

DEA's Office of Forensic Sciences Quest for Organizational Excellence

How using performance improvement tools are not enough

Over the past three years, the DEA Office of Forensic Sciences introduced several new initiatives to improve customer service. The effort began as a result of growing drug evidence backlogs, increased customer dissatisfaction and limited resources. Office leadership recognized that addressing the problem by requesting more resources was an unrealistic proposition and an unsustainable business model. Thus, the office developed a strategy to enhance organizational performance through process improvement and increased employee engagement. The overall effort began with the creation of a five-year strategic plan that focused on understanding the needs of both internal and external customers, improving leadership and leveraging newer instrument technologies. To achieve many of the plan's objectives, the office incorporated the principles of lean six sigma, scrum, risk management and evidence-based decision making into our management system. The presentation will explain each of these performance improvement tools and how each tool was implemented and used in a forensic science environment. Also, organizational alignment will be emphasized to demonstrate how office components must be synchronized for any effort to succeed. Lastly, the presentation will highlight and discuss outcomes and lessons learned from these efforts, and the critical role of leadership throughout the process.