



The first completely Defense Contract Management Agency trained Lean Six Sigma Black Belt graduates get their class picture taken with James Russell, DCMA deputy director, and their instructors shortly before the end of the course near Fort Lee, Va., March 9. (Photo by Michelle Burcham, DCMA Continuous Process Improvement)

Agency accomplishes Lean Six Sigma milestone

Mark Woodbury | DCMA Public Affairs

The Defense Contract Management Agency's Continuous Process Improvement office reached a Lean Six Sigma milestone with the completion of the first internally trained Black Belt course March 9. The milestone accomplishment was in response to the Office of the Secretary of Defense's ongoing request for Department of Defense agencies to become less dependent on them for LSS training and certification needs.

Chris Knaggs, CPI director and course instructor, said training DCMA employees internally not only meets the OSD request but has additional benefits to the agency.

"While OSD offers similar training, it is on a space-available basis only and conducted on their schedule," he said. "Additionally, it's cheaper to bring students to the Richmond area rather than sending them to the D.C. area where OSD offers their training."

Although the coursework and materials come directly from OSD, and encompasses the industry standard required for LSS certification, Knaggs points out with DCMA providing the training the class can be configured and taught with examples specific to the agency workforce. This allows participants to get a realistic viewpoint of how the training can

influence and shape the agency and the way it does its day-to-day activities.

Knaggs said classes being filled with only DCMA personnel allows for instant Lean Six Sigma and functional networking, while also establishing a mentor relationship with the DCMA Master Black Belts and Black Belts. "These are the people who have the familiarity with DCMA operational tempo and agency needs. This is the type of insight these participants are going to need, and rely on, when they get back to their CMOs."

For participant Carla Perkins, DCMA Lockheed Martin Marietta engineer, the knowledge gained through the course

will help her, and ultimately the agency, support the warfighter better.

“In our technologically advanced, ever-changing world, efficiency is critical for success. Knowing how to define, measure, analyze, improve and control processes is the key to success,” said Perkins.

“Understanding these concepts will undoubtedly help DCMA better support the warfighter by eliminating waste and defects, and by reducing process variation in the processes we oversee.”

Jose Cabrera, DCMA Orlando Engineering and Manufacturing Group chief, said he felt the class was outstanding

and believed huge rewards will be reaped through training DCMA employees to the fullest extent possible in LSS principles.

Paul Jensen, DCMA Huntsville Business Team One chief, said the course reinforced his feeling. “It is always good to step back and re-evaluate. Things change and we need to periodically reevaluate our processes to ensure we keep up with and have adequately adapted to capitalize on those changes.”

Sharlee Labrecque, LSS Black Belt instructor, said she was proud of all the participants and reemphasized their successful completion of the course was no small feat.

“It’s no crib course,” she said. “It’s very challenging material and every one of the students rose to the challenge.”

Class participants ranged from a broad base of work professions – from quality assurance specialists, engineers, contracting specialists, a packing specialist and an aviation senior chief.

Employees interested in LSS training opportunities can call (804) 734-1481. 

The three week course, spread over three months in one week increments per month, began in January and finished in March.

The participants in the course included:

- Jose Cabrera
- Matthew J. Frazier
- James M. Herceg
- Paul R. Jensen
- Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Joseph C. Maurer III
- Lindsay N. Norris
- Carla C. Perkins
- Jason R. Pickart
- Robert L. Puckett III
- Randy J. Quirk
- Thomas L. Seay
- James E. Strother
- Larry Taylor

Did you know?

The Continuous Process Improvement office has created an eTool allowing employees to submit improvement ideas which can be turned into LSS projects and tracked through the CPI office. Click on the eTools link in the banner at the top of the intranet homepage (<https://home.dcma.mil>) to access the eTool.

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