

Case Study

Reduced errors in repair job completion information

Project background

The recording of repair or improvement jobs within a utilities company was inaccurate, leading to incorrect material allocation to filed service tasks, invalid unit costing and inaccurate management reporting.



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Problem

Upon completion of a repair or improvement job within a utilities company a job completion form was filled in. This form contained details of the job, a job category code, and was used formally to close the job and allocate appropriate materials.

Over 5% of these forms required some form of rework and a large proportion contained incorrect coding information. This led to increased job completion cycle time, incorrect cost allocation, invalid unit costing, inaccurate management reporting and false material allocation.

A Six Sigma project was set up. Measurement systems studies were conducted out to see if four different operators assigned the same job type category code to a sample of 20 jobs with four separate codes.

The team discovered that over several years a number of codes had been set up that could apply to similar jobs, each operator had developed a personal preference for certain codes and no single master list was available to the users.

Jobs could be completed without using a code and the existence of free text fields meant the opportunity for error and variation was significant. It was also found that there was no process for dealing with jobs which needed more than one job code to be assigned in order for resources to be correctly allocated.

Solutions

Using the data and process information captured during the analysis, the job category database was rationalised, the number of codes was reduced and a single master list was issued.

The system was changed to ensure a repair or improvement job could only be closed after a valid category code had been entered. Free text fields were removed.

A modification was made to the data input screen to enable multi-code jobs to be captured.

The job completion form and stores material issue form were combined. This single document was the source of all job completion information and allowed for a quick check that all the relevant information had been captured.

This reduced the number of documents in the process, thereby reducing both the opportunity for error and the cycle time for job completion and closure.

Business benefits

The number of forms requiring rework was reduced, the cycle time for repair job closure reduced and the correct allocation of costs meant more accurate unit costing and correct in-house / contractor work allocation, also leading to more accurate budgeting and forecasting and saving €300,000