For Castle Remodeling, after involving its customers it identified that two days or less was desired with many handyman and painting/staining customers wanting a faster response. A tally sheet/histogram is a quick tool used to gather data and provide a visual representation of the data gathered. It shows how often an event occurs—in this example each hash mark is one occurrence.

This is a good time to touch on Juran's Pareto principle, which simply stated is 80 percent of the problems or issues result from 20 percent of the causes. Juran also stated "the vital few and the trivial many." This can be applied many ways, two include:

- Your top 20 percent customers account for 80 percent of your revenue.
- 80 percent of defects or complaints come from 20 percent of the potential causes.

Based on a review of their approach, Castle Remodeling found that most delays were related to having only one person provide all of the quotes. This is the focus of its improvement activity—to provide quotes faster. Continuing through the processes in this guide, Castle Remodeling's efforts will be discussed to show how it established its goal and progressed on its improvement journey.

Now that customers have been involved, information is available to act on. The next chapter, "The Plan," will discuss this information, the effort needed, who should be involved, and how to proceed to make improvements. Working to capitalize on these opportunities (the information gained by involving customers) can improve customer satisfaction and retention, employee morale, and result in top-line (revenue) and bottom-line (profit) improvement. The great part is the information is right there for the taking. Just a little effort can result in information we can use each and every moment to make small, incremental, and continual improvements!

The table below outlines where Services for You and Castle Remodeling are after focusing on the customer and gathering some data and their specific goal.

Focus Area	Activity	Services for You	Castle Remodeling
Customer	Things Considered	• Who are the customers? • What products or services do they buy? • What do they like? • What is frustrating them?	• Who are the customers? • What products or services do they buy? • What is frustrating them? • Why do they or don't they return?
	Action Taken	• Reviewed customer records for past three years to group by product and service provided, purchase frequency, and amount. • Performed customer survey with product and service customers that were in top 85 percent of revenue or registered a complaint.	• Talked with customers from past year and current/potential customers.

	Knowledge Gained	• Identified three areas of customer concern:
		  • Purchase follow-up is difficult because a confirmation number is not supplied – primarily impacts Internet customers.
		  • Two customers want to form a service alliance to reduce supply and equipment fees.
		  • One customer is no longer in business.
			• Identified biggest issues is with the time it takes a customer to get a quote from the time they call until the quote is received – taking two or more days.
			• Handyman and painting/staining customers were most frustrated about this.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Things Considered	• What impacts most customers? • How can information be gained on customer status (in business or not, growing or not, etc.)? • Is a project needed to help the two customers form a supply and equipment alliance?	• Who currently provides quotes and why? • Can a standard price list be made for handyman and painting/staining services? • What needs to happen (training, pricing research, etc.) to improve quotation response time? • Would improving response time for handyman and painting/staining services negatively impact quotations for remodeling or new additions?
	Action Taken	• Measured how often customer contact is made for follow-up questions after purchase order is placed. • Measured how much time is spent determining the specific purchase order in question, etc. • Determined most issues were related to Internet purchase orders. • Established S.M.A.R.T. goal related to providing Internet purchase orders with a confirmation number within three weeks.	• Measured quotation time for all activities for two weeks; established measures for phone to on-site time, on-site time, and on-site to quotation provided. Found time to be in excess of two working days for simple quotations. • Established S.M.A.R.T. goal to provide phone and on-site quotations for handyman and/or painting/staining services.
	Knowledge Gained	• All customer types (Internet, phone, face-to-face) are frustrated that no confirmation number is provided to indicate that the order was received. • Impact is primarily with Internet purchase orders and customers.	• Determined that improving quotation skills and response time could help capture 10 percent more business (from customers who did not wait for quote). • Improving handyman and painting/staining quotation time will also help improve quotation time for remodeling and new additions because resources are more readily available to do those quotes.

Figure 6: Focus on the customer data.

Chapter 3 – The Plan

A key to successful change is the use of a powerful change leader! Be wary of appointing anyone as a change leader or always using a top-down approach—it is better to establish the environment and empower than to have someone lead an effort because they are a leader. Look at your organization—who are the informal leaders? These people get things done and others follow; they may not be a leader, supervisor, manager, etc. Are any passionate about the desire to improve and reach the goal? The change leader assessment form in chapter 9 can be used as guidance in finding and empowering the right change leader. Remember, if possible, find and use a change leader who is passionate, respected, and followed by others—not just those who have leadership or managerial duties.

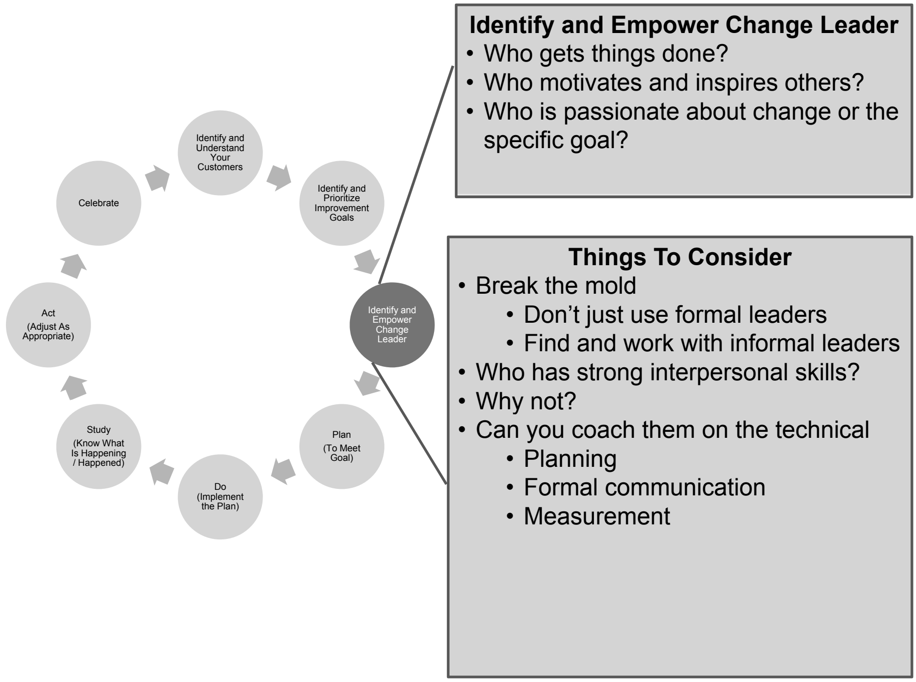


Figure 7: Selecting the change leader.

OK, a change leader has been identified, now it is time to plan. No! Not plan, this is supposed to be simple and quick! The good news is that "The Plan" can be simple or elaborate—it is up to you and, to some extent, the size of the effort and desired results.

