Way Forward!

The road less travelled...

From the Editor's Desk…

Hello reader! Thanks for stopping by to read the SigmaWay story. SigmaWay is proud to present to you its newsletter "Way Forward" for the first quarter of 2014.

It has been a little over a year since SigmaWay started its journey in Florida USA and travelled to Delhi, India. While we spent time galvanizing relationships with our consultants, advisors and clients, and laying the foundation for some world class products and services, we never stopped having fun. And our biggest achievement would be if everyone we came across in this journey, also had fun (apart from experiencing the "breakthrough value"… "Out-of-the-box thinking"… "Flexibility"… that characterize us, of course!).

So here are some snippets of our journey so far, and also a sneak peek into what's in store for you at SigmaWay this year. If you need any of these - expert inputs (consulting) to improve your processes, or trainings for your workforce in quality or any other domain, or smart analytics and market intelligence to help you make strategic decisions - we have something for you.

Hope you enjoy reading this, as much as we enjoyed collecting these experiences. Let us know if you have any questions or suggestions for our next newsletter.

So long... from the editor's desk... while we continue our journey on the road less travelled!

 "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

The journey unfolds...

Conducting a Lean Action Workout in Florida for a leading HCM (Human Capital Management) firm, a Qualitative Research workshop in Bangalore for a leading IT company, delivering classroom Green Belt trainings and mentoring highly motivated interns – it has been an exciting journey so far.

The year ahead is going to be no less exciting as

- Our Lean Six Sigma Green Belt training is ready to go online shortly. You will be able to earn a Green Belt trained and tested certification from the comfort of your home

- New Delhi, India, witnesses our Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, Classroom Training, from 23-25 May 2014. Opportunity to interact with our trainers and network with other corporates

- Our Analytics Product – **System Outage Analysis Framework (SOAF)** © is going to be piloted this summer. A nifty tool for CIOs to form their IT strategy!
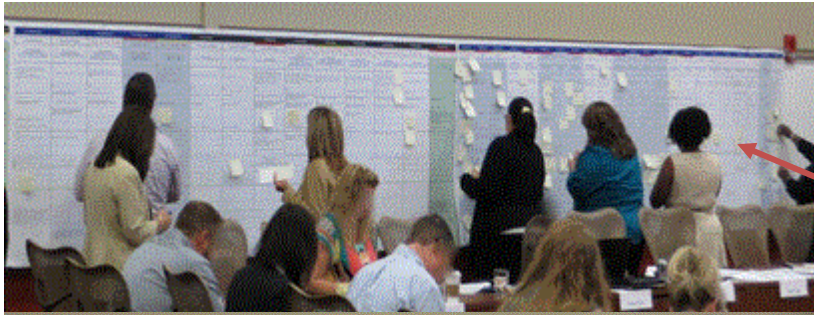
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Highlights

Interesting facts:
The great wall!

As pre-work of the Lean Action workout ([read article below](#)), a grid was filled out by the Sigmaway team in consultation with its client, an HCM (Human Capital Management) firm, to capture the details of the end to end client onboarding process of the HCM firm. It captured the process steps and related data points (typically found in a data box in a Value Stream Map, like cycle time, wait time, inventory, people etc.)

When it was finally printed and laid out on the wall – it was 30 feet long and 4 feet tall!

That itself gave an idea of the monstrosity of the process and therefore the need for Lean!

Prioritizing issues... Lean AWO, FL, USA. Aug 2013

The lean AWO is a great way to solve for cross-functional problems. In addition to being a catalyst for idea generation, it helps break down departmental silos and aligns the organizational focus and culture to the problem resolution.

Lean Action Workout (AWO)

In Aug 2013 SigmaWay facilitated a Lean AWO for its client, a leading HCM (Human Capital Management) firm in Florida, US. The objective of the workout was to **reduce the cycle time and wait time** for their overall implementation process **by 50%**. The workout was attended by more than 25 participants from departments in order to maximize cross functional perspective. Though the workout was only for one and half days, it was preceded by weeks of preparation where data was collected as well as current risks in the process identified. A grid which contained all process steps as well as related data points (typically found in a data box in a VSM, like cycle time, wait time, inventory, people etc.) was used in preference to a VSM exercise in order to optimize time – and was laid out as a [giant working wall](#).

