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Prescribed by Six Sigma Black Belt Project Team

Industry:

Medical Care

Location:

Dallas-Fort Worth, TX, USA

Challenge:

Develop repeatable process to simplify health insurance validation.

Toolkit:

ConceptDraw
MINDMAP ConceptDraw®
PROJECT

Solution:

Use MINDMAP to capture team brainstorming, switch to PROJECT to create implementation plan.

Benefits:

The combination of ConceptDraw MINDMAP and ConceptDraw PROJECT provides teams with a creative, flexible environment within which to conduct initial brainstorming—and then with a powerful project management environment to see the initial ideas through to implementation.

Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Southlake, in the Dallas Fort Worth area, recently completed a project to reorganize its health insurance validation process. Consultant Ralph Jarvis and his team used ConceptDraw's brainstorming and the project management capabilities to create a new process that will be rolled out 11 affiliated hospitals across Texas.

Setting the Stage

"The goal was to improve the patient experience by reducing wait times," Jarvis says. "By reusing information, the hospital could ensure that its patients wouldn't have to fill out insurance forms each time they moved within and between hospitals in the consortium," Jarvis says.

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Jarvis says the project was actually made up of three smaller projects: One customer-focused, one focused on the hospital and the doctors, and the third focused on insurance.

The Six Sigma Black Belt project team used ConceptDraw MINDMAP to manage the brainstorming sessions for each focus area. Each session was made up of from 15 to 20 participants—often the same people, from the hospital president to the clerks who enter patient health information. With all the key stakeholders in one room, the Black Belt team helped them break down the current process to see where improvements could be made.

Building a Plan, One Idea at a Time

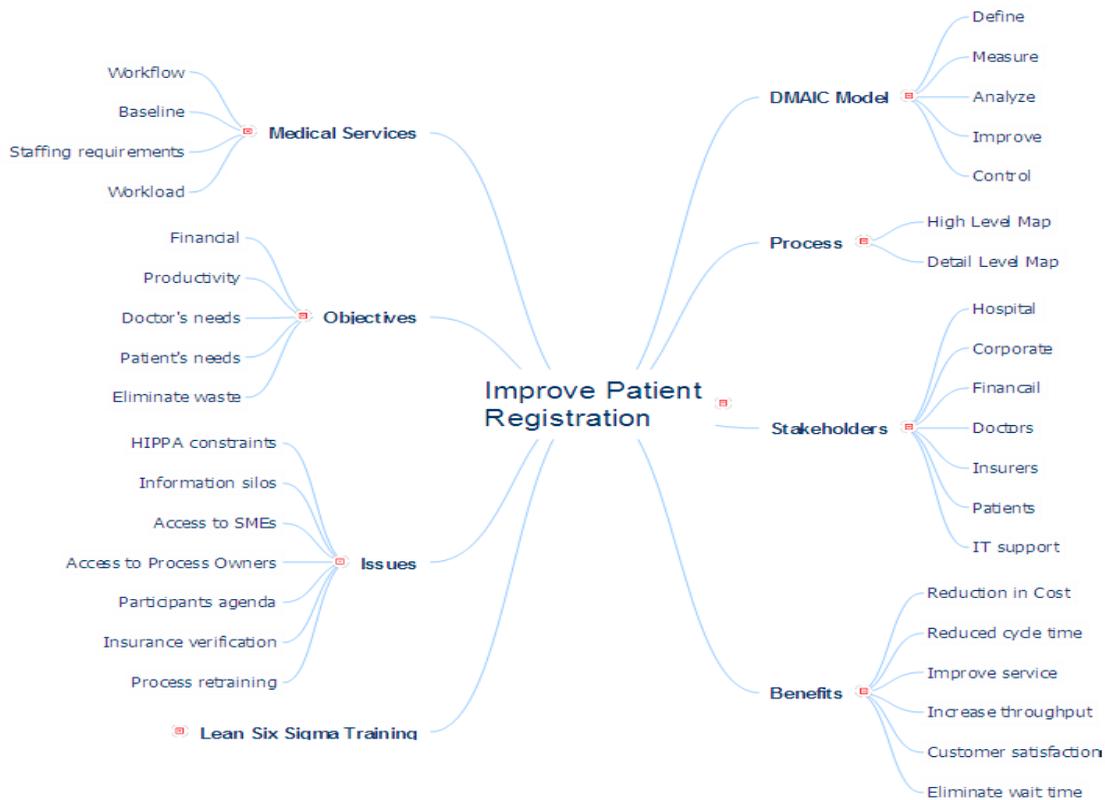
"First we used [ConceptDraw] MINDMAP's brainstorming capabilities to create a visual representation of our thinking. What kinds of things did patients do while they were in the hospital? How much time was spent in any one step of care? How much time did it take to go to the next step, such as getting a CT scan, an MRI, or blood test? What could the hospital do when patients first entered the hospital that would ease patients' stress and give them a positive experience?"