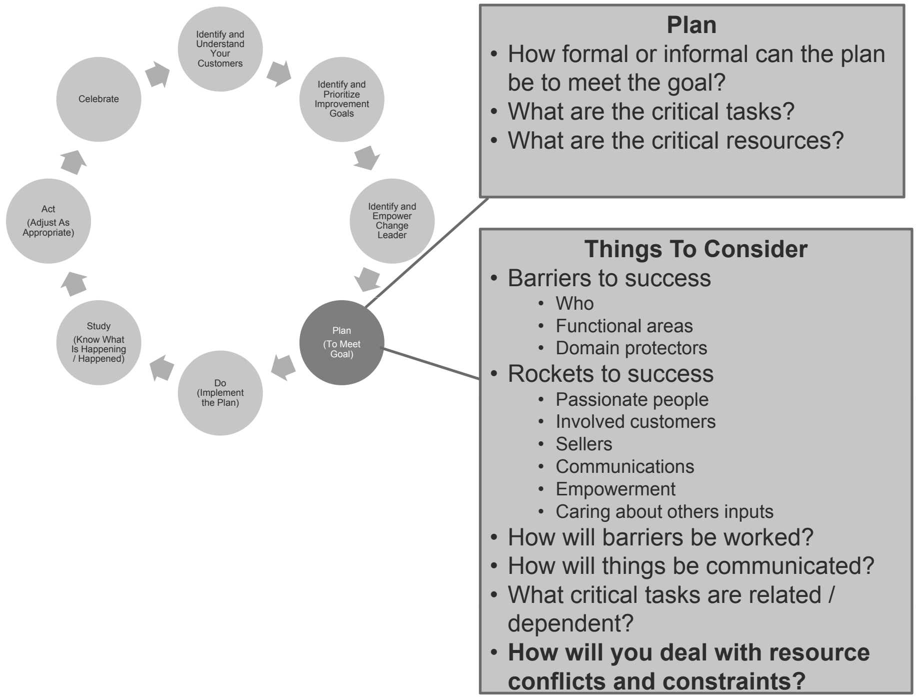


Figure 8: Laying out a plan can help implementation go faster and smoother!

If there is need for a big change, "The Plan" should be more detailed. Some important aspects to make "The Plan" work to achieve the desired positive results include:

- Clearly understanding the goal (i.e., the desired results).
- Being realistic about the effort needed.
- Finding and using a powerful and committed change leader.
- Documenting "The Plan" (this can be simple or elaborate).
- Communicating "The Plan."
- Piloting "The Plan" and changes, if possible, on a smaller scale to ensure the results are achieved before full implementation.

"The Plan" helps identify the tasks, resources, and interactions necessary to be successful when trying to understand what customers want and why they want it. "How do you eat an elephant, one bite at a time"[1] really does apply here! Planning can be a quick in the head plan or an elaborate project file with tasking, resources, timing, dependencies, etc., with the focus on "The Plan."

1. Bill Hogan, Llumina Press, ISBN: 1-59526-204-0.

Documenting "The Plan" will help keep focus. "The Plan" should include, as necessary:

- The goal (keep focus and prevent adding to the goal)
- The boundaries (authority, budget, etc.)
- Critical tasks (what must happen)
- The resources (who is involved)
- The timeline (when must critical tasks and the overall effort be completed)
- Who is responsible (accountability)
- Other items deemed necessary by the change leader, for example, meetings and frequency

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Project Name:
Order Confirmation Number</td><td colspan="3">Project Sponsor:
Sales Director</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">CHANGE LEADER: Jane Jones, Sales Representative</td><td colspan="2">Start Date:
January 15, 2010</td><td>End Date:
February 21, 2010</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Top-Level Goal Statement:
Add an order confirmation number to the online ordering process/tool so customers can track their orders and know that it was received.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overall Budget: $2,000.00</td><td>Projected Hours: 40</td><td colspan="4">Projects Materials:
• Internet order program source code
• Software programmer
• Code test environment</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">General Boundaries: Online order system only</td></tr>
<tr><td>Projected Resources</td><td>People:
• CHANGE LEADER
• Software programmer
• 2 testers</td><td colspan="2">Material:
• None</td><td colspan="2">Equipment:
• Computers
• Software
• Internet Connection</td></tr>
<tr><th>Critical Task</th><th>Responsible</th><th>Dependency</th><th>Plan Date</th><th>Outlook Date</th><th>Actual Date</th></tr>
<tr><td>1) Develop/purchase sequential number generator with linkage to order number.</td><td>Programmer</td><td>None</td><td>1/20</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2) Test code/program to ensure it works as needed.</td><td>Programmer</td><td>Item 1</td><td>1/28</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>3) Review look and feel prior to deployment.</td><td>Sales team/
Select Customers</td><td>Items 1 and 2</td><td>2/8</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>4) Develop/implement communication plan.</td><td>CHANGE LEADER</td><td>None</td><td>1/16</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Figure 9: Services for You used the easy planning tool.

Now it is time to implement "The Plan." Some minor boundaries and communications expectations may be necessary to ensure proper execution. These boundaries may be related to expenditures, communications (status), how to get others involved (i.e., making sure resource conflicts are discussed and worked), etc. The purpose is to ensure empowerment, not strangle, stifle, or punish.

The change leader must be the focal point for the effort. If you, as the empowering leader, have questions or concerns, you should discuss these with the change leader one-on-one in private. Don't undermine the effort in public; be cautious to drive a positive environment. Be encouraging, provide support and guidance, and help drive the effort to success. If we fail here, we not only fail this effort, we negatively impact future efforts too.

Communicate "The Plan" to ensure those involved or potentially impacted by the goal and change are aware of what is occurring and why. The communication plan could be a quick stand-up meeting to discuss what is going to be done and why or a detailed written plan like the example. It all depends on the goal and anticipated effort and impact. Usually the change leader communicates, with support from the empowering leadership. Make this as simple as possible, make it effective, and make it flexible.

Castle Remodeling's plan is a simple bullet list:

- Goal: To provide on-site real-time quotes for painting/staining jobs within three weeks of project start.
- Change leader: Jane Doe
- The improvement team includes: John (painter), Agop (ordering/supply lead), and Sonya (Internet guru).
- All options are on the table, so budget needs will be determined as options are evaluated.
- We will communicate through face-to-face discussions, once a week, for 15 minutes each meeting until the goal is achieved.

Some critical items to achieve our goal include:

- Train estimators.
- Provide paint/stain pricing sheet for (1) type of paint/stain, (2) need for stripping/preparation/primer requirements, and (3) square footage.
- Consider a tiered pricing scheme for repeat customers.
- Provide electronic printing capabilities to give customers a real-time cost breakdown.

