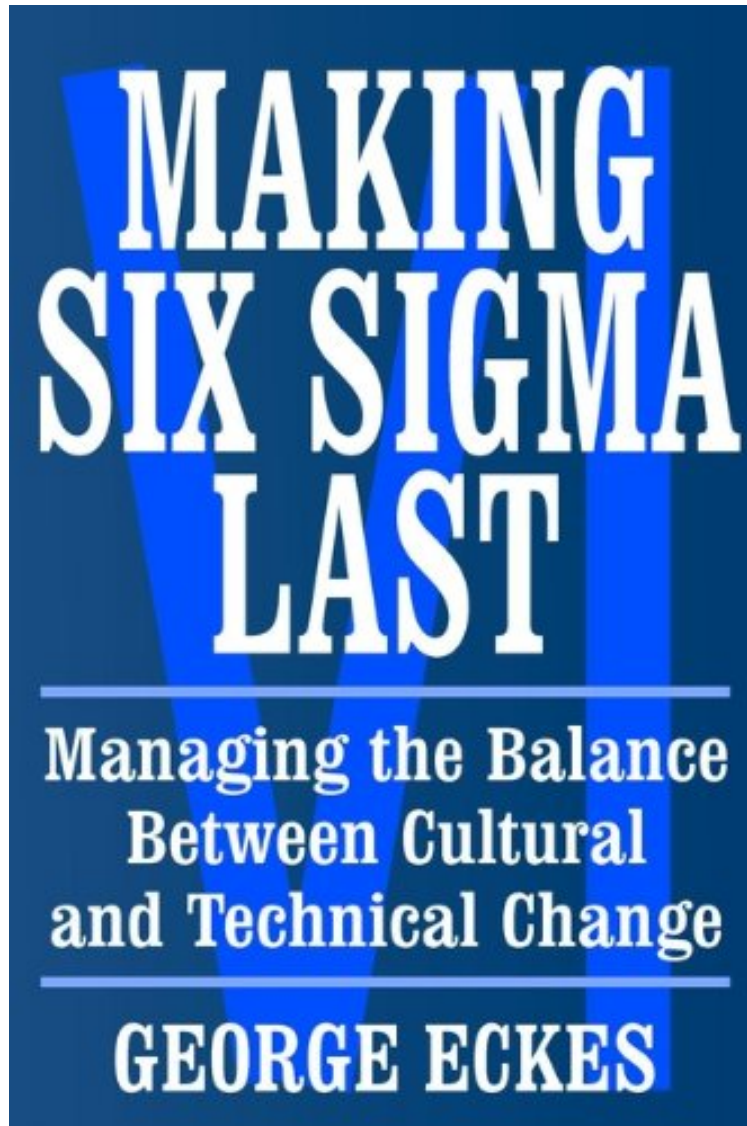


Making Six Sigma Last: Managing the Balance Between Cultural and Technical Change

George Eckes

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George Eckes : Making Six Sigma Last: Managing the Balance Between Cultural and Technical Change before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Making Six Sigma Last: Managing the Balance Between Cultural and Technical Change:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The Vital Six Sigma LinkBy Roderick Smith, Ph.D. Organizations that are serious about being world-class will discover a vital component to their quality initiative in Making Six Sigma Last. George Eckes expertly and courageously tackles the difficult task of getting into the heads of those whose

