

The City of SAN DIEGO Performance & Analytics

FACT SHEET

Public Works Dispatch Process Improvements

As part of a strategic initiative to improve the City's handling of service requests and customer service at the Public Works Dispatch Customer Service Center, Performance & Analytics (P&A) advised a working group from the Transportation & Storm Water Department to shorten the time it takes to process external and internal service requests. This black belt project followed the Lean Six Sigma DMAIC (***Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control***) methodology to achieve $113,000 in hard/soft savings, reduce the variance of e-mail and web request processing times, and remove non-value added steps from the process.

Define. Public Works Dispatch (PWD) operates around-the-clock to handle reports of problems received from the public and other departments within the City. Customer service is a top priority, however balancing the requests received from various communication channels is a challenge. Customers contacting PWD over the phone expect immediate service and customers that submit reports over the web have similar expectations, but response times for web reports would vary significantly. To help define the project, the team utilized process mapping and voice of the customer (VOC) tools. VOC allowed the team to solicit feedback from customers and employees. The group focused on reducing the time it takes to process service requests overall, thereby allowing time to focus on all communication channels.

Measure & Analyze. P&A utilized the Waste Walk tool and tracked the e-mail and web response times. The Waste Walk tool allowed P&A to identify parts of the process that had the potential to be improved. For example, a paper "Message Log" prompted an activity to map out various processes. Through that activity it was determined extra steps could be eliminated.

Improve. After measuring and analyzing, improvements were validated and implemented, specifically:

- *Kaizen Event 1*: Reviewed the current process for animal removal with a cross-departmental team and identified a new process which removed non-value added steps. The new process saves $55,000 a year.
- *Kaizen Event 2*: Brought stakeholders together to analyze the department referral process that required multiple steps and double work. The new process saves $23,000 a year.
- *Scheduling Heijunka*: Identified ways to "level load" the processing of e-mail and web requests to balance the processing time with phone calls. Soft savings: Reduced the need for a new position.

Control. A formal control plan was created for continuous monitoring of e-mail and web request response times and the implementation of employee suggestions generated from this project. Additionally, quarterly Waste Walks should be conducted to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Overall project benefits include:

- Eliminated the monitoring of a legacy computer system, resulting in greater availability to assist customers
- Activities sparked ideas in other departments, such as using smart phones (instead of paper maps and pagers) to increase efficiency and communication
- Customer and employee insights informed upcoming projects, thereby enhancing customer engagement and communication