Finding and empowering a passionate change leader and developing a plan that supports successful goal accomplishment are important steps in the improvement process. The change leader is the face of the effort and is responsible to facilitate the activity and drive success. “The Plan” is the improvement effort’s foundation tying to the goal and the goal’s measurement of success. It can be revised when implementing during “The Do” phase. “The Plan” should be simple, quick, and appropriate for the goal; it is used to communicate what is being done and why.

Services for You and Castle Remodeling went through these processes in this chapter and identified change leaders and plans. Below is a quick summary of their activities.

Focus Area	Activity	Services for You	Castle Remodeling
Change Leader	Things Considered	• Who is passionate about change in general? • Who has raised concerns in this area before and can lead others? • Who are the people who get things done while involving others? • Who can “rally the troops” to gain acceptance and participation?	• Who are the technical/cost experts? • Could they facilitate change or will they be barriers? • Who would understand why we want to make this change? • Who can make things happen quickly?
	Action Taken	• Talked openly about the opportunity with all personnel. • Performed a change leader assessment on those who expressed interest in changing. • Identified two candidates to be the change leader.	• Talked with a limited list of potential change leaders due to sensitivity of cost/profit data. • Selected a change leader who understands handyman and painting/staining work since remodeling and new addition information can be improved by completing the other quote areas.
	Knowledge Gained	• Ensure the change leaders selected is not a “lone wolf”—a person who gets things done, but on their own. • It is important to solicit input from all who could be impacted by the change of who leads the effort. • Sometimes personality outweighs ability—the right personality can be better while mentoring in specifics (like conducting an effective meeting) than someone who is technically capable.	• Those likely to benefit from the change are not always supportive. • Some detailed information is sensitive and not all team members need access to it.
Plan	Things Considered	• What is the goal? • Who owns the online purchase system? • Is the goal realistic and attainable? • How will this help us?	• How can we print quotes in the field? • What can be done over the phone? • What tools and equipment (i.e., types of computers, programs, etc.) are needed to provide the quotes in the field? • What level of expertise is needed to provide a quote? • What interpersonal skills/“face of the company” do we want? • How much detail should be provided in the quote? • Do we need to train personnel providing quotes?

Focus Area (cont.)	Activity	Services for You	Castle Remodeling
	Action Taken	• Had a project kick-off meeting to discuss goal and identify (brainstorm) critical tasks. • Documented meeting results and leveraged to become "The Plan"—one page total length.	• Discussed project with key administrative and trades personnel. • Developed and documented plan.
	Knowledge Gained	• Employees not associated with the purchase order system or Internet provided ideas on what to include in this change. • Ideas were generated and captured on improvements for the whole purchase order system/process. • "The Plan" was flexible and helped us track progress.	• Realized that only few people had the knowledge to provide quotes with the current process. This could be a bottleneck or a problem if they leave the company or are unavailable. • Determined other processes had similar issues/concerns; captured for future improvements. • Many services provided as "handyman" could be quoted at a base rate of dollars per hour or by job type (weeding, tree pruning, trash removal, etc.).
Communications	Things Considered	• Who needs to receive the communication? • What needs to be communicated? • What type of communication (face-to-face, e-mail, etc.) should be used? • How often should there be communication?	• Who needs to receive the communication? • What needs to be communicated? • What type of communication (face-to-face, e-mail, etc.) should be used? • How often should there be communication?
	Action Taken	• Held a kick-off meeting with representatives from across the organization. • Held a review meeting to assess "The Plan" before it was "finalized."	• Talked with key players • Sent memo to all personnel and requested input from them.
	Knowledge Gained	• Personnel wanted regular status on the project. • Key customers wanted input on the project status. • Multiple types of communication (verbal, written) were desired. • Communication should have key points and then details, so people could get an overview and details as desired/needed.	• Stand-up meetings were preferred to keep time down. • All personnel should have been included on a general communication about the project.

Figure 10: Company activity summaries.

Chapter 4 – The Do

Using the knowledge gained from understanding the customer, a problem was identified and an improvement goal established. A passionate change leader was identified who facilitated the development and documentation of "The Plan." Implementation of "The Plan" is "The Do." This phase is nothing more than ensuring the tasks necessary to execute "The Plan" to meet the goal and improve for our customers. The foundation of understanding, goal setting, and planning supports and identifies the path of current and future performance and how to get there.

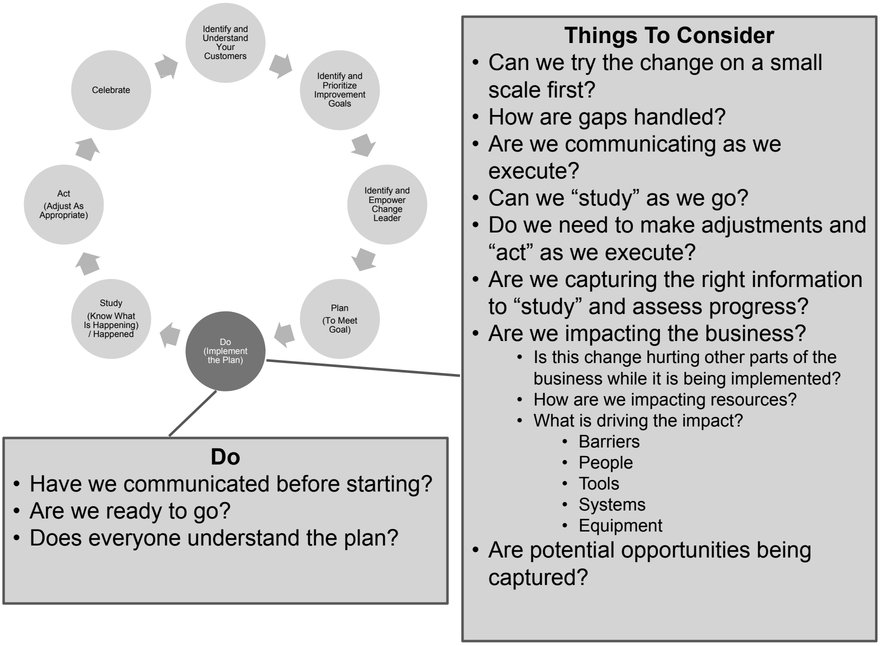
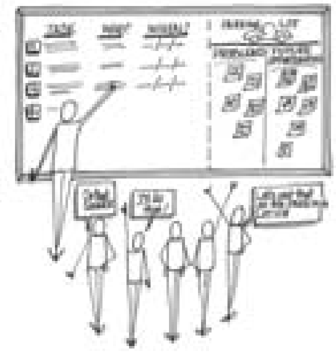


Figure 11: The Do: Where implementation happens!

