



EVEREST™
Customer Focused Quality

customer spotlight

LYNK SOFTWARE, INC.

Six Sigma in Focus

BACKGROUND

Established in France in 1665, Saint-Gobain has been in the United States since 1959. Today, Saint-Gobain operates more than 1,000 consolidated companies in 46 countries, employs over 170,500 people, with annual sales of over \$29 billion.

Saint-Gobain companies lead the world in a number of engineered materials market segments, including advanced ceramics, abrasives, insulation, containers and building materials.

Everest was implemented for the Ceramics division which is a world-class leader in ceramic hot surface igniter technology. Formerly known as Norton Igniter Products, Saint-Gobain igniters are utilized across the globe by major appliance manufacturers and HVAC manufacturers for gas-fired applications.

www.nortonigniters.com

A LEADER'S VISION

Bob Carlson, explained, "As a Black Belt I am approached to lead or participate in many improvement teams in my company.

Since receiving my Six-Sigma training, I have shifted more of my attention from confirming the non-conforming data that the customer finds to discovering patterns or trends in the many data sources we collect."



"Prior to implementing Everest, I would dive right into a project with the usual brainstorming sessions, action items, responsibilities, follow-up meetings, and hopefully some kind of data that demonstrated some form of success. This approach works with the typical problems that appear via customer complaints such as high scrap rates, or out-of-spec material."



SIX SIGMA

A Black Belt's perspective on EVEREST

PROJECT LEADER:

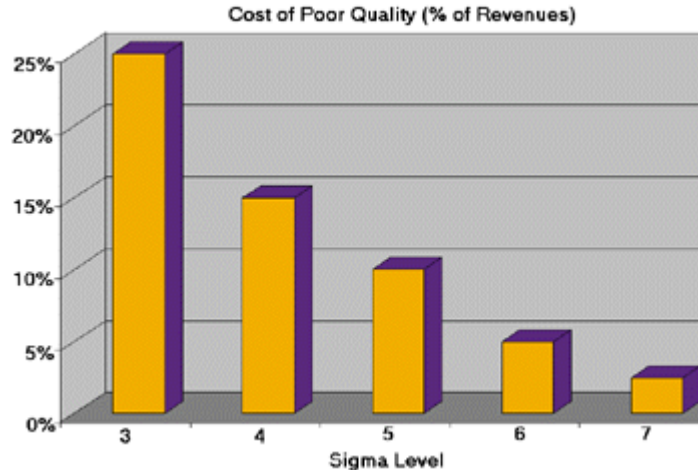
Robert Carlson is a Quality Engineer II and Six Sigma Black Belt. He has worked for Saint-Gobain Ceramics and Plastics (formerly The Norton Company) for over 30 years. Robert's education includes:

BS in Natural Sciences from Worcester State College
MS in Quality Systems Management & Six Sigma Black Belt from National Graduate School
MBA in International Business & Marketing from Clark University

IMPLEMENTATION:

Robert managed the evaluation and successful implementation of Everest at Saint-Gobain Ceramics and Plastics in 2003. Black belts interested in learning more from Bob's experience with Everest may contact him via email at, Robert.H.Carlson@saint-gobain.com

What is Poor Quality Costing Your Organization?



How It Works

Six Sigma is a vision of quality which equates with only 3.4 defects per million opportunities for each product or service transaction. Unlike mindless cost-cutting programs which reduce value and quality, Six Sigma identifies and eliminates costs which provide no value to customers.

For non-Six Sigma companies, these costs are often extremely high.

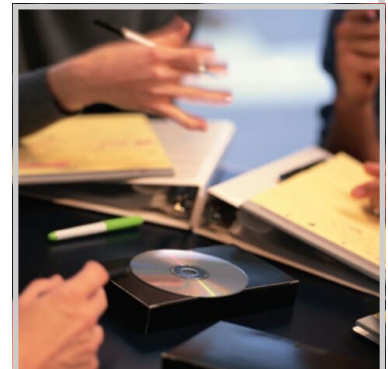
Companies operating at three or four sigma typically spend between 25 and 40 percent of their revenues fixing problems. This is known as the cost of poor quality. Companies operating at Six Sigma typically spend less than 5 percent of their revenues fixing problems (see chart). The dollar cost of this gap can be huge. For example, General Electric estimates that the gap between three or four sigma and Six Sigma was costing them between \$8 billion and \$12 billion each year.

Bob explained, "Successful Black Belts understand that their projects must increase company profits or customer satisfaction with the limited resources available. They further understand the amount of work, employees' time, and company assets that are lost when a company's efforts focus on only solving the current problem or complaint."

A PROACTIVE APPROACH

Bob looks to Everest as a tool to help Saint-Gobain quickly uncover opportunities for improvement with accurate metrics.

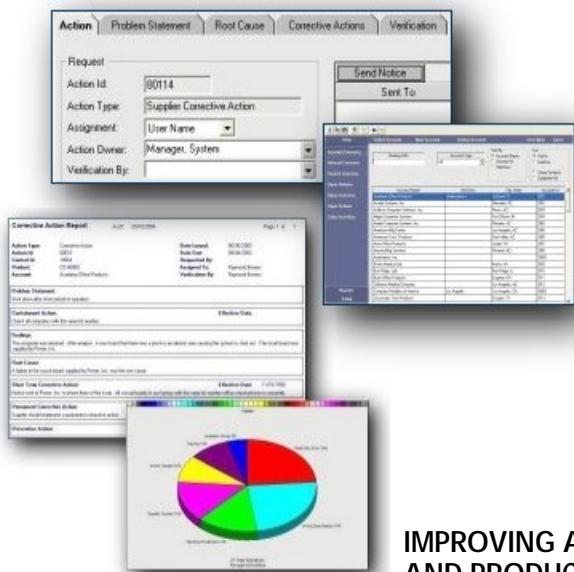
"I propose that when you can throw the balance of your company's efforts into proactive projects instead of reactive responses your customers' satisfaction and your company's profit will increase," Bob stated.



"...Everest software can work as a vital source that alerts the proper people to trends in customer, product, or process data."

Save time, money and resources. . .

CREATING A CONSISTENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



IMPROVING ACCURACY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Supplier Quality Example

“A customer had a problem with a new type of failure mode. During the initial customer/supplier team meeting it was agreed that they needed more information to understand the root cause. The team wanted to review customer complaint data to prove/disprove an assumption that the cause was specifically linked to a supplier in one region within the U.S.”

“Without easily assessable returns data, the investigation took weeks. With Everest, this type of analysis is available in real time with a few clicks.”

REAL TIME DATA

- Time Measures
- Product Measures
- Customer Measures

“This is where Everest software can work as a vital source that alerts the proper people to trends in customer, product, or process data.”

“Black Belts need data that is easy to retrieve and easy to communicate to customers, management, engineering, and improvement teams. Information available in Everest includes time measures that indicate how you react and respond to internal or external customers, product measures that easily report which products are draining the companies resources, and customer measures that help indicate which customers may be in distress.”

A TOOL FOR QUALITY PROFESSIONALS

“As a quality professional, I see Everest software as much more than a simple means for collecting and storing information. It provides a tool for me to access customer, product, and process trends now – in real time. Having this valuable data a few clicks away, I now spend more of my time leading proactive projects.”

“...valuable data a few clicks away.”

For Saint-Gobain, Everest has proven to be much more valuable than just a customer complaint and corrective action tracking system.

Bob concluded, “Using Everest as a tool to investigate and direct my company’s limited assets before they are wasted on corrective actions and complaint handling is one way I can contribute as a Black Belt. It is much more rewarding than explaining to customers why something happened later on.”