

SUCCESS STORY

Starwood Hotels Uses Six Sigma Quality Method



Starwood Hotels

INDUSTRY:

Hospitality

CHALLENGE:

"We measure returns in both hard dollars and soft dollars for these projects. We know that we've increased revenue. And we know that we've increased our 'Voice of the Customer.' It's really opened a lot of eyes."

Vice President of Six Sigma

SOLUTION:

SOCIAL STYLE

OVERVIEW

Starwood Hotels has more than 700 hotels and 227,000 rooms in 79 countries certainly has global reach. But to remain one of the world's largest hotel and leisure companies, there has to be a commitment to providing consistent quality. To ensure that, time after time, customers are satisfied with their hotel experience, this leading company has created a global quality management program that includes SOCIAL STYLE training from The TRACOM Group.

Starwood Hotels, which owns several major hotel brands, is one of the first non-manufacturing companies to use the Six Sigma methodology for quality. Six Sigma is program that increases customer loyalty by eliminating variability, defects and waste. The Six Sigma term refers to a measurement of no more than 3.4 defects per million opportunities.

THE CHALLENGE

The company felt that a Six Sigma program could be an effective way to succeed in the turbulent hospitality industry. Its goals include reducing variation in core service processes; enhancing the "Voice of the Customer;" developing better management measures to drive rapid response to changing market conditions; and improving financial performance through revenue enhancement, improved customer loyalty and greater cost efficiency.

THE SOLUTION

The launch of this effort began with a four-day senior executive Six Sigma training session for the top leaders including the Chairman. Working with Pivotal Resources, the Six Sigma consultant, TRACOM's SOCIAL STYLE concepts and lessons were built into the Six Sigma curriculum. Starwood Hotels felt that SOCIAL STYLE and its impact on interpersonal effectiveness and leadership was an important component of the overall initiative.

“SOCIAL STYLE is a great product and important tool for building productive relationships,” said the company’s vice president of Six Sigma. “Participants have repeatedly told us they like SOCIAL STYLE. It’s easy to understand and relate to. It really works and is well received by participants. It sets the stage for the Six Sigma effort.”

Upon program launch, training was conducted for Master Black Belts and Black Belts using training materials that had been customized to include examples relevant to the hospitality business. To date, more than 1,200 employees have participated in Six Sigma training including property general managers and functional department heads. In addition to Six Sigma Black Belt, Green Belt and Master Black Belt training, general awareness and orientation workshops are provided for the broader group of employees.


The Black Belts develop best practices and the Green Belts are responsible for transferring practices into specific properties and acting as local change agents. The immediate goal is to have three or four Green Belt-trained executives at each hotel and eventually have all hotel department managers trained. The program is being implemented globally with pilots or rollouts in North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa.


“We’re a young company and this is a great program to set a global language and global process that goes across our brands and our properties. All of Six Sigma and our training programs are directly aligned to our business strategies.”


Vice President of Six Sigma


WHY SOCIAL STYLE?

TRACOM’s SOCIAL STYLE Model was originally created through a partnership between education and business. University of Denver industrial psychologist, David Merrill was approached by industry to identify what attributes distinguished top-performing executives from the others. That research turned into the SOCIAL STYLE Model which shows there are four basic patterns of behavior, known as the four SOCIAL STYLEs. Once a person understands these behavioral patterns, they can modify their actions to build more effective relationships with others and be more successful in any profession. This is known as Versatility. Research shows that managers with higher Versatility are:

 **27%** better at leading teams

 **19%** more likely to be promoted

 **25%** better at coaching others

 **23%** better at effectively managing conflict

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Vice President of Six Sigma