International Team Excellence Award (ITEA) Criteria

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Welcome!

ASQ is pleased that you have chosen to use the International Team Excellence Award Process as part of your quality improvement journey.

This document contains two versions of the criteria against which teams will be assessed when participating in the ITEA process. Please read below to determine and/or confirm which criteria version applies to your team.

There are many types of teams (Lean, Improvement, Six Sigma, Innovation, and Quality Circle, to name a few). Regardless of the type of team you are or of any team methodology your company may use, teams always focus on one of two things - either Problem Solving or Process Improvement.

- **Problem Solving** teams have a “problem” to solve. Typically these teams will focus on identifying and eliminating or overcoming “root causes.”

- **Process Improvement** teams have a new process to develop or an existing process that needs to be improved. Typically these teams will focus on identifying and optimizing key process parameters to design or improve an overall process.

Sometimes a team may get confused by the words they use to describe their project. For example, they may say, “We had a problem: our customers were demanding quicker turn-around time and we needed to improve our processes.” This is clearly a case where a **Process Improvement** is needed. There would be no expectation of a **Root Cause** unless something had recently caused the turn-around time to get suddenly worse.

**Select the type of team/project for the corresponding ITEA criteria:**
(Note: the criteria versions are color-coded for visual recognition)

![PROBLEM SOLVING](Page 2)

![PROCESS IMPROVEMENT](Page 11)
Note: This ITEA Criteria applies to PROBLEM SOLVING teams

The ITEA criteria has been developed and refined for more than 25 years. Stakeholder groups ranging from team members to professional project coaches and managers helped develop the current criteria. The criteria’s five sections cover the entire project life cycle. Each section has introductory remarks that tell why that section is important to Team Excellence. The subsections and actual criteria items follow each section’s introduction.

Blue boxes surround the actual criteria (or scoring) requirements the team must meet. *Italicized* words in the blue boxes supply supplemental notes. These notes are not part of the criteria. Each criterion contains one or more “descriptors.” The descriptors are terms such as “explain” or “describe.” The descriptors are in **bold** type, and they let the team know the level of detail with which they must address each item. When there is more than one descriptor, the criterion is a two-part criterion. Each two-part criterion is clearly marked with a (1) and a (2).

The judges evaluate how well the team’s presentation addresses each criterion. Judges will decide if the team Exceeds, Meets, provides Unclear evidence, or did Not Cover the item at all. Scoring is as shown in Table 1:

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Table 2
SECTION 1 ♦

Project Selection/Purpose (9 items @ 3 points = 27 points possible)

Project Selection/Purpose gives the team a chance to talk about the importance of the project to the organization, potential project stakeholders, and the team itself. Section 1 is divided into three sub-sections: (1A) allows the team to discuss how the project was selected. (1B) provides an opportunity for the team to demonstrate the importance of the particular project to the organization. (1C) gives the team a chance to discuss how potential stakeholders were selected and how those stakeholders might be impacted.

1A. Guiding Question: How was the project selected? Either the team or management selected the project. In either case, the process used to select the project must be clear and well stated. As with all team responses, providing specific examples of techniques and data used will strengthen the team’s presentation.

1Aa. (1) Describe how data and/or tools were used to support the selection, even if the project was assigned to the team, and
(2) Explain why these specific tools and/or data were used to select the project.

1Ab. (1) Explain how the project was selected, and
(2) Explain why the project was selected: what discerned gap or observed opportunity lead to the launching of this project?

NOTE: 1Aa addresses the tools and data used. The emphasis in 1Ab is on the decisions made because of the tool usage/data analysis in 1Aa.

1Ac. Describe the potential stakeholders for the project and how they participated in the selection process. If the stakeholders were not directly involved, then describe how their interests were known and taken into account.

NOTE: This should reflect the history of the project. The actual/final stakeholders may be different from the potential stakeholders at the time the project was being defined. The goal here is to be sure that the project was not selected in a vacuum without an understanding of the organizational environment.

1B. Guiding question: Why is this project important to the organization? A good project will support, or at least align with, one or more of the organization's goals, performance measures, and/or strategies. Organizational goals can vary in type and style, from broad vision or mission statements to very specific objectives related to their goals and/or strategies. These items are looking for the link between the team’s project and those goals and/or strategies.