"The Plan" can be adjusted, if necessary, during "The Do." Using "The Plan," our change leader is off facilitating the tasks necessary—from simple to elaborate; whatever is needed to meet the goal. Sounds simple and, for the most part, it is. Normally "The Do" takes hours to a few weeks—when sticking with the several small incremental improvements are better than one large change. Anything longer than a few weeks might be too big to tackle without more experience or tools. However, larger and longer goals can usually be broken down in smaller goals.

While executing "The Do," it is necessary to keep focused on the goal and performance. Be careful not to add new requirements (i.e., scope creep) unless they are absolutely necessary to reach the goal (i.e., tasks necessary that might have been overlooked during "The Plan" preparation). It is easy to overdo and the role of the change leader ensures the established course is followed. Keep this implementation as simple and quick as possible.



Also, during "The Do," communicate with those involved, sponsors (usually leadership), and others who may be affected. Communications can be through any media (face-to-face, e-mail, etc.) as deemed appropriate for the goal and organization. Usually this communication involves identification and discussion of progress, successes, barriers, and help needed. Here the change leader keeps people informed and gets help when necessary.

As "The Do" is performed (i.e., executing "The Plan"), look for items that can be improved in the future. Capture these items, but only add to the existing plan if it is something overlooked or is critical to success. ***Remember the elephant!*** Note things as "must do" or "like to do" so decisions can be made now and in the future about these additional opportunities.

Services for You and Castle Remodeling experienced a lot during "The Do"; some key items are noted in the table below.

Focus Area	Activity	Services for You	Castle Remodeling
DO	Things Considered	• Are the right people involved? • Ensure you check time estimates with those involved. • Check personnel availability.	• How should we track tasks to be done? • How do we keep meetings on track – keep from becoming "gripe" sessions? • Who should be involved and when?
	Action Taken	• Used a dry erase board to track critical tasks. • Held daily tag-ups (10 minutes) and weekly meetings (30-60 minutes). • Identified activities in "The Plan" that could be done in parallel, though originally thought to be dependent on each other.	• Print out plan and "schedule" – cross off tasks as complete. • Held regular discussions on progress, issues, etc.
	Knowledge Gained	• Other critical tasks come up; when they do it is necessary to be flexible but critical to not lose momentum or focus. • Problems do arise. Be prepared for the unexpected (at least know that things will happen). • Solutions come from unexpected sources – non-technical personnel, customers, peers, and family. • Have personnel not involved with project part of status meetings to help ensure items are not overlooked.	• Information on what was being done and why was not effectively communicated to all employees. • Some people held back information because they were afraid to let go.

Figure 12: Company's "Do" activities.

Keep things simple, clear, and engaging! **Involve the right people/functions within the organization. Communicate how we are doing. Let others know if we need help to achieve our goal.**

Chapter 5 – The Study

“The Study” is a fancy way of saying “Are we succeeding?” Apply “The Study” step during and after “The Do.” Why? Because it is important to know how things are going as they are being implemented to adjust if necessary. And, it is important to know how it went when the project is done. In other words: How are things going during “The Do” and when finished were the expected results achieved?

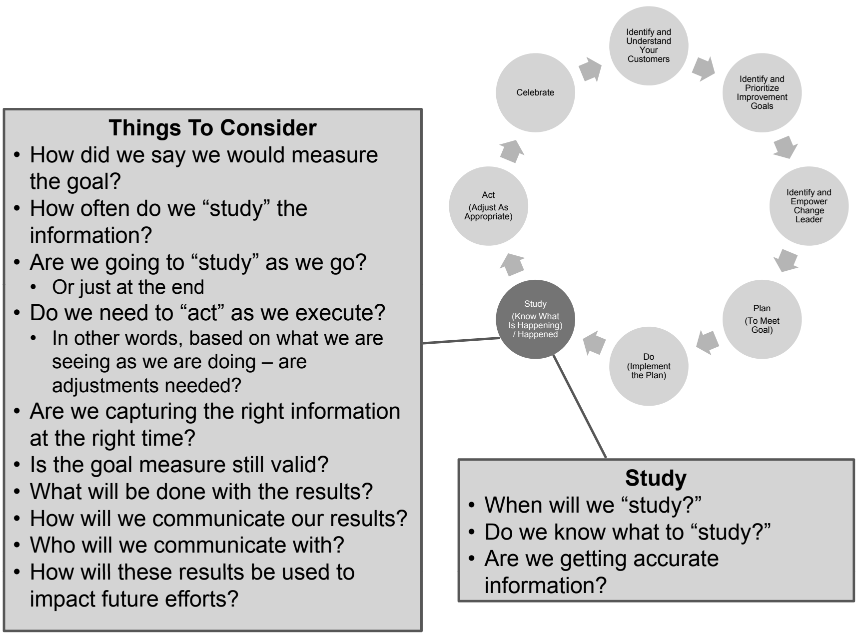


Figure 13: The Study: Measuring progress to be successful!

This is where the measurement part of the S.M.A.R.T. goal is used. If the measurement is to reduce the time it takes to provide a service, then the measure taken prior to the improvement project is studied during the project. And, of course, since we had a final goal to improve time by a specific percentage or number of hours (like Castle Remodeling), then at the end of the effort it can be determined if the goal was met.

First, how are things studied during “The Do?” Assess what actions/tasks have been performed, should they impact the goal at this time. If yes, then measure against the goal. Are things improving? If not, what adjustments (“The Act”) to “The Plan” need to be made and executed in “The Do?” Basically, as “The Do” is being performed, the change leader and team should be reviewing and discussing:

- How are things going?

- Is the measurement improving as desired?
- What problems are being experienced? How can they be resolved?
- Is the goal going to be met? If not, why? What can be done to ensure the goal is met?
- What other opportunities have we identified for future change?

Depending on our relationship with our customers, their feedback might be obtained during "The Do," to see if they perceive improvement. This is not required and depending on the effort involved might not be possible during "The Do."

Second, when "The Do" is complete, study the results. Determine if the goal was met. Remember, goals are not always met—as they should stretch the organization—but was there improvement or did things stay stagnant? If the goal was not met, investigate to understand why. Usually at this point, because the effort is done, it is possible to check with customers to get their input and feedback. Did we improve in their opinion? Are we meeting their expectations? How and what can be better?

Ask these questions, during and after the effort, and be ready to act. By studying progress and the end result, actions and corrective actions—if needed—can be outlined and implemented.

