

Xerox and Quality Companion: Success You Can Duplicate

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Xerox Corporation has been using Minitab Statistical Software in its Lean Six Sigma program for a number of years with great success. In late 2006, a team from Minitab visited to show us their newly updated process improvement software, Quality Companion. The software demo included dozens of templates for forms and soft tools that are used in Six Sigma, like Process Maps, C&E Matrix and Y Metrics. We also saw some interesting features but I didn't see anything new—we have lots of Project Charter templates, why do we need one more? To me, it was another application that we'd all have to learn how to use and, in the end, it wouldn't be worth the implementation effort.

The onsite demonstrations, however, did create some fans. One of our Black Belts participated in the demo by telephone and was able to play with Quality Companion while the Minitab team talked about it. Afterwards, another Belt downloaded the 30-day trial and explored it on his own. Both quickly became internal advocates.

While I valued their opinion, I remained a skeptic. I don't consider myself technically savvy and tend to learn best by watching and doing. So, I signed up for Minitab's two-day Quality Companion training class. I was transformed. The training class was an excellent opportunity to ask lots of questions and get the hands-on perspective I need. As I left the class, I was completely on board for licensing Quality Companion at Xerox.

That experience also taught me to really appreciate the differences in how people learn. Our entire team participated in the demonstrations and, while I just saw a collection of templates for forms and tools, my colleagues saw the power of sharing centralized X, Y and Lean data across those forms and tools, they understood the convenience of Quality Companion's all-in-one Project File and the value of on-demand guidance that's so important for Green Belts. To their credit, they saw the bigger picture and really wanted to help improve the processes in our process improvement program.

Since licensing Quality Companion, Xerox's Services group has been integrating the software into its Lean Six Sigma program in a number of ways and we're leveraging the great support tools that we've come to expect from Minitab.

- All Xerox Services staff preparing to enter the Lean Six Sigma training program are encouraged to view Quality Companion's four-minute online Product Tour and sign up for one of the Quality Companion Webinars for a live demonstration.
- Xerox Services Green Belt candidates are also using Quality Companion to manage projects. Quality Companion's all-in-one project file and guidance (Coaches, sample files, demos) help support our Green Belts as they lead projects.
- Xerox's Black Belt program includes nominated and hand-selected staff who are put through a five-month program with one week of training per month. In-depth Quality Companion training is provided mid-program and is followed by Minitab Statistical Software training. It's a great sequence as trainees are able to learn about our Lean Six Sigma processes, organize projects using Quality Companion features (that the Xerox team easily customized) and analyze their data using the power of Minitab.

Now that I'm a regular user of Companion, my favorite tool is the Fishbone. It is very easy to use and offers great flexibility. I'm also a big fan of the FMEA, and especially its Coach. Each time I start an FMEA with a team, I reference the coach to confirm how to use the form's features. It's very helpful in ensuring the team understands how it works.

Today, Xerox Service's Lean Six Sigma program has seen a reduction in cycle times and we're projecting greater improvements as our training program expands. In the past, so much effort was spent on formatting data, selecting—or re-creating – templates and fine-tuning tollgate presentations. Now, our project data is in one file, forms and tools are added with a single click, data is entered once and used almost everywhere, and we drag and drop information to create stakeholder reviews. More time is spent ensuring our data collection methods are sound and our analysis is accurate. That's powerful. While we struggled with change during implementation, as users of Quality Companion by Minitab, Xerox Service's Lean Six Sigma team is much more efficient and productive.

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improve quality at www.minitab.com.*