

FIRST AGENCY-EXCLUSIVE LEAN SIX SIGMA COURSE TAUGHT

By Chris Knaggs, Continuous Process Improvement Office Lean Six Sigma Black Belt

The first two Lean Six Sigma green belt classes exclusively taught by Defense Contract Management Agency personnel took place in February. Twenty-five employees from DCMA Fort Worth, Texas, and Amarillo, Texas, locations were among those in the class.

The DCMA trainers for the courses were Master Black Belt James Stamper, along with Black Belts Chris Knaggs, Katherine Beal and Reshma Dhanani.

While other green belt classes have been executed for DCMA, these two classes were designated as green belt waves 1 and 2 for the agency. This is due to new teaching methods and the ability for DCMA to organically train the courses.

Students for the class were from Bell Helicopter Textron led by Commander Marine Col. Keith Danel. Danel provided opening remarks in both locations where he directed his employees to get heavily involved in continuous process improvement.

During the class, students conducted a training simulation, posting process steps on the walls. Using the simulation gave the participants an opportunity to fine-tune the process with an eye toward eliminating waste. Very strict definitions of customer value were taught to instill the lean discipline



Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas/Fort Worth green belts pose for a picture in front of their process map during their recent training. (DCMA photos)

that will be needed when the students conduct their own events.

Several students remarked that many of the inefficiencies intentionally introduced into the simulation were reminiscent of process problems that existed in their daily work. Teresa Ferens noted, “Several DCMA processes that interrelate with Bell Helicopter certainly have areas of rework that might be eliminated or speeded up if we could apply some of these principles.”

The instructors were also very pleased with the progress of the trainees. “Some of the Lean concepts are counterintuitive to the way business normally runs inside transactional systems, but the

students stayed with us all the way,” said Beal, a black belt from DCMA Bell Textron.

Stamper, a master black belt from DCMA Headquarters, also expressed, “The group stayed together and worked well as a team to continuously improve the simulation results and other exercises that were given to the students. As instructors, we also learned some better ways to prepare students for the course and their projects that will benefit the next round of classes.”

Michael Pullen from the Amarillo office summed it up by stating, “The training is a ‘must do’ for all DCMA employees, especially with the emphasis on cutting costs

“The training is a ‘must do’ for all DCMA employees, especially with the emphasis on cutting costs and increasing quality throughout defense acquisition. — Michael Pullen, Defense Contract Management Agency Amarillo”



and increasing quality throughout defense acquisition. It's a tool that can be used in every facet of contract administration."

Graduation from the course is the first step in the process of becoming a certified green belt. All students had to pass an extensive exam and

now must complete a Lean Six Sigma project to be certified. The students brought proposed projects to class. The black belts assisted the trainees in scoping the projects to stay within the boundaries of DCMA work processes and be small enough to be accomplished in a 90-day window.

Mentoring will continue with the green belts until the projects are finished. It is a DCMA expectation that all projects will be completed leading eventually to a green belt certification.

Anyone interested in opportunities for green belt courses should call Kristi Echegaray at (804) 416-9148. 



Defense Contract Management Agency Amarillo green belt students and their instructors pose for a class photo in front of a production V-22 aircraft.



Green belt students perform quality and contracting checks during the training simulation portion of the class.



Green belts students hurry to wrap up their work during the training simulation portion of the class. The simulation gives students an opportunity to fine-tune processes with the goal of eliminating waste.

GREEN BELT TRAINEES FOR THE LEAN SIX SIGMA COURSE

Dallas/Fort Worth

- Dick Broda
- Russ Campbell
- Steve Case
- Rick DePriest
- Ronald Durrant
- Teresa Ferens
- Doug McCombie
- Geoff Pink
- Dan Pleis
- Harold Serrano
- Sam Shaw
- Timothy Silkwood

Amarillo

- Jody Cox
- Stephen Floyd
- Charles G. Foster
- Daniel Grinbergs
- Harry D. Johnston II
- Tom Kubler
- Bryan Lester
- John D. McGuire
- Rob Morriss
- Maj. Dennis Powers
- Michael Pullen
- Doug Shepard
- Greg Williamson