

PWK Flowform – (Toledo/USA) Employee Receives 6 Sigma Black Belt

Flowform is extremely proud to announce, Miles Smith, Continuous Improvement Manager, has achieved the 6 Sigma Black Belt Certification, on September 9, 2007.

The program used at Flowform was run by Lemforder ZF Corporation, a world wide supplier of suspension and transmission components. Training was offered to Flowform by ZF as part of their supplier development program. The program was taken up by Flowform under the leadership of Dhruva Mandel who took Six Sigma champion training in order to ensure adequate support.



Six Sigma is a structured problem solving methodology built around five disciplines. These are: Define; Measure; Analyze; Improve; Control. Each discipline contains within it, a variety of tools, methods and techniques that the practitioner can choose to apply when solving industrial problems. The Six Sigma philosophy is to relate industrial problems back to the goals of the business capturing the true cost of poor quality. Effort is focused on the largest value problems using a team approach. Data based problem solving techniques are favored and a key concept is that improvements should be demonstrated using a measurable. During the analyze phase heavy use is made of statistical techniques to identify cause and effect relationships. The objective of Six Sigma is to deliver performance that is better than 4 defects per million opportunities.

Three levels of accomplishment are recognized:

Green Belt – Somebody who can make good use of many of the methods but needs some guidance and help usually with the statistical methods.

Black Belt – Somebody who can apply all the techniques unaided and provide support to green belts.

Master Black Belt – Somebody who has complete understanding and is able to teach the methods to would be practitioners.

In addition to this Six Sigma calls for a Champion who should be somebody trained sufficiently in the method to understand the philosophy and support the trainee during implementation. Training started for Miles in August 2006 and continued as one week per month at ZF's Gainesville, Georgia transmission plant until December 2006. Each training module was focused around one of the five disciplines of Six Sigma. The trainee is expected to undertake a project during the training complet-