1Ba. Identify the affected organizational goals, performance measures, and/or strategies.

Note: Goals may be present at various levels in an organization and the team is being asked to identify the goals/performance measures impacted by their project. If the team’s project is linked to a lower-level goal, it may be helpful for the team to demonstrate the linkage between the project and the lower-level goal as well as the linkage between the lower-level goal and the organizational-level strategy or goal.
1Bb. **Identify** types (WHAT) of impact the project will have on each goal, performance measure, and/or strategy presented in 1Ba.

NOTE: “Type” implies a directional impact of some sort, such as increased/decreased costs, efficiencies, safety, associate satisfaction, etc.

1Bc. (1) **Identify** the **degree of impact** (HOW MUCH) the project will have on each goal, performance measure, and/or strategy, and

(2) **Explain how** the team quantified the predicted degree of impact. If the team provided relative degrees of impact such as high, medium, or low, they should provide their rationale for deciding “high” vs. “medium” or “low.”

1C. Guiding questions: Who might be impacted by this project? What type of impact might they expect to see? “Stakeholders” defines anyone who may be affected by the project. Stakeholders could typically include internal/external customers/clients, suppliers, employees, etc. Stakeholders may refer to a unique group (e.g., “the maintenance department”) or one or more individuals.

1Ca. (1) **Identify** the potential internal and external stakeholders who might be impacted by the project, and

(2) **Explain how** the potential stakeholders were identified.

1Cb. (1) **Identify** the types of potential impact on stakeholders, and

(2) **Explain how** these were determined.

NOTE: Stakeholders may be impacted in many different ways by the project, from quality to timeliness. Demonstrating that the team understands how the project may have different impacts on the different stakeholder groups is important. As with 1Bb (type of goal impact), the impact is implied to be directional. This section could later tie to 4Ab, as correctly predicting potential negative impacts early in the project can help the team prepare to overcome resistance later.

1Cc. (1) **Identify** the degree of potential impact on stakeholders, and

(2) **Explain how** this was determined. Not all stakeholders are impacted to the same degree. If the team provided relative degrees of impact such as high, medium, or low, they should provide their rationale for deciding “high” vs. “medium” or “low.”

♦ SECTION 2 ♦

**Current Situation Analysis (6 items @ 4.5 points = 27 points possible)**

Current Situation Analysis focuses on how the team analyzed the current situation. This includes the processes, data, and information. This section also covers how stakeholders were involved. The second half of this section covers how the team determined and validated their final root cause(s). If the organization uses a specific methodology as part of the quality process, the team may want to consider sharing how that methodology was applied to identify the possible and final root causes.
2A. Guiding question: How did the team identify the potential root cause(s)? A high-performing team will explore multiple explanations for their current situation, not assuming that the first explanation is correct.

2Aa. Describe the methods and tools used to identify possible root cause(s). Teams may use a variety of approaches/processes to identify the possible root causes of a problem they face.

2Ab. Describe the team’s analysis of data to identify possible root cause(s). Provide clear, specific examples of what data were analyzed (from the tools/methods described in 2Aa), and how they were analyzed, to help identify the possible root cause(s).

2Ac. Describe how the stakeholders were involved in identifying the possible root cause(s). Provide supporting information.

NOTE: “Involved” does not necessarily mean how stakeholders participated directly in the process of selecting the root causes. “Involved” can be addressed by describing how the team took the interests of the stakeholders into account in determining the possible root causes.

2B. Guiding question: How did the team analyze information to identify the final root cause(s)? Having identified a variety of possible root causes, in 2A, these items give the team a chance to share how they went about narrowing down the possibilities to identify the true root cause(s) for this project. As is true elsewhere, by sharing any appropriate validation techniques, the team could strengthen their presentation.

2Ba. Describe the methods and tools the team used to narrow down the list of potential root causes (identified in 2A), to the final root cause(s).

2Bb. Describe the team’s analysis of data to select the final root cause(s). Provide clear, specific examples of what data were analyzed (from the tools/methods described in 2Ba), and how they were analyzed, to help identify the final root cause(s).

