



## Competitive Business Solutions

# Developing Client Learning Platform or Lean Six Sigma Blended Learning Program Delivers Results

A CBS client manufactures complex product in the global aerospace and defense technology sector. At the time of engagement, the client lacked a comprehensive training strategy around their continuous improvement (CI) activities and wanted a training solution that would create a common language and approach for their team. The solution needed to be customizable, transferrable and leverageable across their global footprint, so the client could sustain the program using their own resources. After reviewing many different approaches and solutions, CBS introduced a blended learning model to develop lean Six Sigma Green Belt and Black Belt practitioners across the client's organization.



### INDUSTRY

A&D

### SOLUTION AREA

Training, Operational  
Excellence

## THE CHALLENGE

The client wanted to rapidly increase the number of employees who both understood and could apply lean Six Sigma processes. As a global organization, they desired to include personnel throughout the value stream (i.e., manufacturing, engineering, finance, customer service). This cross-section involved several time zones and languages, and any potential plan needed to address various personal learning styles to be successful.

The company also lacked the process to identify the correct change agents within the organization and properly align these resources with Green Belt and Black Belt projects. The company needed assurance that the selected areas of focus were going to be the most impactful and that the trainee selection would provide a clear route to action, sustainability and trained resources that could lead the team forward.

CBS and company leadership agreed the best path forward would include a common approach with standardized Green Belt / Black Belt training.

*“After 5 years of running the program, we now have close to a thousand Green Belts and 100 Black Belts; the projects that these employees have run, post the training, have realized over \$150M in bottom line savings.”*  
— **Leader of CI & Quality, Aerospace & Defense**

## THE APPROACH

The CBS team met with client leadership to understand the current state of continuous improvement (CI) culture. Through interviews, interactions with employees and comparative analysis, the team assessed the organization. CBS recommended a blended-learning training structure. This consisted of a learning portal that could be maintained by the client and could accommodate current and future needs. CBS provided additional feedback regarding both the selection of trainees and potential high impact projects that each of the trainees could lead as part of the training. After developing the methodology in only one month, the initial training was scheduled and launched. Trainees were expected to come to class with a project in mind (either one they were passionate about or one CBS suggested), and CBS worked with client leadership to ensure people, training and projects were aligned. Standardized training methodology with application in mind prevented a “use it or lose it” situation following training execution.

CBS introduced a Green Belt and Black Belt curriculum, which incorporated online training, onsite instructor-led training and hands-on

application of concepts to address the variety of learning styles. Training materials utilized a body of knowledge that allowed both novice and expert employees to learn at a pace that supported engaged learning. Student teaching was also used to provide reinforcement of concepts in a facilitated environment. For example, an expert in statistics could be a natural teacher of Six Sigma concepts.

During the first 4 months, the CBS team led the client through several stages:

- **Month 1**—Training methodology developed
- **Month 2**—First wave of Black Belt training launched
- **Month 4**—Monthly Green Belt training cadence introduced

Learning opportunities such as Problem Solving, DMAIC and Six Sigma techniques were targeted, and 17 Black Belt projects were completed. These projects not only provided savings to the client in the way of labor and defect reduction, but they were also organized such that they were achieved with no disruption to production activities or the end-customer.

CBS leadership provided participating employees a significant development opportunity while weaving in their existing job responsibilities. The hands-on approach allowed the team to quickly engage in learning and overcome obstacles before any process delays were realized. Interaction between CBS and the client, coupled with the blended learning model, drove results even faster than the client thought possible. Several employees were even able to move into more impactful roles within the organization less than a year after their training.

During project implementation, CBS identified the need for a change leadership training module to teach employees how to effectively use their new skills to drive change. This often neglected facet of implementation allowed these new CI practitioners to better interface with their teams and lead their colleagues through the change process. The client team received not only an exciting new toolbox, but they were also taught the soft skills to recognize different styles, adapt and leverage the team to success.

*“More importantly, we have developed the future leaders of the corporation with many of the Black Belts now taking up senior positions across all functions in the corporation. The training has been a marvelous success, primarily due to the work conducted by CBS; I cannot recommend them highly enough.”*

**— Leader of CI & Quality, Aerospace & Defense**



### STATISTICAL RESULTS

- 7 years following program implementation
  - 1200 people trained
  - 12 Black Belt classes
  - 70 Green Belt classes
- Strategy was implemented across the organization
- 40+ facilities
- 5 countries

### CONCLUSION

Rapid, sustainable change is challenging for any organization. For this client, the desire to overcome all obstacles led them to partner with CBS. The hands-on blended learning model that CBS employed allowed the client not only to provide employees with enhanced skills, but also introduced the system and framework necessary to create a culture shift. While the project could have been completed by simply introducing a learning portal, the CBS team ensured that participants, projects, and processes were aligned for quick results and that the practitioners were equipped to lead others through the process. The employee development benefit along with the savings to the client from completed projects created a true win-win situation!

**Ready to optimize the transformation of your organization?** We can help.  
**REAL BUSINESS CHANGE. FASTER THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE.**

Our operational problem-solvers bring unmatched industry experience, creative thinking and a collaborative approach to every client engagement. Call us at **973-509-0110 x147** for a private consultation to learn how we can help you with your continuous improvement efforts.