
Business Transformation Agency Exhibits at Lean Six Sigma for Defense Symposium

By

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The Lean Six Sigma (LSS) for Defense symposium focused on the bottom line to benefit the DOD. The symposium provided attendees with an overview of LSS methodologies and the benefits attributed to using LSS, such as reducing wasteful spending, better resource allocation, decreasing time in completing vital deliverables, and increasing efficiency. Hosted by the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement, the symposium was held December 8–10.

Assistant Deputy Chief Management Officer Elizabeth McGrath gave a presentation entitled “Changing to Succeed in a New Environment,” which covered key elements of change: Strategy, Process, Information, Culture, and Technology. McGrath focused on the business aspects of the DOD and challenged the group by asking, “What are you trying to improve?”

The use and application of LSS methodologies to the U.S. military and the defense industry has increased exponentially in the last few years. In May, the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef) Gordon England mandated the implementation of LSS practices across DOD.

The symposium addressed key enablers to advance efficiency and effectiveness in DOD business operations by using innovative business transformation approaches; integrating cost cutting acquisition strategies; applying streamlined and reorganization principles; and supporting the concept of committed, leadership-driven ownership.

Business Transformation Agency (BTA) LSS Training Initiative and Success Stories

BTA has sent 95 students for training and has exceeded the DepSecDef’s goal of one percent Black Belts and five percent Green Belts. The challenge is to continue this momentum and complete strategically aligned, high-priority projects, said keynote speaker on deployment of LSS across DOD J.D Sicilia, Director, DOD Continuous Process Improvement and LSS Program Office.

Sicilia addressed the BTA’s LSS training initiative and underscored the importance of focusing on a vision to broaden and accelerate process improvement, drive a consistent approach, leverage replication while enabling autonomy across the enterprise, engage a wide array of processes, and apply appropriate LSS techniques.

LSS methodologies have been an important tool to bring about positive change, said Sicilia. LSS provides a way for us to increase our agility. By removing waste and inefficiencies, we are more responsive. By eliminating our defects, we are increasing our customer satisfaction.

Amid all the speculation about what changes the next Administration will make, it is clear performance will matter, said Sicilia. LSS provides one way to improve our performance to meet our ever-expanding defense demands with fewer resources. As the DOD accelerates application of LSS tools across the DOD enterprise, we expect to see exponential improvement. DOD achieves this through greater strategic alignment

and project selection, consistency of approach and integration, which will provide transparency leading to replication.

In addition, we are codifying our human capital documents, which institutionalize our profession, said Sicilia. These measures go a long way in providing a greater sense of empowerment among our workforce.

Other speakers included representatives using LSS methodologies to implement readiness and enterprise improvement initiatives from the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps.

BTA exhibited at the symposium; engaged attendees in discussion about defense business transformation; and distributed brochures about BTA, Wide Area Workflow, Defense Agencies Initiative, and BTA's Defense Business Systems Acquisition Executive (DBSAE) portfolio of systems.

This audience was intrigued by the positive implications of our agency name, given that much of the conference focused on process improvement, said Julie Blanks. Using business transformation as an opening, much dialogue about the specifics of our transformation processes and their application beyond DOD occurred. Participants wanted to know how they could apply BTA's enablers to their own organizations.

Engaging in discussion with a representative from the Canadian Defense transportation and logistics industry provided for an exchange of ideas and lessons learned, said Enterprise Planning and Investment's Terri Beatty. The participant shared his views on challenges [in] implementing LSS. As we spoke, we came to recognize some of the strengths and challenges in our organizations.

Attendees had the opportunity to review lessons learned and case studies successfully utilizing LSS methodologies to achieve transformation through project completion and to network with senior level professionals from all related military units and civilian providers.