The session was launched by the operations and sales leadership talking about the importance of the exercise from a customer perspective which was followed by a short *Lean* module by Mark Reinisch to orient the team before the problem identification session.

The team came up with a lot of creative ideas which were grouped and then further detailed by three sub groups. **Ideas were prioritized** and **project teams were aligned**. The quantified benefits (reduction in cycle time) met the AWO objective easily and by the end of day 2 teams were already on their way to **implementing the quick hits.**

For more information on how to conduct lean AWO for optimized impact please email:
contact@gosigmaway.com

AWO Dashboard

Over 150+ ideas generated from the front line, SME's and Leaders

It would lead to **reduction of 40% from the Client On-boarding Cycle-time**, and would be a strong step toward a Continuous Improvement and Customer-centric culture.

AWO - Voice of the customer

100% participants felt they achieved the right number of ideas and impact from the work out.

74% participants believe that leadership will support the ideas.

Consulting - Voice of the Customer

This is what our customer had to say about our services:

"We contracted with SigmaWay for assistance to improve and redesign our operational processes, but the services and results they provided were beyond what we had hoped to achieve.

Our industry has very complex processes and the consultants we worked with, were very quick to learn and understand not only our business, but our culture as well. Their approach to process improvement encouraged employee engagement and developing positive relationships, which ultimately resulted in a business transformation for us, where employees on all levels are constantly looking for ways to improve the business and are able to apply the tools SigmaWay provided to define, analyze, prioritize and operationalize the improvements.

We were very impressed with the Analytics provided by SigmaWay, which helped us to articulate and justify the need for process improvement projects.

The cost savings and increase in revenue potential we identified during our engagement outweighed the consulting fees 10 fold.

Working with the consultants was a great experience and I would highly recommend them to any company who wants to maximize operational efficiency, increase revenue and create a culture that strives for process excellence!"

- Senior Director of Business Process Management, Leading HCM (Human Capital Management) firm in USA

Services to complete the Consulting Spectrum

How many times have you had consultants who have brilliant suggestions on paper and then leave your operations team to execute those plans, without much success? Unlike that, SigmaWay Consultants will not only identify the root cause of your business problems and suggest action plans, but also partner with your operations team to drive the execution.

SigmaWay engaged with a leading HCM (Human Capital Management) firm in the USA for **Process consulting** and conducted an assessment of its processes. Current state process maps, Value Stream Maps were created to identify opportunities for improvement, and a Lean Action Workout was carried out (read previous section for details).

This was followed up with **Analytics** for improving Customer retention, and timeliness and accuracy of payments.

Our **Market Intelligence** team also helped them choose the best document Management System through a Competitive Benchmarking Report

The **IT Services** team at SigmaWay created Business Requirements Document for the client's Document Management System and for Automation of Payroll Reminders. We created strategic design and architecture for their contact center including CRM, Document Management and IVR. IT system Outages were studied to assess business impact and action plan.

We also conducted Change Management and Leadership **Training** for their senior management to help them implement the organization wide changes suggested by us.

Qualitative Research Workshop

HR Managers deciding research plan for a live case study. Bangalore, India

Do Human Resource managers need to do research? Yes. HR Managers need to gauge the voice of the employee on an ongoing basis. But are interviews and focus group discussions the only ways to do it? That is the question that brought one of the leading IT firms in India to SigmaWay. The answer was revealed in their Bangalore office over a 2 day, **highly customized workshop with a live case study**. In the 2 days the line HR managers not only learnt when and how to use different Qualitative Research techniques (**illustrated with examples from HR scenarios**) but also went back to their Lines of Business and gathered data using those techniques, and analyzed them to identify top employee issues that needed to be addressed. Something that may have taken months was achieved in just 2 days. Call that efficiency? Yes!

For customized workshops that are not only about theory but lead to actionable results in Market Research, Project Management or Analytics for your business, contact us!

Case Study Discussion during GB training

Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Training

SigmaWay organized classroom Green Belt trainings in Kolkata, India, both independently and in association with IBS Business School.

The trainings were a combination of instructor led material presentation, case studies, interactive games focused on lean and six sigma and hands on experience on statistical aspects. The participants included SigmaWay Interns and representatives from Industry and academia.