2Bc. (1) Identify what the root cause(s) was/were, and (2) Explain how the team validated that the final root cause(s) determined in 2Bb was/were in fact the final root cause(s). What tools and/or methods did the team use to validate (prove) to themselves (and others if needed) that they identified the true root cause(s)?

♦ SECTION 3 ♦

Solution Development (9 items @ 3 points = 27 points possible)
Solution Development allows the team to demonstrate how they logically moved from the causes to their final choice. Initially the team should share how they developed a set of possible root causes. From there, the team should share how they arrived at their specific solution(s) that would meet the project objective(s). Finally, the team should share how they convinced themselves and others that their proposals would be both practical and acceptable to the organization.
### 3A. Guiding questions: How did the team identify the possible solutions? What criteria did the team decide on for selecting their final solutions? An excellent team is one that explores multiple options to arrive at the best one. They will also have specific, supportable criteria against which to judge those options.

| 3Aa. | **Describe** the tools and methods the team used to identify the possible solutions for the root cause(s) identified and verified in 2B. There may be a number of ways to address the root cause(s). What tools and/or methods did the team use to identify these possible solutions? |
| 3Ab. | **Describe** the team’s analysis of data to develop possible solutions. Provide clear, specific examples of what data were analyzed (from the tools/methods described in 3Aa), and how they were analyzed, to help identify the possible solutions. |
| 3Ac. | **Identify** the criteria the team decided to use to assess the relative effectiveness of the various possible solutions they identified in 3Aa and 3Ab above.  
*NOTE: The criteria should help the team narrow down the list of possible solutions to enable them to identify the best solution(s).* |

### 3B. Guiding questions: How did the team select/determine the final solution(s) from the possibilities generated in 3A above? How did they assure that their final choice(s) met the needs of the stakeholders? Having identified a variety of possible solutions, the team should share what lead them to decide on their final approach.

| 3Ba. | **Describe** the methods and tools used by the team to select the final solution(s). Now that the team has identified the criteria they used in selecting the final solution(s) item asks the team to describe the tools and methods they used along with the criteria identified in 3Ac above to select the final solution(s). |
| 3Bb. | **Describe what** data were analyzed, and how they were analyzed to help identify the final solution(s).  
*NOTE: The team described the methods and tools they used to determine the final solution(s) in 3Ba; 3Bb is now asking the team to describe what data were analyzed and how they were analyzed, to support the selection of their final solution(s).* |
| 3Bc. | **Describe how** stakeholders were involved in determining the final solution(s).  
*NOTE: If the stakeholders were directly involved in the selection of the final solution(s), the team should describe how they were involved in the process; if they were not directly involved, the team should describe how the stakeholders’ interests and concerns were considered.* |
3C. Guiding questions: How did the team validate the final solution(s)? What benefits does the team expect the organization to realize once the solution(s) is/are implemented? How did the team use data to justify the implementation? “Validation” is not to be confused with “justification.” “Validation” is simply verifying that the solution(s), if implemented, will solve the problem(s)/address the root cause(s) found in 2Bc. “Justification” assumes that the solutions are valid, and that, in addition, they are a good “value” to the organization. Both validation and justification need to occur before the implementation of the final solution. They should not be based on data generated after implementation.

3Ca. (1) Describe the solution(s) the team felt would be most appropriate, and then (2) Explain how they validated that the solution(s) would solve the problem prior to actually proceeding with the implementation of the solution(s).

3Cb. List the benefits that may be realized from the solution(s). (1) Tangible benefits include those benefits that lend themselves to being represented by improvements in specific measures or metrics—cycle time, number of defects, production, etc.—and (2) Intangible benefits include those that may not easily be linked to a specific measure or measurement, but might require demonstration through improvements in a variety of related indicators—morale, employee satisfaction, etc. Teams should attempt to describe what indicators they are looking at when identifying their intangible benefits—what did they see that led them to believe there could be an improvement in a given intangible benefit?

3Cc. Explain how the team used data to justify the implementation of the solution(s) they determined to be best in 3B. The team should present the data and information they used to demonstrate the value to the organization in implementing their solution(s).