cooperation is essential to a successful quality effort. As he so aptly discussed in *The Six Sigma Revolution*, any change effort is sure to be met with resistance because of the "cultural" mind-set of those affected. In his simple but powerful formula, $Q \times A = E$, George pinpoints the "A", or the cultural Acceptance of the tactical strategic elements of Six Sigma as the oft neglected link between the Quality of these elements and the Excellence of the overall results. In *Making Six Sigma Last*, Eckes provides tools to help create an awareness of the need for a Six Sigma culture (based on threats and opportunities), identifies the four types of resistance and specific steps that can be taken to overcome them, explains how to mold the vision of a Six Sigma culture, and provides specific tools that can be used to measure the culture of your organization. George also offers experienced guidance in how to change job structures in your organization in ways that can compound your Six Sigma success. Your time will be well-invested reading *Making Six Sigma Last*. It is benchmark work. You will be challenged, informed, encouraged, entertained, and very possibly taken to the next level in your pursuit of never-ending improvement.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Starting is Much Easier Than Staying the Course: Here's How By Robert Morris There are several outstanding books on the general subject of Six Sigma and Eckes has written two of the best. Previously in *The Six Sigma Revolution*, he examined major corporations such as Motorola and GE in which Six Sigma programs really did create revolutions which continue as I compose this review. These are properly acclaimed successes. Of course, little (if any) attention has as yet been devoted to those organizations which initiated and then later abandoned Six Sigma programs. The reasons for doing so vary, of course, but most can be classified within two categories of resistance to change: cultural and technical. As O'Toole brilliantly explains in *Leading Change*, it is a formidable task to overcome what he characterizes as "the ideology of comfort and the tyranny of custom." In this volume, Eckes suggests all manner of strategies and tactics by which to overcome resistance and then sustain Six Sigma programs, once launched. Correctly, he stresses the importance to an organization of achieving a "balance" between its culture and its technology. Moreover, at a time when change is (literally) the only constant and occurring at an ever-increasing velocity, it is also a formidable challenge to maintain the proper balance of the two. For many years, I believed that most people fear change. I no longer believe that. Rather, I have become convinced that most people fear the unfamiliar. Hence the importance of constant and effective communication between and among everyone involved. Eckes suggests that this book will show his reader how to "Create the need for Six Sigma" but, in fact, the need probably exists already so there is a need to help everyone recognize that need and appreciate the importance of responding to it. Therefore, Eckes also shows his reader how to "Shape a vision of Six Sigma so that employees understand the desired results and new behaviors of a Six Sigma organization." Also, he shows the reader how to "Mobilize commitment to Six Sigma and overcome resistance" which is inevitable. Only then can any organization change its systems and structures "to support the new Six Sigma culture." Next: "Measure Six Sigma cultural acceptance" and "Develop Six Sigma leadership." All of these components are absolutely essential, difficult to integrate, and even more difficult to sustain in appropriate balance. In this volume, Eckes explains how and he does so with precision and eloquence.

In recent years, I have become more involved in Six Sigma or process improvement programs which vary somewhat in terms of their design and scope but all of which encountered several of the "pitfalls" which Eckes discusses in Chapter 8:

1. Feeling obligated to achieve quick success
2. Clogging up agendas with competing distractions
3. Having unrealistic time frames
4. Ignoring previous quality efforts
5. Conducting poor Six Sigma cultural planning and follow-through
6. Delegating (i.e. dumping) cultural development or seeing it as a one-time event
7. Not having appropriate cultural goals or objectives
8. Not allowing for unexpected interruptions
9. Allowing false or cosmetic positive readings to suggest authentic cultural transformation has been achieved
10. Underestimating resource allocation

Of course, whether or not involved with Six Sigma initiatives, any organization can experience some or even all of these "pitfalls." In this book, Eckes offers sound, street-smart advice on how to avoid them. Time and again, he places great emphasis on the importance of cultural values by which everyone involved in a Six Sigma can be guided and, when under duress, sustained. Herb Kelleher has this in mind whenever he explains what Southwest Airlines competitive advantage is: "Maintaining excellent customer service involves a process of getting people to understand the importance of it to them in their daily lives as well as in others'. We were a little concerned as we go bigger that maybe some of our early culture might be lost so we set up a culture committee whose only purpose is to keep the Southwest Airlines culture alive. Before people knew how to make fire, there was a fire watcher. Cave dwellers may have found a tree hit by lightning and brought fire back to the cave. Somebody had to make sure it kept going because if it went out, there would be serious problems. That cave dweller was the most important person in the tribe. I said to our culture committee, 'You are our fire watchers, who make sure the fire does not go out. I think you are the most important committee at Southwest Airlines.' I really do believe that to be the case." This is precisely what Eckes means by "culture" in this book. For everyone in any organization already embarked on a Six Sigma program or now considering one, this is a "must read."

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Best Book On How To: Create Sustain a Six Sigma Culture By bill huey Think about it. Seriously think about it. What was the downfall of your quality endeavor? Your performance improvement plan? Your Six Sigma initiative? Was the wrong strategy used or was it the wrong tactical approach? Mostly likely it was neither your strategy nor your tactical approach. The failure was most likely do to people. Most likely your people hadn't really bought in. Buy-in from your people is necessary for an