Both Services for You and Castle Remodeling applied "The Study" during and after "The Do." Here is some of what was experienced.

Focus Area	Activity	Services for You	Castle Remodeling
STUDY	Things Considered	• How can this be measured during "The Do?" • What exactly will be measured? • Why do we want to measure during "The Do?"	• What is the goal measure? • Should there be other short-term measures while performing "The Do?" • What information is needed to ensure progress?
	Action Taken	• Reviewed Internet orders and customer contact over past several years. • Established an average time to provide answers to customer post order questions. • Established process to capture time to respond to customer inquiries for orders places. • Had to adjust S.M.A.R.T. goal measure to add this information.	• Determined average quote time by type (handyman, paint/stain, remodel, addition). • Added measures for project-specific items like training needed versus completed. • Piloted (handyman quote activity changes implemented first) to assess impact of changes.
	Knowledge Gained	• Goal measures may need to be revised, changed, or added to ensure proper information is assessed.	• It may be appropriate to add measures related to the project, in addition to goal measures. • End of project measures were easier to capture.

Figure 14: Company's "Study" activities.

Chapter 6 – The Act

As noted in the prior chapter, periodic checks (“The Study”) are performed during “The Do.” Additionally, the results are studied when a project is finished to determine if the goal was or was not met. There are three phases when “The Act” is usually encountered: during “The Do,” at project completion when the goal is met, and at the end if the goal is not met.

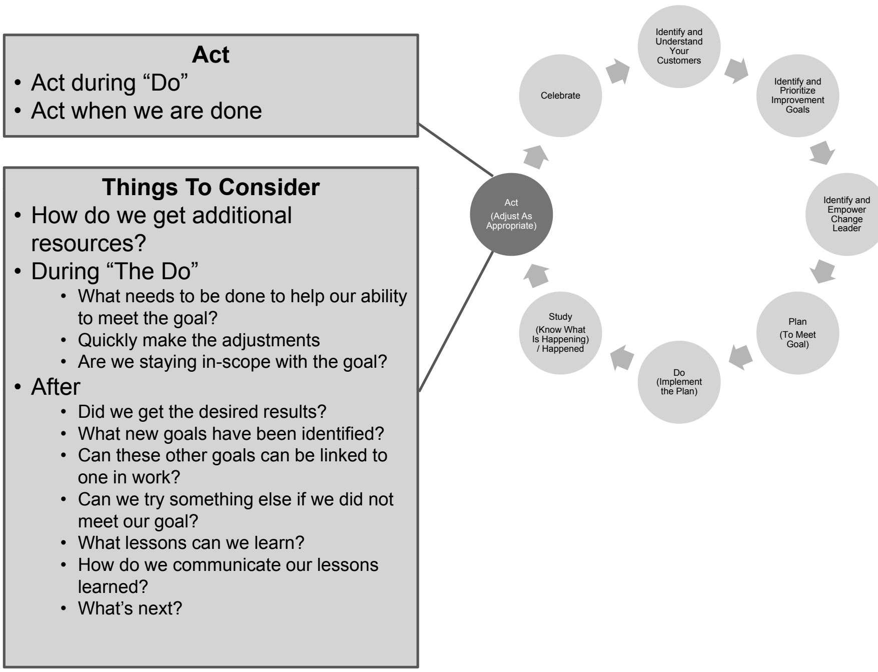
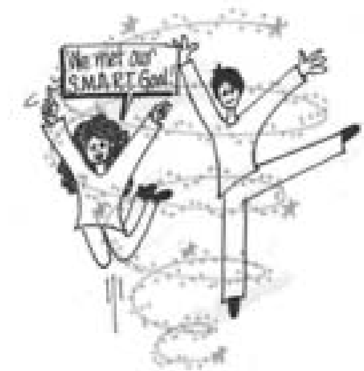


Figure 15: The Act: Making adjustments based on results!

When “The Study” is done during “The Do,” it is to see progress toward the goal and to determine if any corrections are needed. Usually, when “The Act” is done during the effort, it is to adjust progress or adapt to unexpected changes. For example, if a task is behind plan, then “The Act” might be to add another person to the task to get it done. “The Act” is done to better the chances of meeting the goal while executing. Recognize that not all things are within the project scope and all issues encountered cannot be overcome. Based on the effort and the information gained during “The Study,” while the improvement effort is being worked, there may be a decision to abandon the improvement effort. This could be a total abandonment or a decision to restart based on the new information. Remember the primary reason for “The Act” during “The Do” is to better the chance of success, not solve new unrelated problems.

The next set of actions occurs when the effort is completed. "The Act" here is to simply celebrate and recognize the success! This is important because it reinforces the commitment to improvement, the process, and the people involved. Celebration does not need to be elaborate, but should be genuine and appropriate to the efforts performed. Additionally, "The Act" here includes deciding on the next goal—be it related to the one just completed or something entirely new. Then the whole process—identifying a goal, identifying our customers related to that goal, their needs/expectations, etc.—is repeated.

Being realistic, not all goals are met. As discussed earlier, setting S.M.A.R.T. goals that are focused on small incremental improvement betters the chance to succeed. But sometimes the best laid plans and goals are not successful. If the goal was not met, then perform "The Study" after completion and review "The Plan" and results to determine why the goal was not met. Now "The Act" is done to ensure:



- Learning and knowledge are gained from the experience.
- A recommitment to the process, recognition of the efforts, and a celebration for doing the best effort possible is done.
- The next goal is identified.

Using what was learned from this effort and others will improve chances of success! It is important to understand why the effort was not successful and to communicate these lessons. This will help to avoid repeating the issues that led to being unsuccessful. It is also appropriate to recognize these people who tried and the effort they did to reinforce the commitment to improving.

Below is a quick summary of Services for You and Castle Remodeling's application of "The Act."

Focus Area	Activity	Services for You	Castle Remodeling
ACT	Things Considered	• What is being studied? • How are we progressing to goal achievement? • What problems have come up during "The Do?" • What actions can be taken to improve the chance to succeed? • Should we involve the customer at this point?	• Was goal properly stated? Seems too difficult to achieve when looking at all quotes/ estimates provided. • What information/data did we have available versus need to get?
	Action Taken	• Monitored "The Plan" and "The Do" using "The Study" principles. • Captured problems and potential problems during stand-up meetings. • Developed and implemented quick fix actions for problems, like purchased new Internet website generation software. • Established interim measures related to the project. • Had technical experts review problems and provide/ implement solutions on a same-day basis.	• Established standard pricing for many handyman services and painting/staining work. • Developed a quick training (30 minutes) and guide (two pages) to allow for phone estimates for handyman services and improvement. • Piloted (handyman quote activity changes implemented first) to assess impact of changes. • Clarified goal to focus on handyman and painting/staining services (~75% of quotes/ estimates provided weekly).
	Knowledge Gained	• Many actions were related to improving communication. • Most problems or issues that came up had simple solutions. • Keeping a focus on simplicity and immediate solutions helped keep the project on schedule.	• Most quotes/estimates were for handyman and painting/staining services. • Tally sheets/histograms are easy to generate and use. • A tally sheet/histogram provides a quick visual representation of a measure or other data.