♦ SECTION 4 ♦

Project Implementation and Results (9 items @ 3 points = 27 points possible)
Project Implementation and Results addresses how the team sought and secured buy-in. In addition, this section gives the team the chance to discuss the approaches they used to plan for and implement their solution(s). Finally, this is where the team gets to present the results that were achieved. This should be based on data generated after implementation of the solution(s).

4A. Guiding questions: How were internal and external stakeholders involved in implementation? How did the team go about securing buy-in, identifying resistance, and convincing themselves (and others) that buy-in did, in fact, exist?

4Aa. Indicate how internal and external (as applicable) stakeholders were involved in implementing the solution(s).
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4Ab. (1) **Describe how** the team identified the various types of resistance encountered (to their project, solution(s), and/or implementation plan), what steps were taken to anticipate resistance, and
(2) **Describe how** resistance from any of the stakeholder groups was addressed.

4Ac. **Explain how** the team ensured that they had stakeholder buy-in. What proof did the team have that stakeholder buy-in existed prior to implementation? If it was not practical to obtain buy-in from all stakeholders, the team should explain why.

4B. Guiding questions: How did the team make the changes? What changes did the team make? How did they assure that the new approach would be sustained? A successful project not only addresses an immediate need, it also leaves behind evidence that changes occurred and leaves in place a way to verify that changes were both made and sustained.

4Ba. **Describe** the methods used by the team to implement their solution(s). How did the team plan for the implementation of their solution(s), including action plan development, and such items as allocation of resources, time management activities, etc.?

4Bb. **Describe** the procedure, system, or other changes that were made to:
(1) implement the solution(s), and
(2) sustain the results over time.

4Bc. **Describe** the creation and installation of a system to:
(1) measure and manage the performance of the team’s solution(s), and
(2) sustain the results over time.

**NOTE:** If existing system(s) were able to be used, the team should describe how they were used.

4C. Guiding question: Was the project successful and worth celebrating? The team should share the project’s benefits, whether those benefits were as expected relative to original goals, and how the team shared their success with all the stakeholders.

4Ca. **Identify** the actual results attributable to the implementation of the team’s solution(s).
(1) Tangible results include those results represented by improvements in specific measures or metrics-cycle time, number of defects, production, etc., and
(2) Intangible results include those that may not easily be linked to a specific measure or measurement, but might be demonstrated through improvements in a variety of related indicators–morale, employee satisfaction, etc. Teams should describe the indicators they used to identify their intangible results and what led them to believe there was an improvement in a given intangible result.

4Cb. **Describe how** the team’s results impacted the organization’s goals, performance measures, and/or strategies as identified in 1B. Trail back through the criteria to the organization’s goals, performance measures, and strategies identified early in the problem solving process, and describe how the team’s results supported the achievement of those organizational goals, measures, and/or strategies.
4Cc. **Describe** the ways in which the team shared their results with the various stakeholder groups. Throughout the problem solving process, the team has described how they identified, communicated, and interacted with internal and external (as applicable) stakeholders to understand their concerns and gain their inputs. Teams should describe how they closed the feedback loop by sharing the project’s results with the stakeholders.

♦ **SECTION 5 ♦

**Team/Project Management and Project Presentation (4 items @ 4.5 points = 18 points possible)**

Team Management and Project Presentation cover the people-resource side of the project. This ranges from how the most appropriate team members were chosen to how they were prepared for this special assignment. Organizational assistance to assure project success is covered here. Also covered is how effectively the team communicated with themselves during the life of the project. Finally, the judges will provide feedback on the overall project presentation.

**5A. Team Member Selection and Involvement:**

(1) **Explain** how and/or why the various members of the team were selected including any specific skills, capabilities, knowledge, qualifications, and/or any other criteria used in selecting the team members, and

(2) **Describe** how the various team members were involved throughout the project including any specific tasks, roles, responsibilities, *etc.* they may have had during the project.

**5B. Explain** Team Member Preparation/Development. The team should detail any training or other preparation the team received prior to or during the project to help them operate more effectively as a team. Additionally, any training the team received related to the problem solving methodology/approach they used—including the various tools and techniques used throughout the project to collect, analyze, and/or present data and information—should be included.

