

# THE PIVOT PALETTE

A quarterly publication of PIVOT Management Consultants



Quarter 2 2004

## MISSION

*Be a premier provider of management consulting services to industry in the high technology, manufacturing / design, services, healthcare, education and government fields.*

*Be the best partner a business leader can have to help accelerate the move along the path of continuous quality improvement and quality system enhancement, rethinking and changing the way our client's business is done internally and for the marketplace and industry our client serves.*

*Implement operational improvements across all functions and levels of our client's organization to achieve improved strategic and marketplace position, delivering value added measurable results.*

*Provide a positive, rewarding, collaborative work environment within PIVOT that fosters personal growth, fulfillment and success for our associates, suppliers and clients.*

## VISION

*Together we will. . .*

*Work to fully understand the requirements of our jobs, the requirements of our clients and the systems that support us.*

*Provide error free services, analysis information, education and skills training on time to our clients.*

*Practice ethical, honest and fair behavior in our interactions with clients, associates and suppliers. We will not promise anything we cannot honestly deliver.*

*Inspire trust and respect by our clients, associates and suppliers, through PIVOT's proven commitment to our mutual success.*

*Have fun!*

## ALBERTSON'S

### Kicks Off Six Sigma

Albertson's Inc. has started a major roll-out of a company-wide Six Sigma quality program that will enable them to reduce management layers, increase leadership spans, improve customer focus, and formalize its quality program.

The Six Sigma approach will be used as the foundation for training and implementation activities. Leading the Six Sigma effort for Albertson's will be Jim Gentile, who has been named senior vice president of Six Sigma quality.

"Six Sigma has the potential to move Albertson's to an all new level of productivity and customer service in our industry", says Larry Johnston, Albertson's chairman of the board, CEO and president. "We are excited to be the first food and drug retailer in the world to launch a company-wide Six Sigma effort. Over the next 36 months, we plan to . . . re-engineer our major processes in every function and discipline. The world has witnessed how Six Sigma can transform industrial giants like GE, Allied Signal, 3M and others. We believe it holds the same exciting potential in food and drug retailing."

Albertson's is one of the world's largest food and drug retailers, with annual revenues of approximately \$36 billion. Based in Boise, Idaho, the company employs more than 200,000 employees and operates about 2,300 retail stores across the United States.

#### How You Can Do It!

The interest in Six Sigma has never been higher, and as in the general field of Quality, a wealth of information is now available on the subject. Many excellent books/periodicals emphasize statistical

techniques, the history of Six Sigma, or the problem solving methodology, but they include only a cursory review of the critical managerial deployment issues. Discussions with those who have been through implementation illustrate that much is unknown about Six Sigma deployment. These gaps in understanding Six Sigma deployment methods pose a serious obstacle to any successful Six Sigma program; that is where trusted consultants are valuable. They bring experience from various industries and under various circumstances, transfer knowledge and skills and build on lessons learned at other organizations.

Although books can be very useful in gaining technical knowledge, an organization can gain by leaps and bounds if it hires the right consultant - one that fits in well with the organization culture and is able to facilitate change.

PIVOT consultants are known to help organizations achieve cultural change, encourage employee participation at all levels, conduct training, and work in partnership with the client to deliver bottom line results. We have worked in various industries, from hi-tech to healthcare to distribution and executive recruitment, to help organizations achieve measurable results.

If you would like direct on-site assistance or training by expert Black Belts, contact PIVOT Management Consultants for that help at [www.pivotmc.com](http://www.pivotmc.com)

# IN BRIEF

## SIX SIGMA TRAINING

**R**ecognizing that certification as Six Sigma Black Belt or Green Belt is becoming important, there are not many opportunities for getting this training locally in the Los Angeles region. We are offering public Green Belt and Black Belt on site training one day a week, for 10 weeks and 20 weeks respectively, as most organizations find long class times rather challenging (keeping key employees away from work). Lean and Triz techniques are covered as well. We also offer 3 days of training for Lean/Six Sigma Champions. For details, please call us or visit our website, [www.pivotmc.com](http://www.pivotmc.com). We also realize that implementing six sigma with only black belts or green belts can be difficult. To address this concern we offer training in Six Sigma for the Workforce, a 40-hour program. We may be able to arrange for State financial assistance for training. Give us a call at 877-pivotmc (909-985-9294). See Below.

