Discovering Six Sigma: The Future of Quality Improvement

Translation by Kifayah Amar from the Indonesian original posted at ITB web site: www.itb.ac.id/news/news.html?newsID=435

On Saturday, 26 February 2005, the School of Business and Management (SBM) and C&CE SBM Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) Indonesia has conducted an International seminar on Six Sigma as part of the MBA program which was held in the Auditorium of the School of Business and Management ITB. Six Sigma is a methodology that was introduced by Motorola Company to reduce production cost through minimizing rejects in the production process.

The opening speech was delivered by Mr Adang Surachman, the Vice Rector of ITB. The two key speakers of this seminar included Dr. Hasan Akpolat from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Australia, an expert on Six Sigma and the author of “Six Sigma in Transactional and Service Environments” and Ir. Yoni Irawan, MBA, from General Electric (GE) Technology Indonesia. The role of the moderator was taken Dr. Dermawan Wibisono, M.Eng.

The seminar was attended by more than 100 students, mainly from the Industrial Engineering and MBA program, which highlighted the enormous interest in Six Sigma and production management. Prof Richard Moore from California State University was also among the participants.

The first session was conducted by Dr. Akpolat who presented a case study covering Six Sigma implementation at Sony and GE. He explained how these two both companies have customised Six Sigma to suit their own organisational needs and characteristics. He stressed that for instance Sony Corporation uses Sony Six Sigma (SSS) together with Value Creation Management (VCM) and Supply Chain Management (SCM) as a company-wide core program to achieve its strategic goals and objectives.

During his systematic and excellently presented paper, Dr. Akpolat’s showed a video clip containing a speech by Jack Welch, the former CEO of GE Company, and a video footage about the characteristics of the Six Sigma deployment at Sony. These two video screenings greatly contributed to the better understanding of the Six Sigma concept by the audience. Dr. Hasan Akpolat then explained the so-called Green Belts and Black Belts and the DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control) problem solving methodology used within the Six Sigma program. In the Q&A session, Dr. Akpolat also provided valuable answers to the questions asked by the audience.

The second session was conducted by Ir. Yoni Irawan, MBA from GE Technology Indonesia. He explained the strategy of implementing Six Sigma in his company. In the question and answer session, some interesting questions related to Six Sigma application and how to implement it in other areas were discussed.

This seminar was closed by Prof Surna Tjahya Diningrat from School of Business and Management ITB. He stressed that only few local lecturers could explain Six Sigma and its application clearly. He also mentioned that three sigma acceptable two to three decades ago when he learned statistics during his university years is no longer acceptable today.

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