Figure 16: Company's "Act" application.

Chapter 7 – Now What?

First, as noted, celebrate! If the effort succeeded in meeting or exceeding the goal, then ensure that it is recognized as an accomplishment. If it was not successful, there is still a need for some celebration—celebrate that something new was tried, that lessons were learned, and that the journey will continue.

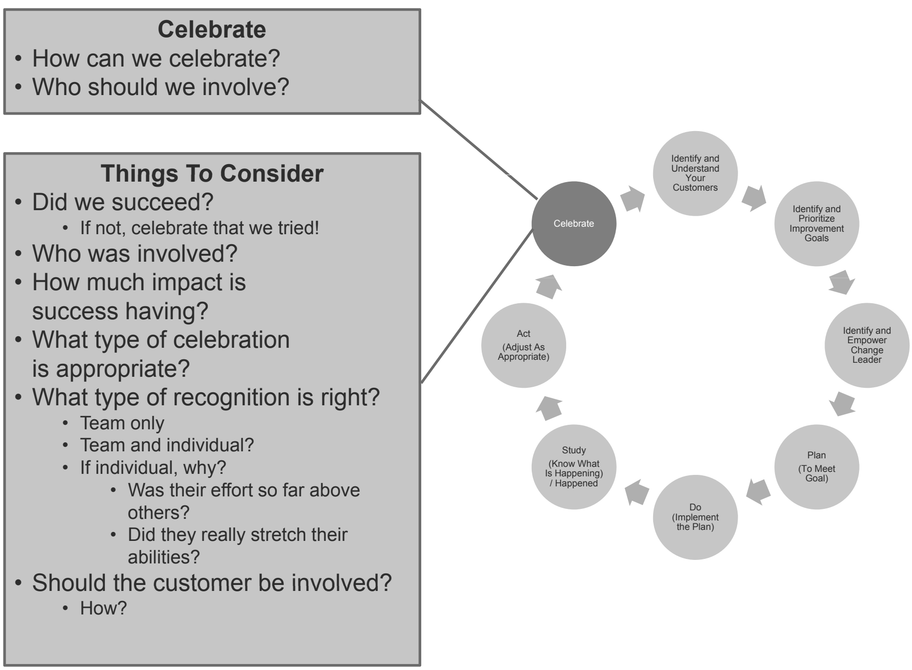


Figure 17: Celebrations reinforce the commitment to change!

Now, look at other opportunities. Assess them for priority and impact. Establish a new goal, find your change leader, and move through the process again.

What if you want to learn more? Where can you go? Are there other things that can be done to improve the chance of success? How should a larger goal or change be approached?

Although there are several organizations that have a focus on change and improvement, ASQ has been a champion for quality and improvement for decades. The Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) is another organization focused on customer-focused improvement. Listed below are some resources available from ASQ, SME, and elsewhere. These resources can be used to gain additional knowledge, identify new tools (beyond the forms and information provided here) for use, and are just good resources for all on the improvement journey!

ASQ's resources include:

- The website (www.asq.org)
- Publications (books, papers, periodicals, etc.)
- ASQ Knowledge Center (http://www.asq.org/knowledge-center/)
- Training (online, traditional, and on-site)
- Certifications – Ways to gain and acknowledge mastering of a specific body of knowledge
- Tools – More ways to make an impact than presented here
- Conferences – Organized events focused on different business sectors
- Forums and Divisions – Members from around the world with a focus on specific topics or industries
- Sections – Local members who get together to discuss quality and improvement

SME (www.sme.org) also has many resources available; but perhaps most important to small businesses, nonprofit, and government organizations is its lean resources. Lean is the identification and elimination of waste from the customer's perspective. Two other good websites include Free Quality (www.freequality.org), which has tools and information provided in useful formats like pdf and Microsoft Excel® files, and iSixSigma (www.isixsigma.com), which also has overviews of tools, methods, and others. Both of these websites are supported by user input, so the materials vary in skill level from beginner to advanced. Just be a little cautious to ensure that the information does not become overpowering without some background on how and when to use the information and tools.

There are many tools available on the websites mentioned that can be easily reviewed and applied to improve the success and applications of the principles and tools presented in this book. Some suggested items, to expand beyond this guide, include the 5-Whys, Pareto charts, and the "fishbone" (or cause and effect) diagram. These tools can expand the knowledge from the tally sheet/histogram and other tools in this book to help the improvement activity better identify problems to address.

Additionally, a few of my favorite books that can be the next step include:

- *The Quality Tool Box*, ASQ Quality Press, by Nancy Tague. This book provides many common quality and improvement tools and methods, identifies when to use them, and—more important—how to use them. An excellent resource.
- *5S for Service Organizations and Offices: A Lean Look at Improvements*, ASQ Quality Press, by Debashis Sarkar. This book provides a quick foundation of lean principles (identify and eliminate waste) with a focus on office and service organizations.
- *The Lean Pocket Guide*, MCS Media, by Donald M. Tapping. This book provides the principles and tools of lean in a clear and usable manner.
- *Six Sigma Simplified*, by Jay Arthur, KnowWare International. I found this book, as well as other books and resources, by Jay Arthur, to be straightforward and easy to use. Find more of his books and other materials on his website (www.qimarcos.com).

There are also forums/discussion boards and blogs available related to quality. These include, but are not limited to:

- **http://www.asq.org/communities-networking/communities.html**
- **http://blogs.isixsigma.com/**
- **http://www.isixsigma.com/index.php?option=com_kunena&Itemid=151**
- **http://elsmar.com/**

If you want to know more, ensure the sources are reputable and have a proven record. Connect with ASQ or another organization to continue the quest and grow your knowledge and tool base! And, continue to apply these tactics learned here to other projects.

Chapter 8 – Summary

The principles are rooted in history and have decades of proven success. From understanding the customer's wants, needs, and desires to celebrating success; each step is important to understand and apply. Simple, quick, focused activities can provide improvements that satisfy the customer and align with company/organization goals.

Understand the customer. What they want and when. How they want it. What is it like to be in their positions/shoes? How are they treated? Involve them to outline your improvement journey and use information gained from this involvement to prioritize goals.

