

# The Six Sigma Journey: From Art to Science

THIS BOOK EXCERPT  
EXPLAINS HOW A  
FICTIONAL COMPANY  
SUCCESSFULLY  
USED DOE TESTING.

By Larry  
Walters, R2  
Solutions Inc.



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Often the most difficult part of the Six Sigma process is getting everyone to understand and completely support the initiative. This is the focus of *The Six Sigma Journey: From Art to Science*, a novel by Larry Walters. The book describes the journey of the main character, Barry, as he implements Six Sigma at HPZ Chemicals, a fictional company that manufactures catalysts, dyes and pigments. It chronicles the deployment of Six Sigma along with the real events that happen at companies trying to implement Six Sigma in a difficult environment. The story touches upon the people who oppose it, what is needed to make Six Sigma work and the many successes and failures along the way.

As this excerpt begins, HPZ Chemicals has started on Black Belt (BB) training and is in the "improve" phase (from the normal Six Sigma DMAIC model) of its first projects.

## Black Belt Training: Improve

I wasn't able to spend a lot of time in the training classes during this module, which really upset me. Dave and Roman had whet my appetite for design of experiments (DOE) during the executive training.

Paula was a little upset her project did not lend itself to DOE, so she helped Tim with his. This way she was able to fulfill her qualifications for certification and get some practical experience.

Dave was also teaching this module, and he explained the real goal of a BB project was to solve the problem, not try and use all the tools. If the project could be solved in the define and measurement stages, great. Solve it, and start working on something else. The only demand was for all the tools to be used during training so the BBs had some practical experience.

There were quite a few experiments that had to be run in the next three weeks. Dave said it was acceptable to put some off until the fourth module if necessary. He understood we still had a plant to run.

The problem was the plant had a way of doing things and did not want to take a chance on doing something that would slow it down. But if the production managers had their way, we would never run the tests. I was late for a meeting in production to discuss running Tim's DOE on the number one rotary kiln.

## Convincing Lou

"Come on in, Barry. Everyone is here now," said Tim.

"Tim, why don't you explain what you want to do for all of us," said Mark, who was starting to act like a Six Sigma convert.

"Everyone knows my project is to better control surface area. This affects all

# Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science

**Michael Rajnik**



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## **Table of Contents Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science**

1. Understanding the eBook Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - The Rise of Digital Reading Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Exploring Different Genres
  - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
  - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
  - Popular eBook Platforms
  - Features to Look for in an Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Personalized Recommendations
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science User Reviews and Ratings
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science and Bestseller Lists

5. Accessing Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science Free and Paid eBooks
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science Public Domain eBooks
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science eBook Subscription Services
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science eBook Formats
  - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science Compatibility with Devices
  - Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
  - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Highlighting and Note-Taking Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Interactive Elements Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
8. Staying Engaged with Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Joining Online Reading Communities
  - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
  - Following Authors and Publishers Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Benefits of a Digital Library
  - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
  - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
  - Minimizing Distractions
  - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Setting Reading Goals Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Six Sigma Journey From Art To Science
  - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning

- Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
- Exploring Educational eBooks

### 14. Embracing eBook Trends

- Integration of Multimedia Elements
- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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