

The DMAIC Cycle



At the core of Six Sigma methodology is a disciplined five-phase roadmap known by the acronym The DMAIC Cycle. It identifies a proven, scientific approach to problem solving, with DMAIC meaning: Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control.

Phase	Description
D efine	Clearly articulate and define the problem you are trying to solve. Brainstorm about the causes of the problem/opportunity, understanding the current state by creating a current state map and deciding what needs to be measured as baseline process data. Teams will naturally jump to solutions as you work to define the problem. It's important in this phase to keep them focused on the problem, not solutions.
M easure	Focuses on working with the team and other staff members to collect baseline measures and the voice of the customer.
A nalyze	Analyze the data to confirm or disprove assumptions and pinpoint root causes. This can include using data visualization techniques to help the data story unfold. By looking at the data in a variety of ways such as trend charts and Pareto charts, the data story emerges. It is important to ensure it aligns with the problem/opportunity statement that was developed during the Define phase.
I mprove	Brainstorm solutions and test out your improvements using the PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) cycles to create process improvements that provide the needed change. Measuring in this phase is important to see if the change has truly led to an improvement.
C ontrol	Establish and validate the controls that have been put in place to maintain the new process and identify any other controls that need to be implemented to ensure the process does not slip back into the old way of doing things. Most often there are several of these in place to ensure compliance and monitor performance.



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