The objective of the trainings was to give the participants a good grasp of not just the six sigma tools but also a flavor of teamwork, leadership and cultural change involved to make a green belt project successful. The training material also covered cutting edge topics like **simulation in the service arena** and **TRIZ**

(theory of inventive problem solving) in addition to introduction of concepts like **Design of Experiments** at the Green Belt level. The participants were taught how to choose the right combination of tools from the **lean toolkit** and **six sigma methodology**, based on the complexity of the problem and optimizing the use of time and resources available.

The trainings were facilitated by SigmaWay trainers Debjani Mitra and Nitin Sinha. Both Nitin and Debjani are **certified Black Belts from ASQ** (American Society of Quality). In addition Nitin is also a **Master Black Belt** from ASQ.

To learn how to conduct green belt training in your city or organization please email us at trainings@gosigmaway.com

Voice of the customer

Lean Six Sigma GB Training

"It was an extremely well arranged training session… very informative. Concepts were clearly explained... (waiting) to apply it in some projects. .. this training in Lean Six Sigma will help us in more ways than we can probably imagine!" ~ *Debarati Raha, student M.Sc. in Applied Economics (2012-2014), Presidency University*

"We pretty much enjoyed the session. The games and case study sessions are lots of fun." ~*Arkapratim Ghosh, student M.Sc. in Applied Economics (2012-2014), Presidency University*

"Training was indeed very informative especially for academicians like us… can explore some lean six sigma tools for quality improvement of courses for students" ~ *Anuradha Bhattacharya, Visiting faculty of IT in Business Schools*

Internships virtually anywhere! Literally.

Yes! If you are a Post grad student in business (finance/marketing/systems), economics or engineering, and you have a high speed broadband connection and have one hour of overlap a day with SigmaWay mentors, you are eligible to apply for our internship! You could be virtually anywhere in the world, literally.

In the summer of 2013, our virtual internship program was piloted with Economics Post Grad students from **Presidency University and Calcutta University** to collaborate virtually to develop SigmaWay Products and conduct product research. There were 8 interns who worked in areas like simulation, design of experiments and robust product design. They also got an opportunity to become familiar with conducting statistical tests using multiple packages like excel, R and Minitab. A group of interns was also challenged to work with SigmaWay consultants to develop the go-to-market strategy for the soon to be

launched Green Belt training program. The Interns felt that this experience has been invaluable to them with respect to understanding the demands of organizations today. They said their main objective while joining the internship was to get some hands on analytics experience. The interns loved the fact that they could work from homes and found it extremely flexible. The success of the 2013 internship program is marked by the fact that some of them have continued the internship after the semester break., In the summer of 2014 our internships have students from **Calcutta University, Presidency University, Madras School of Economic, IBS Business School Kolkata** and **Singapore University**.

For information on internship programs, institutes can email to trainings@gosigmaway.com Individual students can apply here – internship application web form

Product of the Quarter: SOAF ©

System outages even for a few minutes and even when constrained to a geographical location or specific systems, can severely hamper the productivity of organizations. Due to the sporadic nature of such outages, a lot of organizations only have data pertaining to them in form of IT alert emails. These emails can be a goldmine of information and can provide invaluable insight to the C-level suite while figuring out the IT strategy. Questions such as - whether to go for in-house maintenance, contract for Managed Infrastructure or look towards the cloud - can be better answered if organizations take some time to ponder on the impact of the system outages and their root cause.

SigmaWay has studied the experiences for some of its clients and in combination with data mining techniques to delve into unstructured data, has developed the **System Outage Analysis Framework (SOAF) ©**. The framework is a combination of process improvements, Analytical modeling and automation of data reporting and policy changes.

Using SOAF, our clients can take a structured approach to reducing System outages directly impacting their cost and productivity. Some of the key features of the SOAF are:

- **Process Oriented approach** to understanding the client's IT landscape and its alignment with their business drivers. SOAF factors in the utility of each system to the client's revenue stream and service delivery.
- Our model to **automate classification of unstructured data** in emails or free form text in ticket management systems is modified to every client's landscape.
- We are more than happy to run and maintain this process for our clients.

Our processes to quantify business impact are inherently conservative in order to aid the C-suite in making fast decisions. For example, we know that if the desk phone goes down an employee can use his mobile phone to reach out. Another example would be, when the backup network lines come into play, many of them may have narrower bandwidth compared to the main network lines which have gone down. This may or may not impact productivity depending on usage. Such scenarios are factored into our business impact calculation model. Even while using conservative estimates we found that system outages may cost a medium sized organization millions of dollars in productivity and some more in credibility.