## SOFTWARE QUALITY?

**W**e've known for some time that ISO 9001:2000 offers software engineering activities a huge potential. A new document, ISO/IEC 90003:2000, Guidelines for Application of ISO 9001:2000 to computer software, covers development, supply, acquisition, operation and maintenance of computer software. ISO/IEC 90003:2000 is not in itself a certification standard but is intended to be a useful guide, to focus an organization on its Quality Management System, whether or not the organization seeks ISO 9001:2000 registration.

## NO. 1 RANK IN QUALITY

**T**he annual Airline Quality Rating has ranked JetBlue the highest quality airline in the industry. This year was the first year JetBlue was large enough to be eligible for the study. The AQR is a weighted average of criteria deemed to be the most important to customers, including on time flights, denied boarding, mishandled luggage and customer complaints, (e.g., discrimination, customer service, in flight problems, fares and refunds). Alaska Airlines and Southwest Airlines were No 2 and 3 respectively.

*QUALITY DIGEST, JUNE 2004*

## PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT!

**B**usinessweek reveals that productivity improvement is the real culprit behind anemic job growth. U.S. businesses have squeezed out productivity gains of nearly 5 percent annually since the end of the recession. Some of this increase in productivity can be attributed to initiatives such as Six Sigma and Lean. These have saved corporations billions of dollars and resulted in much more efficient organizations. In an attempt to retain competitiveness and save costs in wasteful activities, more and more organizations are training their workforce than ever before; some states are even providing grants to help organizations offset their costs of training! Join the increased productivity bandwagon today! We may be able to assist with State funding.

**Upcoming Public Courses:**  
*(customized for on-site offerings)*

Six Sigma Executive Overview .....	6 hours
Lean / Six Sigma Champion .....	24-40 hours
Six Sigma for the Workforce .....	40 hours
Six Sigma Green Belt - one day a week (80 hours) .....	Certification available
Six Sigma Black Belt - one day a week (160 hours) .....	Certification available
Lean Manufacturing - Basic & Advanced available .....	40 hours each
Mistake Proofing .....	24 hours
Setup Reduction .....	32 hours
Business Process Mapping / Responsibility Charting .....	16 hours
Problem Solving Tools (Basic) .....	16 hours
Time Management .....	16 hours
Project Management .....	40 hours
Business Continuity Planning .....	8-40 hours

*Call us about offerings in Spanish.*

If you have any comments/suggestions, please contact:  
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 or write to: PIVOT, P.O. Box 536, Upland, CA 91785-0536  
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EXCUSES FOR NOT GIVING RECOGNITION

**B**ecause you are not a supervisor/manager you don't need to recognize your team members on a regular basis. **WRONG!** Recognizing the people you work *with* or who may work *for* you is critical to creating the sense of team which eventually goes right to the bottom line! Although you may not feel that it is your role, see if any of these apply to you:

***"It's not my job."***

Thinking that giving recognition comes only from the top and that's their responsibility, is just not so! It's the biggest reason why recognition doesn't happen as often as it could or should. Recognition is everyone's job. Are only supervisors to be concerned with basic courtesy?

***"I don't know how."***

This can be a valid concern. Most people never receive any type of recognition training. Then, on the other hand, common sense goes a long way.

***"I don't believe in rewarding people for just doing their job!"***

Rewards should be given for special achievements. But recognition is different. It's simply reinforcement on a personal level that increases the probability that the behavior witnessed will result in people repeating that good behavior.

***"I don't have time."***

Sure, we're all busy. We always have more to do than we have time. But think about it, don't we always make time for things that are important to us? Besides, how much time does it take to say, "thank you" or "I appreciate that?"

