



Unlocking A Six Sigma Mindset in Pursuit Strategy

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If you don't feel that Six Sigma principles apply to Marketing and Sales, then you're staking your future on the assumption that your competitors are equally as apathetic.

The central philosophy behind Six Sigma is that if we can measure how many "defects" in a process (yes ... pursuit execution is a process), we can systematically figure out how to eliminate them and get as close to "zero defects" as possible. The three key elements of quality are, **a) the customer, b) the process and c) the employee.** Those elements should absolutely cause us to, at minimum, have one of those "aha moments". As Marketing and Sales professionals it is incumbent upon us to proactively drive a world-class quality focus into our day-to-day activities that move our respective organizations toward excellence.

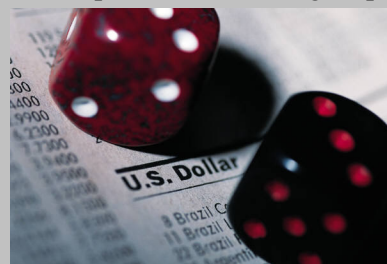
A Six Sigma mindset is especially critical when we are pursuing **major strategic accounts** ... those types of opportunities that don't come along every day. These are the 20% of our customers that account for 80% of our business (Pareto/Iceberg Principle). Driving up win performance by a few percentage points and/or sales/decision cycle time down, on these accounts will make or break a fiscal financial reporting period. Each one of these strategic pursuits is so important that we must be flawless in our pursuit execution. While we can't, and don't want to, micro-manage every aspect of our sales processes and daily activities of our sales team, it is incumbent upon the organization to ensure that we are **covering all the bases on these impactful deals.** If our solution offering truly meets the prospect's needs then we are obligated to our shareholders to make sure that we are doing everything necessary to win ... "no stone left unturned".

With a Six Sigma focus on the three critical quality elements (Customer, Process & Employee), let's paint a picture of what excellence in pursuit strategy and execution should feel like. We:

- ❖ Are working as a **"Trusted Advisor"** with our pursuit's senior-level executive team
- ❖ Understand **vertical-specific, role-specific issues** the pursuit's **individual** executives are facing and how/if our solution addresses their issues

- ❖ **Understand consequences** for the executive if the issue remains unresolved
- ❖ Are clear on budget availability & timing
- ❖ Understand the various roles within the pursuit impacted by these issues we are resolving and how they are **individually** impacted
- ❖ Are actively communicating with each of these influencer roles and **corralling their needed support**
- ❖ Are clear on the competitive and political environment we are selling into
- ❖ Have defined, requested and built a business case to gather internal resources necessary to increase win probability

The cross-functional utilization (Marketing, Sales, Product Development) of a Six Sigma principle called **DMAIC**



(Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) will greatly enhance our ability to ensure that we are giving our organization the greatest probability of winning. Utilization of

DMAIC will ensure our processes are well defined, we're measuring results and continuously analyzing, learning/improving/maturing and controlling the process. It's important that this mindset be present in all aspects of the pursuit strategy and execution ... from account planning, all through the sales cycle and post decision. Regardless, whether we are winning or losing we must use these experiences to gain intelligence and adapt as necessary.

The organization that successfully deploys a cross-functional Six Sigma mindset, especially on large, strategic deals, in their pursuit strategy & execution will win the deals that they are supposed to win.

For more information to see how your organization can tap into vertical-specific, role-specific prospect intelligence and vastly improve your Sales team's ability to relate to, and understand, the executives they interact with visit Sales Builders website at www.salesbuilders.com or call Scott Jones, VP Marketplace Adoption at (770) 497-8572 x26.