We know IT landscapes evolve and we make sure that each client's SOAF © evolves with it.

Assessment
- IT Infrastructure
- Vendor Contracts
- Business Drivers
- Disaster Recovery Plans

Modeling and Analytics
- Map Structured Data Sources
- Extract Unstructured Data
- Quantify Model Parameters

Automate Process
- Create/Modify IT Alert Process
- Automate Reporting Dashboard
- Quantify Business Impact

Recommendations
- IT Hiring Portfolio
- IT Service Delivery Model
- Risk Mitigation

Products & Services

Click here for an overview of our services

SigmaWay Blogs

Visit our website and click "subscribe to blog" to receive our blogs on various topics

Click here

Upcoming Event:
Mark your calendar!
Lean Six Sigma GB Training

New Delhi, India

23-25 May 2014
India International Center, 40 Max Mueller Marg, Delhi 11003, India
Contact: trainings@gosigmaway.com
Click here to register
scan the QR code to register

Coming Soon:
e-learning modules
- *Lean Six Sigma Green Belt*
- *Basic Lean*

Product of the next quarter

Interaction Segmentation Analysis (ISA) Framework *Drive customer retention and revenue growth by using predictive techniques on structured and unstructured customer interaction data.*

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Andy Hare

Corey Baisch

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Directors

Nitin Sinha

Rick Link

Debjani Mitra

Scan this QR code to read more about our directors

Special Interest Article:
Incumbent's Curse: To be or not to be...

Whether its elections in India or a service delivery model of a market leader in any sector, the incumbent is always at risk of losing their market share. Be it their government, their services like banking or healthcare or their retail experience, the consumer wants them to continuously evolve in a direction which they perceive as beneficial to them. As time bound service contracts become passé, disruptive technology becomes available at affordable prices (think 3D printers, e-books, digital content, Google fiber, multi-core smart phones) today's consumers and clients are exposed to a plethora of choices. With lowered exit cost barriers, it is becoming imperative that a business does all it can to retain their customers.

Organizations realize that they not only have to ward off direct competitors but also cope with tangential attacks from substitutes powered by disruptive technology. The choice between a successful well proven business model and a new idea is never easy. In the first case the organization risks its immediate client base by diverting significant funds and effort for turning an innovative idea into a winning product. This strategy has a high probability of failure which might cost them a significant market share. HTC lost a large portion of its small-medium priced phone market share in its bid to create a premium flagship smartphone model. In the second case it believes in its business model and tries to take incremental steps to make it more robust till it is too late for them. Blockbuster, Blackberry and Borders are examples of organizations which could not counter the threat of new market players like Netflix, Android (Samsung, LG etc.) and Amazon. There is also a third case of the likes of Barnes & Noble and Nokia where the incumbent tries to play it safe by not going all out for the new technology but yet has a back-up plan to survive. So what's the magic mantra? To me it remains the quintessential quest.

Though one thing I firmly believe in is that the fickle consumer / client has become even more choice aware and will try out the new flavor of the month if they feel that their implicit or explicit objectives are not being met in the vendor-client relationship. Thus it is essential that organizations know the pulse of their clients and consumers and be geared towards meeting their changing demands. Analytics can play a key role here. Predictive analytics can help organizations preempt attrition by taking mitigating measures while social media and web analytics can help them know what some of their consumers are thinking and provide insights into their future behavior

 While the objective of analytics i.e. to provide actionable insight, remains the same the demands of the information consumer have drastically changed. They want a lot more data crunched in much shorter time frames and yet presented with all the bells and whistles. With today's scalable cloud computing infrastructure like AWS available and tons of reporting packages which play well with them it is almost possible. It is also possible for the security conscious to invest and manage the requisite infrastructure in-house. The JIT (Just in time) lean principle applies here as well. An organization should only generate information and insights at the speed which it can take action on. Anything more could be a waste of resources.

Thus at the end of day know the customer's pulse, make an informed choice between evolutionary and revolutionary changes to your business model and be prepared to be blind-sided by someone your organization may have never heard of. To be or not be is an incumbent's curse but making an informed choice and to be prepared for change must never be a dilemma.

Article contributed by: Nitin Sinha, Director, SigmaWay LLC