Establish S.M.A.R.T. goals that align with customer and organizational needs. Consider small incremental improvement goals to gain success and momentum. Use data—simply gathered when possible—to help establish current performance and the improvement goal (future performance).

Who gets things done and is followed by others? This is your change leader! Find the passionate! Empower the change leader to work with others to facilitate change. Be genuine and sincere; this is not a place to provide lip service! Don't appoint someone because they are a leader or supervisor; ensure they are viewed as a leader by others and they have a passion for the goal. Support the change leader throughout the process and communicate regularly.

Plan for success. Keep it simple and appropriate to the effort and organization! Communicate "The Plan"—what is being done, why, how, who is involved, etc. Identify critical tasks to succeed; remember the resources, tools, equipment, people, and money needed to be successful in achieving the goal. Do what works—dry erase board, handwritten document, computer file (spreadsheet, project plan, etc). Apply the quick and simple rule whenever possible.

Execute "The Plan" in "The Do." Work what can be done in parallel to improve implementation time. Identify and resolve conflicts for time, equipment, and other resources. Communicate! Be prepared for surprises; capture them and fix them as quickly as possible. Keep focused and avoid adding tasks or activities that are not directly supporting achievement of the goal. Have fun!

Execute "The Study" to assess progress during "The Do" and at completion of the effort. Are things going as planned? Gather data and perform measures, if possible, during "The Do" to see if tasks being completed are not providing the desired results. But, ensure that there should be improvement. Project-specific measures are needed to assess progress in addition to goal measures. Implement what makes sense and what will help the improvement project succeed. Work with data and facts in "The Study" to ensure things are on track. At completion, study the results: Was the goal met? If not, why? Performing "The Study" is necessary to assess progress and establish if adjustment is necessary.

Act on information, data, and measures—make adjustments during the improvement project if necessary. Ensure "The Act" is aligned with the goal. Remember "The Act" includes acting on the result—this may be establishing new goals or a new improvement project. "The Act" supports the simple, quick, and incremental improvement approach!

Celebrate! Do something to celebrate and recognize the effort regardless of outcome. If the goal was not met, celebrate—at an appropriate level. The organization tried! Ensure reinforcement to the journey and recommit to try again. When successful, celebrate the success. Recognize individual efforts, but more important, recognize the team effort!

Key factors:

- ***Being willing to change***
- ***Customer understanding and involvement***
- ***Having a passionate change leader***
- ***Establishing S.M.A.R.T. goals***
- ***Planning, at the right level, to be successful***
- ***Doing "The Plan" implementation***
- ***Studying what is happening and what has happened***
- ***Acting on the information studied***
- ***Celebrating the effort***

Have Fun – Keep It Simple!

Small, Quick, Incremental Improvement Is Key!

Chapter 9 – Tools

The tools provided here are for your use. They can be copied and filled out to help you in your journey to understand and improve.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Tool

The S.M.A.R.T. goal form below is used to document goals and ensure that they meet the S.M.A.R.T. criteria of specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic, and timely.

Goal Name: ______________________________

Date: ____________

The goal description should answer questions like: What are you going to do? Why is this important? How will it be done (not a full plan, just top level)? How much do we want to improve (e.g., reduce order processing time by 10 percent from last year's average)?

Goal Description:

____

____

____

____

____

Measurement:
How will this goal be measured? Examples include measures based on time (reductions in processing), waste (elimination of redundant information, waiting, unused data, etc.), and quality (reductions in rework or scrap, improvement of first time acceptance, improvement in customer satisfaction levels, etc.). How often will the goal be measured (event or time based) and for what duration? Remember, once we attain a goal we still want to sustain our gains and may want to improve further.

Measurement Description:	**Measurement Frequency:**
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________

Attainable: List resources, etc., needed to achieve this goal.	**Relevant/Realistic:** List things like why this is important to your organization and customer, what are you doing now to make this happen, etc.
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________
______________________________	______________________________

Estimated, Needed, or Desired Completion Date:

____

Approvals (if needed):

Name: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Signature: ______________________________

Name: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Signature: ______________________________

Name: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Signature: ______________________________

Prioritization Tool

This prioritization tool can be used to help determine what goals to go after first. Fill out the goal name and assign a 1, 3, or 5 value (low to high) for impact on customer satisfaction, likelihood of success, ease of implementation, and return on investment. With a little multiplication, the highest priority goals have the highest value! Customize this form by adding new or changing/deleting existing ranking categories too.

Prioritization Tool

Instruction: List goals in goal column. Then assign a rating 1=low, 3=medium, 5=high for each ranking category (customer satisfaction, success, etc.). Add, change, or delete categories to meet your need. Then add the scores for each goal from left to right and put that number in the Total Score column. Finally, rank the goals from highest (1) to lowest by taking the goals with the highest total as number one (in the event of a tie, determine which is better to implement first by using a category or two you choose).

Goal Name / Description	Impact on Customer Satisfaction	Likelihood of Success	Ease of Implementation	Return on Investment	Total Score (add columns left to right)	Final Ranking (1 through n, highest score is first1)

Change Leader Selection Tool

The change leader assessment/selection tool can help assess who is most likely the best change leader for a specific goal. This tool uses the same approach as the prioritization tool—by ranking the potential change leader's passion for the goal, their ability to influence others, their ability to communicate, and their desire to effect change. The highest potential leaders with the highest rankings have the better chance of leading to success.

Change Leader Selection Tool

Instruction: List potential change leaders for a specific goal in the Name column. Then assign a rating 1=low, 3=medium, 5=high for each ranking category (passion, understanding, etc.). Add, change, or delete categories to meet your need. Then add the scores for each goal from left to right and put that number in the Total Score column. Finally, rank the goals from highest (1) to lowest by taking the goals with the highest total as number one (in the event of a tie, determine which is better to implement first by using a category or two you choose).

Name	**Passion For Change**	**Understanding of Goals**	**Likelihood Others Will Follow and Support**	**Ability to Influence Others**	**Ability to Communicate**	**Total Score** (add columns left to right)	**Final Ranking** (1 through n, highest score is first1)

Buy-In and Barriers Assessment Tool

The buy-in and barriers assessment tool can be used to assess areas, functions, or people and determine where they are on the scale of barrier to buy-in. In other words, are they likely to put up roadblocks or help break them down? Those with higher scores are more likely to help the project succeed.

Buy-In and Barriers Assessment Tool

This tool is used to assess if areas, people, functions, organizations, suppliers, etc., will be supportive, passive resistive, or overtly resistive to the change. Although not with 100-percent certainty, it can help. By understanding potential support and barriers, proactive solutions can be implemented to capitalize on the support and reduce the impact of resistance.