**5C. Explain** Team Performance Management. Explain how the team members worked together effectively throughout the project. The team’s response should include an explanation of how the team capitalized on the skills of their individual members as they carried out their roles and responsibilities, how team members shared data and information throughout the project, how they ensured effective communication within the team, and how the team managed their performance with respect to project deadlines/deliverables/milestones. 

*NOTE: Responses might include a description of how meetings were conducted, any electronic means, or any other methods the team may have used, to share data and information. Regardless of the approach(es) the team used, an explanation of how they ensured effective communication within the team is appropriate.*
5D. Project Presentation: Judges will score the team on the organization, clarity, and overall effectiveness of their presentation. Effective use of any audio/visual aids and any other presentation aids and/or techniques will also be considered in this item. It is important to note that the judges will assess how clearly and effectively the team communicated the story of their project.

Note: the scoring and feedback report will also reflect themes, both strengths and opportunities for improvement, which judges observed throughout the presentation. Consistent use of tools, analysis of data, stakeholder groups, etc. will be considered as integrating the project in a positive fashion.

♦♦♦ End of PROBLEM SOLVING Criteria ♦♦♦
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1A. Guiding Question: How was the project selected? Either the team or management selected the project. In either case, the process used to select the project must be clear and well stated. As with all team responses, providing specific examples of techniques and data used will strengthen the team’s presentation.

1Aa. (1) Describe how data and/or tools were used to support the selection, even if the project was assigned to the team, and
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1Ab. (1) Explain how the project was selected, and
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NOTE: 1Aa addresses the tools and data used. The emphasis in 1Ab is on the decisions made because of the tool usage/data analysis in 1Aa.

1Ac. Describe the potential stakeholders for the project and how they participated in the selection process. If the stakeholders were not directly involved, then describe how their interests were known and taken into account.

NOTE: this should reflect the history of the project. The actual/final stakeholders may be different from the potential stakeholders at the time the project was being defined. The goal here is to be sure that the project was not selected in a vacuum without an understanding of the organizational environment.

1B. Guiding question: Why is this project important to the organization? A good project will support, or at least align with, one or more of the organization's goals, performance measures, and/or strategies. Organizational goals can vary in type and style, from broad vision or mission statements to very specific objectives related to their goals and/or strategies. These items are looking for the link between the team’s project and those goals and/or strategies.

1Ba. Identify the affected organizational goals, performance measures, and/or strategies.

Note: Goals may be present at various levels in an organization and the team is being asked to identify the goals/performance measures impacted by their project. If the team’s project is linked to a lower-level goal, it may be helpful for the team to demonstrate the linkage between the project and the lower-level goal as well as the linkage between the lower-level goal and the organizational-level strategy or goal.
### 1Bb. Identify types (WHAT) of impact the project will have on each goal, performance measure, and/or strategy presented in 1Ba.

**NOTE:** “Type” implies a directional impact of some sort, such as increased/decreased costs, efficiencies, safety, associate satisfaction, etc.

### 1Bc. (1) Identify the degree of impact (HOW MUCH) the project will have on each goal, performance measure, and/or strategy, and (2) Explain how the team quantified the predicted degree of impact. If the team provided relative degrees of impact such as high, medium, or low, they should provide their rationale for deciding “high” vs. “medium” or “low.”

### 1C. Guiding questions: Who might be impacted by this project? What type of impact might they expect to see? “Stakeholders” defines anyone who may be affected by the project. Stakeholders could typically include internal/external customers/clients, suppliers, employees, etc. Stakeholders may refer to a unique group (e.g., “the maintenance department”) or one or more individuals.

#### 1Ca. (1) Identify the potential internal and external stakeholders who might be impacted by the project, and (2) Explain how the potential stakeholders were identified.

#### 1Cb. (1) Identify the types of potential impact on stakeholders, and (2) Explain how these were determined.

**NOTE:** Stakeholders may be impacted in many different ways by the project, from quality to timeliness. Demonstrating that the team understands how the project may have different impacts on the different stakeholder groups is important. As with 1Bb (type of goal impact), the impact is implied to be directional. This section could later tie to 4Ab, as correctly predicting potential negative impacts early in the project can help the team prepare to overcome resistance later.