With the mind map projected up on a screen, participants could follow along as the Black Belt team typed ideas and insights into the mind map, moving them around to create a logical structure, adding new information as people reacted to the content of the map.

Jarvis says this process enabled participants to see their thinking evolve and made it easier for them to collaborate toward viable solutions. With all their thinking displayed before them, participants could plainly see that their ideas were being taken seriously, and that helped the group come to consensus around a high-level project view.

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“I’ve done brainstorming where you use little Post-it notes and everybody puts them all over the walls. And then you sort those Post-it notes into categories or quadrangles on a chart. But I think mind mapping is one of the best ways to capture the essence of what is being said within a room. And after everything is completed within a session, you have a document that you can share with stakeholders, and use as the basis for subsequent meetings.”



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From Brainstorming to Planning

To facilitate the next step in the process, Jarvis’s team moved from ConceptDraw MINDMAP to ConceptDraw PROJECT and created a project management plan.

“The two programs share a common technique of storing data, so we could instantly view all of the brainstorming details inside a standard project plan,” Jarvis says. “That enabled us to jump right into establishing project timing, coordination among the various departments, and milestones and guidelines.”

Jarvis says that the ability to capture and organize people’s thinking inside a strong creative environment, and then port the results of that thinking directly into a project management tool, enabled his team to move quickly and to keep their eyes on the main objectives established at the beginning of the project. ConceptDraw, he says, is able to support the entire project lifecycle, all the while efficiently implementing the Lean Six Sigma approach.

Perfect for Lean Six Sigma

“What you’re really trying to do with Six Sigma is to create a perfect process that eliminates defects—all the things that don’t add value to the end customer. You want to increase the customer’s satisfaction with your products or services, and reduce costs associated with defects and inefficiencies. It’s all about focusing on what you need to get to the marketplace and satisfy the customer’s needs. It’s as simple as that.”

Jarvis says the ConceptDraw suite is appropriate for Lean Six Sigma because his team could use MINDMAP to pursue three integrated processes and then put them together into one project. Then the team could use PROJECT to create a timeline and complete a specific Lean Six Sigma model (DMAIC) to improve the process flow within the hospital.

“You can use ConceptDraw and Lean Six Sigma to create a standard that integrates strategies, refine processes, and to monitor and evaluate quality to provide continuous improvement.”

Perfect for Consulting

“The fun part about any kind of consulting,” Jarvis says, “is when you get to brainstorm with the client, to extract information regarding the issues, regarding the problem. This is an opportunity to tap in on the creative side of your clients. Whether they’re executives, managers, or people in the line that are making things work, they all have creative skills. They all have their own opinions. They all have ways of improving things. And in a brainstorming session, those things bubble up. If handled properly, these ideas can lay the foundation for a successful project.”

Jarvis says there are many opportunities in health care to take the same approach he used to improve the patient experience.

“You can use ConceptDraw and Lean Six Sigma to create a standard that integrates strategies, refine processes, and to monitor and evaluate quality to provide continuous improvement. Many hospitals across the country have already embraced Lean Six Sigma because they’re trying to address the cost-effectiveness of their hospitals and to reduce cost, which is a major issue in today’s world.”

Texas Health Southlake president Traci Bernard worked directly with Jarvis and his team. She says that Jarvis and his team “identified inefficiencies, and made recommendations for measures and improvements. The impact was immediate...” ■



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