initiative such as Six Sigma to be successful. The people in your organization create your organizations' culture. How do you get cultural buy-in? How can you sustain that buy-in? In the book *Making Six Sigma Last*, the author, George Eckes shows us how. Through heart-felt stories, humorous personal examples, and real business illustrations the author takes us through the process needed to create and sustain a culture that supports Six Sigma. First we learn about $Q \times A = E$. This powerful formula shows us that: "Q" Quality, the technical and strategic elements of a Six Sigma initiative, times "A" Cultural Acceptance, of the technical and strategic elements of Six Sigma, determines "E" the success of the Six Sigma process. Then, the author addresses resistance. We are reminded that it's a natural process for people to resist change. Eckes describes four types of resistance and offers specific strategies for overcoming each. The next chapters show how to sell it and then manage it. Now it's time to ask did it work? Did you get the cultural buy-in you were attempting? How do you know? In *Making Six Sigma Last*, Eckes offers a model that is used to measure the cultural acceptance within the organization or as Eckes says, "how well Six Sigma has been baked into the organization". Five case studies are used to illustrate these concepts. Then through profiles of leadership, the author shares real business examples of what worked, what didn't and why. Finally we learn how to sustain the culture that will support Six Sigma initiatives with the chapter on pitfalls: 10 things to avoid. *Making Six Sigma Last* is an informative and easy read. It's effective and efficient, hallmarks of Six Sigma. The book leaves you inspired and hopeful that this stuff really can work. Don't start without it!

"*Making Six Sigma Last* is the most practical and helpful resource that I have seen on this subject. George's charisma and charm spill over into this interesting and entertaining book. Using one of George's many analogies, 'this is an upper-deck shot,' and combined with his first book should become the benchmark for Six Sigma learning." -Dan Porter, Chairman and CEO, Wells Fargo Financial "An energetic, step-by-step exploration filled with interesting and entertaining examples of real-world business experiences. *Making Six Sigma Last* is a powerful action plan for managers!" -Guenter Bulk, Managing Director, GE Capital IT Solutions

"This is a concise book...well written and easy to read..." (TQM) From the Inside Flap In his successful previous book, *The Six Sigma Revolution*, the man who helped implement Six Sigma at General Electric and helped formulate their training program gave readers step-by-step instruction in the strategic and tactical aspects of creating a Six Sigma initiative in any organization. Now, George Eckes revisits the most popular quality improvement methodology in history, addressing an even more critical component of the Six Sigma implementation process-one that can assure the stability and longevity of your own initiative. *Making Six Sigma Last* offers you the tools your organization needs to make this quantitative approach to improving effectiveness and efficiency work for you. In this book, Eckes focuses on the cultural component of a Six Sigma initiative-which, if mastered by an organization, can drive quicker and more dramatic improvement in Sigma performance. It is also the component that most organizations ignore-and most Six Sigma consultants are unaware even exists. Offering simple yet direct concepts and techniques, Eckes demonstrates the necessity of dealing with human nature in persuading any organization to culturally accept change. Whereas current Six Sigma titles focus on the technical elements of change, Eckes concentrates on balancing the cultural component with the technical-the only way to achieve successful Six Sigma. He explains how to systematically improve your chances of realizing a solid change initiative, including how to:

- * Create the need for Six Sigma
- * Diagnose the four types of resistance to Six Sigma and overcome them
- * Shape a vision so that your employees understand the desired results and new behaviors
- * Alter your systems and structures to support the new Six Sigma culture
- * Avoid pitfalls in managing your Six Sigma cultural transformation
- * Develop highly effective Six Sigma leadership

You'll discover how to create clear, motivating Six Sigma goals in your organization, as well as learn from case studies of both successful and unsuccessful initiatives. Eckes also imparts the proven training secrets of Eckes Associates, Inc. and profiles triumphant Six Sigma leaders-from whom you'll receive valuable, one-of-a-kind lessons. If increasing profits and stock prices, improving customer satisfaction, and saving large amounts of money sounds good to you, reach for *Making Six Sigma Last*-and master the key ingredients to launching and leading a Six Sigma effort. From the Back Cover "*Making Six Sigma Last* is the most practical and helpful resource that I have seen on this subject. George's charisma and charm spill over into this interesting and entertaining book. Using one of George's many analogies, 'this is an upper-deck shot,' and combined with his first book should become the benchmark for Six Sigma learning." -Dan Porter, Chairman and CEO, Wells Fargo Financial "An energetic, step-by-step exploration filled with interesting and entertaining examples of real-world business experiences. *Making Six Sigma Last* is a powerful action plan for managers!" -Guenter Bulk, Managing Director, GE Capital IT Solutions