#### 1Cc. (1) Identify the degree of potential impact on stakeholders, and (2) Explain how this was determined. Not all stakeholders are impacted to the same degree. If the team provided relative degrees of impact such as high, medium, or low, they should provide their rationale for deciding “high” vs. “medium” or “low.”

♦ **SECTION 2 ♦

**Current Situation Analysis (6 items @ 4.5 points = 27 points possible)**

Current Situation Analysis focuses on how the team analyzed the current situation. This includes the processes, data, and information. This section also covers how stakeholders were involved. The second half of this section covers how the team determined and validated their final improvement opportunity(ies). If the organization uses a specific methodology as part of the quality process, the team may want to consider sharing how that methodology was applied to identify the possible and final improvement opportunity(ies).
2A. Guiding question: How did the team identify the potential improvement opportunity(ies)? A high-performing team will explore multiple explanations for their current situation, not assuming that the first explanation is correct.

2Aa. **Describe** the methods and tools used to identify possible improvement opportunity(ies). Teams may use a variety of approaches/processes to identify the possible improvement opportunity(ies) in a given situation.

   NOTE: For “opportunity for improvement teams,” describe the methods and tools used to generate a list of possible opportunities for improvement.

2Ab. **Describe** the team’s analysis of data to identify possible improvement opportunity(ies). Provide clear, specific examples of what data were analyzed (from the tools/methods described in 2Aa), and how they were analyzed, to help identify the possible improvement opportunity(ies).

2Ac. **Describe how** the stakeholders were involved in identifying the possible improvement opportunities. Provide supporting information.

   NOTE: “Involved” does not necessarily mean how stakeholders participated directly in the process of selecting the improvement opportunities. “Involved” can be addressed by describing how the team took the interests of the stakeholders into account in determining the possible improvement opportunities.

2B. Guiding question: How did the team analyze information to identify the final improvement opportunity(ies)? Having identified a variety of possible improvement opportunity(ies), in 2A, these items give the team a chance to share how they went about narrowing down the possibilities to identify the true improvement opportunity(ies) for this project. As is true elsewhere, by sharing any appropriate validation techniques, the team could strengthen their presentation.

2Ba. **Describe** the methods and tools the team used to narrow down the list of potential improvement opportunity(ies) (identified in 2A), to the final improvement opportunity(ies).

2Bb. **Describe** the team’s analysis of data to select the improvement opportunity(ies). Provide clear, specific examples of what data were analyzed (from the tools/methods described in 2Ba), and how they were analyzed, to help identify the final improvement opportunity(ies).

2Bc. (1) **Identify what** the improvement opportunity(ies) was/were, and (2) **Explain how** the team validated that the final improvement opportunity(ies) determined in 2Bb was/were in fact the final improvement opportunity(ies). What tools and/or methods did the team use to validate (prove) to themselves (and others if needed) that they identified the true improvement opportunity(ies)?
SECTION 3 ♦

Solution Development (9 items @ 3 points = 27 points possible)

Solution Development allows the team to demonstrate how they logically moved from the opportunities to their improvement action(s). Initially the team should share how they developed a set of possible improvement opportunities. From there, the team should share how they arrived at their specific improvement action(s) that would meet the project objective(s). Finally, the team should share how they convinced themselves and others that their proposals would be both practical and acceptable to the organization.

3A. Guiding questions: How did the team identify the improvement actions? What criteria did the team decide on for selecting their final improvement actions? An excellent team is one that explores multiple options to arrive at the best one. They will also have specific, supportable criteria against which to judge those options.

3Aa. Describe the tools and methods the team used to identify the possible improvement actions for the improvement opportunity(ies) identified and verified in 2B. There may be a number of ways to address the improvement opportunity(ies). What tools and/or methods did the team use to identify these possible improvement actions?

3Ab. Describe the team’s analysis of data to develop possible improvement actions. Provide clear, specific examples of what data were analyzed (from the tools/methods described in 3Aa), and how they were analyzed, to help identify the possible improvement actions.