***"People don't care about it much."***

True, there are some people who don't, but very few. For every person like that there are hundreds who like being stroked for their contributions. So be a gambler who wins, play the odds!

***"It's meaningless if done too much."***

But most organizations have a long, long way to go before there need be any concern. Actually, it's insincerity rather than quantity that devalues recognition.

***"I'm very limited in what I'm able to do."***

You may not have access to a budget or control any formal award programs, but those are only the tip of the recognition iceberg anyway. Get creative. It doesn't take that much!

***"Sometimes it's awkward and uncomfortable."***

As was the first time you tried to roller skate or skateboard when you were kid . . . but the more you did it, the easier it became. And the more you found you liked it! Do it more often and practice!

***"People will think they've got it made and stop working hard."***

Not true! Ask yourself, do you slow down when someone shows appreciation for a job you did well? We need say no more.

***"I don't get it. Why should I give it?"***

You know how it feels to have your achievements and efforts overlooked. You know how it feels to be taken for granted. Don't let your teammate's oversight be the rationale for not doing it yourself. It's the right thing to do!

Purposely look for someone doing something good and recognize them for it!



**Kudos  
& Quotes**

"It is amazing that people are always on time for PIVOT's training sessions and even forget their breaks! And they are all working on improvement projects instead of complaining."

- Mike Faucher, Director of Operations  
Teledyne Electronic Systems

**TECHNICAL COMPETENCE DOES NOT EQUATE TO MANAGERIAL MATERIAL!**

Many technically competent people have a desire to become a manager. Reasons for this wish range from wanting the authority/prestige that comes with the position, its the next rung on their career ladder, the perception that a supervisor's job is easier, or just because they want to be the "boss".

Many consider that technical competency prepares one for a management position. Although some subject matter expertise in the area that one manages is helpful, it is not required. This has become repeatedly evident to me as I conduct simulation exercises at organizations. Interestingly, every time I facilitate one of these exercises and ask participants to take on various roles, the manager's role seems to be the most envied. Even the person appointed as manager seems elated. They are 'the boss,' and have the authority to hire and fire and they are empowered to make important decisions; there is prestige with the position.

As the simulation begins, however, this sense of elation is short lived. Orders come in, inventory piles up, defects increase, deliveries slip, frustration mounts and chaos is the order of the day. Fire

fighting becomes the norm. Soon, everyone is happy they were not selected to be the manager and even the appointed manager now wants out! The situation has totally reversed from what it was when it was started (sometimes as soon as 15 minutes in this exercise)! It becomes clear that technical competence does not necessarily prepare one for a managerial role.

Surprisingly though, many organizations take their technically competent employees and promote them to managers. Just because the person is technically proficient does not mean that he/she will be able to effectively manage the team. Managing people and resources does not depend on a person's technical ability; rather it depends on the ability to facilitate, persuade, plan, organize, motivate and communicate. Often these are not the strengths of technical people. Is it any wonder then that some of the biggest issues in most organizations deal directly with the soft skills – people related problems? Managing is about accomplishing "it" through others, not doing "it" all by yourself. It requires patience when others do not perform; it requires providing support and guidance, and it requires building experts, not expertise!

The role of management requires a different perspective, set of skills, mind-set, and approach to dealing with issues. Although a technical person may have an advantage when it comes to managing a highly technical area, many new skills still have to be learned. To some, these come naturally; for others, the skills are never mastered. Managing is not about giving orders and telling others what to do. It is much more –managing projects, mentoring people, juggling resources, solving people problems, facilitating change, persuading, planning, organizing, motivating, listening and speaking. It means providing incentives often and using discipline rarely! It also requires self-motivation and initiative! These skills are hard to acquire, but through time, they can all be learned.

So, if you really want to become a manager, first ask yourself 'why' and start learning the skills that will help you become more *effective* in that role. Remember, technical competence alone does not a good manager make!

**Akhilesh Gulati**  
Principal, PIVOT Management Consultants

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