

*For people seriously committed to product  
and process improvement*

# Brief

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## The One-Two Punch: Lean & Six Sigma

Henry Ford was able to explain complex issues in understandable, common sense terms. “The longer an article is in the process of manufacture and the more it is moved about, the greater is the ultimate cost,” Ford said. It’s not hard to embrace that concept--every manufacturer wants to reduce production time. Could the one-two punch of lean manufacturing followed by a Six Sigma initiative be the answer?

Dave Hoover, VP of Manufacturing, and Bob Einsig, Quality Manager, think so. They recently completed a five-day course on Six Sigma, presented by Manufacturing Resource Center, the training arm of MANTEC.

“Excellent” was how Einsig described the program. “I have learned how Six Sigma integrated with lean manufacturing can produce significant, lasting results,” adds Einsig, who is eager to put these newly learned tools to work at Die-Tech.

“ We currently use lean manufacturing techniques to create simplified, standardized processes which reduce waste, decrease task time, eliminate rework and non-value added steps. Now we will introduce Six Sigma to identify additional improvement opportunities and address tougher issues which may require corrective action,” explains Einsig.

Six Sigma is often touted as one of the most powerful problem-solving tools for achieving significant quality improvement. It isn’t the latest quality improvement fad, it is a proven technique grounded in principles which will survive as long as there are processes that can be improved.

However its effectiveness depends on how well it is understood and implemented. Einsig demonstrates an in-

depth knowledge of the topic. He says that in Six Sigma terminology, defects constitute any factor that interferes with profitability or meeting the customers’ needs or expectations.

Although Die-Tech quality metrics exceed industry standards, Einsig explains that they not satisfied. “We have always looked for ways to control costs and produce a quality product in a shorter time. We won’t be content until we have zero defects, zero customer complaints, and 100% on time delivery.”

Einsig will use the Six Sigma model to measure the effectiveness of various processes, track trends and find root causes of any non-conformity to specifications. The Six Sigma methodology uses a variety of quantitative techniques that depend upon data and objective analyses of the data. “We will use fact based, data driven statistical tools to identify our greatest quality improvement opportunities,” he adds.

Einsig is confident that by using the one-two punch approach – integrating lean manufacturing with Six Sigma-- he can knock out defects before they occur. “We are taking a proactive rather than reactive approach to manufacturing operations and the result is sure to be improved customer satisfaction.”

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