3Ac. Identify the criteria the team decided to use to assess the relative effectiveness of the various possible improvement actions they identified in 3Aa and 3Ab above.

NOTE: The criteria should help the team narrow down the list of possible improvement actions to enable them to identify the best improvement action(s).

3B. Guiding questions: How did the team select/determine the final improvement action(s) from the possibilities generated in 3A above? How did they assure that their final choice(s) met the needs of the stakeholders? Having identified a variety of possible improvements, the team should share what lead them to decide on their final approach.

3Ba. Describe the methods and tools used by the team to select the final improvement action(s). Now that the team has identified the criteria they used in selecting the final improvement action(s), this item asks the team to describe the tools and methods they used along with the criteria identified in 3Ac above to select the final improvement action(s).

3Bb. Describe what data were analyzed, and how they were analyzed to help identify the final improvement action(s).

NOTE: The team described the methods and tools they used to determine the final improvement action(s) in 3Ba; 3Bb is now asking the team to describe what data were analyzed and how they were analyzed, to support the selection of their final improvement action(s).
3Bc. **Describe how** stakeholders were involved in determining the final improvement action(s).

*NOTE: If the stakeholders were directly involved in the selection of the final improvement action(s), the team should describe how they were involved in the process; if they were not directly involved, the team should describe how the stakeholders’ interests and concerns were considered.*

3C. **Guiding questions:** How did the team validate the final improvement action(s)? What benefits does the team expect the organization to realize once the improvement action(s) is/are implemented? How did the team use data to justify the implementation? “Validation,” is not to be confused with “justification.” “Validation” is simply verifying that the improvement action(s), if implemented, will the improvement opportunity(ies) found in 2Bc. “Justification” assumes that the improvement actions are valid, and that, in addition, they are a good “value” to the organization. Both validation and justification need to occur **before** the implementation of the final improvement actions(s). They should not be based on data generated after implementation.

3Ca. (1) **Describe** the improvement action(s) the team felt would be most appropriate, and then (2) **Explain how** they validated that the improvement action(s) would solve the problem prior to actually proceeding with the implementation of the improvement action(s).

3Cb. **List** the benefits that may be realized from the improvement action(s).

(1) Tangible benefits include those benefits that lend themselves to being represented by improvements in specific measures or metrics—cycle time, number of defects, production, etc.—and

(2) Intangible benefits include those that may not easily be linked to a specific measure or measurement, but might require demonstration through improvements in a variety of related indicators—morale, employee satisfaction, etc. Teams should attempt to describe what indicators they are looking at when identifying their intangible benefits—what did they see that led them to believe there could be an improvement in a given intangible benefit?

3Cc. **Explain how** the team used data to justify the implementation of the improvement action(s) they determined to be best in 3B. The team should present the data and information they used to demonstrate the value to the organization in implementing their improvement action(s).

♦ **SECTION 4 ♦**

**Project Implementation and Results (9 items @ 3 points = 27 points possible)**

Project Implementation and Results addresses how the team sought and secured buy-in. In addition, this section gives the team the chance to discuss the approaches they used to plan for and implement their improvement action(s). Finally, this is where the team gets to present the results that were achieved. This should be based on data generated after implementation of the improvement action(s).

4A. **Guiding questions:** How were internal and external stakeholders involved in implementation? How did the team go about securing buy-in, identifying resistance, and convincing themselves (and others) that buy-in did, in fact, exist?
4Aa. **Indicate how** internal and external (as applicable) stakeholders were involved in implementing the improvement action(s).

4Ab. (1) **Describe how** the team identified the various types of resistance encountered (to their project, improvement action(s), and/or implementation plan), what steps were taken to anticipate resistance, and

(2) **Describe how** resistance from any of the stakeholder groups was addressed.

4Ac. **Explain how** the team ensured that they had stakeholder buy-in. What proof did the team have that stakeholder buy-in existed prior to implementation? If it was not practical to obtain buy-in from all stakeholders, the team should explain why.

4B. Guiding questions: How did the team make the changes? What changes did the team make? How did they assure that the new approach would be sustained? A successful project not only addresses an immediate need, it also leaves behind evidence that changes occurred and leaves in place a way to verify that changes were both made and sustained.

