



Case Study

Fortune 500 Defense Technology Company



“Mapping helps address the challenges of changing an environment, because employees are able to focus better with the visual representation of that change.”

ROI

Enables the company's Lean Six Sigma Black Belt facilitators to realize 25 percent more process completion during Lean Six Sigma events; helps teams understand and address issues much more quickly and efficiently.

Company Profile

This Fortune 500 defense technology company develops and manufactures technology for the U.S. Department of Defense and federal agencies.

Challenge

To ensure that team members work together to improve the company's operations, and therefore serve customers better.

Lean Six Sigma Methodology Yields Process Improvement

This advanced defense technology company uses MindManager to facilitate Lean Six Sigma process-improvement events.

This Fortune 500 defense technology company is a world leader in building extremely complex defense systems — everything from missiles to fighter aircraft. But when the company needs to improve the mission-critical business processes behind its products, it finds there's no substitute for visually mapping information.

The company's Lean Six Sigma facilitators use Mindjet® MindManager® to map information collected during Lean Six Sigma process-improvement events.

“Lean Six Sigma initiates structured change into the environment,” says one of the company's leading Lean Six Sigma event facilitators. “Change is very frightening to most people, and inevitably generates resistance. Mapping helps address the challenges of changing an environment, because employees are able to focus better with the visual representation of that change.”

Capturing the way things are

The facilitator uses MindManager to facilitate week-long Lean Six Sigma events that bring together up to ten people from across many functional areas involved in a business process. The events have addressed hardware design, software development, networking and telecommunications, and horizontal integration. (Because the company's products are classified, we are not able in this case study to go into more detail on these processes.) Event participants most often have not worked together in a team environment. As such, it is important to level-set the team thinking as quickly as possible.

The facilitator starts by capturing the group's brainstorming ideas on flip charts that are retained during the course of the event. The flip charts serve as references throughout the event, enabling team members to recall what they initially articulated regarding the current, ideal and future states of the process requiring the improvements.

The facilitator then has the team start to explore the identification of waste and inefficiency in the processes. An associate at the meeting captures this information into a PowerPoint template that is used to outbrief at the end of the event.

Bringing the process into focus

Midway through the event, the facilitator exports to MindManager the information captured in Power Point. She begins arranging the ideas presented by the team into categories, such as the execution of work, the decision-making process, leadership and governance, communication processes, people's behaviors and attitudes, and reactions from customers and stakeholders.

When she reveals the categorized ideas to the team, she finds that it is easier for the participants to discuss ways to improve the process to meet the needs of customers.

“I have found that the mind map stimulates their thinking, which helps them come to conclusions faster,” she says. “When they look at the map, they say, ‘Now we “see” what our current environment looks like,’ because it's all categorized into nice neat groups. The initial brainstorming process is effective in generating new ideas. But it is hard to organize ideas written on multiple flip charts. The map adds structure to the ideas so the team members can easily view their environment as they have perceived and articulated it.”

The facilitator uses the map through the remainder of the event. “The map changes dynamically from the time it is first created through to the end of the event,” she says. “It becomes the team's holistic view of the process under assessment, categorized and on one page, which is always included in the event outbrief.”

Solution

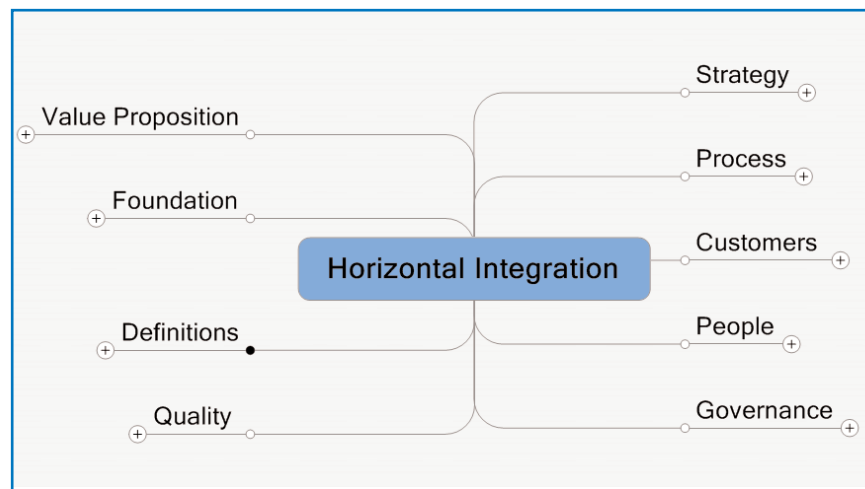
This leading defense technology company uses MindManager to create visual representations of current, ideal and future state characteristics.

Product

Mindjet MindManager

Result

Team members are able to quickly grasp the current and future state characteristics, issues and process improvements related to those characteristics, and to work together to devise ways to improve mission-critical business processes.



Process Improvement with Mindjet MindManager

Creating the right atmosphere for change

The facilitator has noticed that mapping allows team members who have never worked together before to quickly understand the current state issues. “I’ve noticed that the mapping tool helps them to view the holistic process and decide together what will solve the problems of that process,” she says.

She thinks that because the map gives team members an overview of the process as the event progresses, less time is spent making sure everyone on the team understands where the group is heading: Team members collectively “get it” much quicker.

“During the last couple of events the team has finished with time to spare, whereas before we were running down to the wire. Now we have time for the outbrief preparation to senior management. Since I started using mapping, the events are less stressful, allowing more sophisticated facilitation.”

The facilitator says that the benefits of mapping are invaluable. “Team members can analyze the map together as a team, because it improves their ability to focus on what their current state looks like. Since I began using mapping, this step in the Lean Six Sigma process runs much smoother because of the easy-to-understand visuals.”

“Lean Six Sigma team members know that they have an important task to identify specific changes to existing processes,” she says. “And with any action that results in discussing and planning changes to any environment, there is an element of stress. Mapping helps them understand their current state and visualize their future state process—allowing them to focus on how to improve it.”



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