Instruction: List people, functions, organizations, suppliers, etc., in the Identity column. Then assign a rating 1=low, 3=medium, 5=high for each ranking category (threatened, supportive, passively resistant, wait and see, etc.). Add, change, or delete categories to meet your need. Then add the scores for each goal from left to right and put that number in the Total Score column. Finally, rank the scores based on highest being very supportive to lowest being actively resistive to the change. Using this information, solicit the support of the highest ranks and closely work with others to reduce resistance and/or mitigate efforts to undermine the success.

Identity (name, function, organization, customer, supplier, etc.)	**Understands Change**	**Domain Protective**	**Fears Failure**	**Low Trust Level**	**Goes With the Crowd**	**Personality Conflicts**	**Total Score** (add columns left to right)	**Final Ranking** (1 through n, highest score is first1)

Easy Planning Tool

This "easy" planning tool can be used to document the project's goal, change leader, critical tasks, resources, timeline, budget, boundaries, dependencies (i.e., does one task have to be completed before another or are the same resource needed), etc. It can be used as it is presented here or modified. It can stand alone or be used with other forms or tools (e.g., MS Project).

Project Name:	**Project Sponsor:**	
Change Leader:	**Start Date:**	**End Date:**

Top-Level Goal Statement:

Overall Budget:	**Projected Hours:**	**Projects Materials:**

General Boundaries:

Projected Resources	**People:**	**Material:**	**Equipment:**

Critical Task	**Responsible**	**Dependency**	**Plan Date**	**Outlook Date**	**Actual Date**

Communication Planning Tool

The communication planning tool/checklist can be used to help identify who to communicate with, communication methods, and frequencies.

Communications Checklist Instruction: List potential information to communicate (status, problems, task completion, changes, project plan, feedback, etc.) on each row. Determine who needs the information and enter their name, role, or function in the recipient column. Then determine how the information will be communicated and annotate in the method column. Finally, identify the frequency for communication for each item.			
Information to Communicate	**Recipients**	**Method** (e.g., face-to-face, phone, written report, e-mail)	**Frequency of Communication** (e.g., Near-real-time, daily, weekly)

"The Do" Checklist

"The Do" checklist can be used by the change leader as a reminder of key plan activities as a tool to lead to success.

"The Do" Checklist

Instruction: List critical tasks, communication, information/measures, concerns, etc., necessary to perform prior to and during implementation.

Items to consider include: Have we communicated "The Plan," and are necessary resources, tools, software, equipment, etc., available? Have "The Plan," communications, goals, etc., been defined and documented/communicated?

Critical Item Description	Check Prior to or During Implementation (or Both)	Responsible	Check Completed Date	Completed By

"The Study" Checklist

"The Study" checklist can be used to guide what to study, when to study, and how to identify potential actions.

"The Study" Checklist

Instruction: List critical measures, results, issues identified, and opportunities identified. This can include information you know before implementation and information found during implementation. The purpose of this checklist is to identify things to check (during or after the implementation) and things to learn from or capitalize on at completion.

Item Description	What to Assess	When to Assess	Responsible	Check Completed Date	Completed By

The Success Celebration Checklist Tool

This success celebration checklist outlines things to consider when getting ready to celebrate the success of change.

Celebration Checklist

This checklist can be used to help plan for celebration! It can help determine if it should be a team celebration, individual recognition, or both.

Consider the answers to the questions below to help determine the appropriate celebration. You can add questions and celebration ideas as appropriate; these are just a few ideas to get things rolling.

Question	Yes/No	**Question**	Yes/No
Was this a strong team effort?		Were barriers overcome at the team level?	
Were there individuals who went way above and beyond?		Did activities occur on time or ahead of plan?	
Was the goal met or exceeded?			

Team Celebration Ideas	**Individual Recognition Ideas**
Lunch	Certificate of Appreciation
Dinner	Lunch
Certificates of Appreciation	Thank You (in person or at group event)
Time Off	Dinner Certificate
Team Building Activity	Gift Certificate/Card
	Monetary Award

Parking Lot Tool

This parking lot tool can be used to capture items not within the scope of the activity and categorize them for the future.

Opportunity Parking Lot Tool	
As you identify new opportunities, list them in the appropriate area based on a quick assessment of their ease of implementation and impact on customer satisfaction. Items that are easy to implement and have a high impact on customer satisfaction should be addressed first. Then, address items with a high impact on customer satisfaction and are difficult to implement.	
Difficult to Implement and High Improvement in Customer Satisfaction	**Easy to Implement and High Improvement in Customer Satisfaction**
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
Difficult to Implement and Low Improvement in Customer Satisfaction	**Easy to Implement and Low Improvement in Customer Satisfaction**
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____
• ____	• ____

ASQ and the author graciously acknowledge the time, effort, and feedback of our reviewers during the preparation of this book. Without your assistance this book would not exist.

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Tim Hallock – Wisconsin Forward Award (WFA)

Jay Ford – NIATx

Danae Davis – Pearls for Teen Girls

Michelle Mason – ASQ

Although the process for making incremental and fast improvements has been provided in this book, ASQ has created an online community* called *Simple Quality* **(http://community.asq.org/networks/simple_quality),** which can be used as a resource to share ideas, ask questions of the author, network with other users, download the forms from the book, and much more that will help you on your journey. The online community is another powerful tool to gain knowledge and continue the journey!

*ASQ online communities require registration with ASQ to participate. Registration is free.

Quality Improvement Made Simple…and Fast!

Matthew J. Maio

Most of us work in small and mid-sized businesses, nonprofit organizations, and small government organizations. It goes without saying that we each want to deliver the best to our clients and customers. We carry with us a strong belief in the value of what we could be offering, if we just had the money... the time... the right people. Meanwhile, the daily job of just getting things done overwhelms our drive to do things better.

This book is focused on you. The money, time, and people probably won't change significantly soon—but the power of using simple principles and practices to improve customer care, reduce waste, and ultimately strengthen your bottom line are timeless. This book is designed to help ordinary people make extraordinary contributions to their organizations.

Don't wait another day—jump in and get started!

About the Author:

Matthew J. Maio is a quality assurance manager at Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems. He started his quality career as a technician, project engineer, senior engineer, and then principal engineer at Honeywell. He holds bachelor's degrees in business administration and in computer science, both from the College of Santa Fe. He is an ASQ Certified Six Sigma Black Belt, Six Sigma Green Belt, Quality Auditor, Quality Manager, and Software Quality Engineer. He is a Senior member of ASQ, and previously served as a regional director and member of the board of directors. Maio has also received Lean Enterprise recognition from Lean Enterprise Training, and is a member of the International Test and Evaluation Association.

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