4Ba. **Describe** the methods used by the team to implement their improvement action(s). How did the team plan for the implementation of their improvement action(s), including action plan development, and such items as allocation of resources, time management activities, etc.?

4Bb. **Describe** the procedure(s), system(s), or other change(s) that were made to:

(1) implement the improvement action(s), and

(2) sustain the results over time.

4Bc. **Describe** the creation and installation of a system to:

(1) measure and manage the performance of the team’s improvement action(s), and

(2) sustain the results over time.

**NOTE:** If existing system(s) were able to be used, the team should describe how they were used.

4C. Guiding question: Was the project successful and worth celebrating? The team should share the project’s benefits, whether those benefits were as expected relative to original goals, and how the team shared their success with all the stakeholders.

4Ca. **Identify** the actual results attributable to the implementation of the team’s improvement action(s).

(1) Tangible results include those results represented by improvements in specific measures or metrics-cycle time, number of defects, production, etc., and

(2) Intangible results include those that may not be easily linked to a specific measure or measurement, but might be demonstrated through improvements in a variety of related indicators-morale, employee satisfaction, etc. Teams should describe the indicators they used to identify their intangible results and what led them to believe there was an improvement in a given intangible result.
4Cb. **Describe how** the team’s results impacted the organization’s goals, performance measures, and/or strategies as identified in 1B. Trail back through the criteria to the organization’s goals, performance measures, and strategies identified early in the improvement process, and describe how the team’s results supported the achievement of those organizational goals, measures, and/or strategies.

4Cc. **Describe** the ways in which the team shared their results with the various stakeholder groups. Throughout the improvement process, the team has described how they identified, communicated, and interacted with internal and external (as applicable) stakeholders to understand their concerns and gain their inputs. Teams should describe how they closed the feedback loop by sharing the project’s results with the stakeholders.

♦ **SECTION 5 ♦

**Team/Project Management and Project Presentation (4 items @ 4.5 points = 18 points possible)**

Team Management and Project Presentation cover the people-resource side of the project. This ranges from how the most appropriate team members were chosen to how they were prepared for this special assignment. Organizational assistance to assure project success is covered here. Also covered is how effectively the team communicated with themselves during the life of the project. Finally, the judges will provide feedback on the overall project presentation.

5A. **Team Member Selection and Involvement:**
   1. **Explain** how and/or why the various members of the team were selected including any specific skills, capabilities, knowledge, qualifications, and/or any other criteria used in selecting the team members, and
   2. **Describe** how the various team members were involved throughout the project including any specific tasks, roles, responsibilities, etc. they may have had during the project.

5B. **Explain** Team Member Preparation/Development. The team should detail any training or other preparation the team received prior to or during the project to help them operate more effectively as a team. Additionally, any training the team received related to the process improvement methodology/approach they used—including the various tools and techniques used throughout the project to collect, analyze, and/or present data and information—should be included.

5C. **Explain** Team Performance Management. Explain how the team members worked together effectively throughout the project. The team’s response should include an explanation of how the team capitalized on the skills of their individual members as they carried out their roles and responsibilities, how team members shared data and information throughout the project, how they ensured effective communication within the team, and how the team managed their performance with respect to project deadlines/deliverables/milestones.

**NOTE:** Responses might include a description of how meetings were conducted, any electronic means, or any other methods the team may have used, to share data and information. Regardless of the approach(es) the team used, an explanation of how they ensured effective communication within the team is appropriate.
5D. Project Presentation: Judges will score the team on the organization, clarity, and overall effectiveness of their presentation. Effective use of any audio/visual aids and any other presentation aids and/or techniques will also be considered in this item. It is important to note that the judges will assess how clearly and effectively the team communicated the story of their project.

Note: the scoring and feedback report will also reflect themes, both strengths and opportunities for improvement, which judges observed throughout the presentation. Consistent use of tools, analysis of data, stakeholder groups, etc. will be considered as integrating the project in a positive fashion.

★★★ End of PROCESS IMPROVEMENT Criteria ★★★

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