



Reducing Process Variation: Using the DOTSTAR Problem-Solving Strategy.

Davis R. Bothe

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Whether you're just beginning a career in quality or have been in this field for 30 years, this book is a must read for all those who desire to be successful at eliminating chronic process variation. Because the author stresses getting the most information from the least amount of data, you will learn how to gather the right amount of the right data at just the right time. Making decisions based on properly collected data helps you dramatically reduce process variation and its associated waste, thereby increasing process capability, customer satisfaction, and company profitability.

The seven steps of the powerful DOT*STAR problem-solving strategy that are explained in this two-volume set (8.5 by 11 inches, 1136 pages) are briefly outlined below:

1. Define the Problem -- identify and prioritize areas that need improvement and also offer the highest return on your investment of resources.
2. Observe the Process -- monitor and control key product characteristics and process variables to separate assignable-cause from common-cause variation. Obtain clues about major causes of process variation with efficient data-collection plans and effective recording techniques.
3. Think of Potential Causes -- generate many possible causes of variation based on the clues gathered in step 2. Organize these in a graphical manner to reveal interrelationships between ideas.
4. Select the Most Likely Cause -- determine the most probable cause of process variation by comparing how well the potential causes from step 3 explain the known clues generated in step 2.
5. Test to Verify -- confirm the choice made in step 4 is really a major contributor. If it isn't, the second most likely cause must be chosen and tested. This iterative procedure continues until a cause is verified as a major source of process variation.
6. Act to Implement a Solution -- produce a number of ideas for potential solutions and then select the one with the best chance of successfully resolving the problem. After confirming its effectiveness with a pilot study, develop a timetable for the solution's implementation.
7. Review and Revise the Solution -- the organization must maintain the improvement by ensuring that the solution remains effective over time and the problem stays solved forever.

Through the large number of real-life case studies provided, you will learn how numerous companies in a wide variety of industries have unleashed the problem-solving creativity of their shop-floor personnel by teaching them the DOT*STAR strategy.

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