



## **Chapter 9**

### **Six Sigma Marketing: Some Quality Guidelines**



With Six Sigma project in hand the focus now shifts to show case quality improvement in every aspect of marketing the project. Generally management does not go beyond setting up a goal for successful implementation of a SS project. In various chapters above, we have seen that, SSM is a fact based data-driven disciplined approach to growing market share by providing targeted product/markets with superior value. For such a business to sustain one should focus on three aspects of SSM, namely: strategic, tactical and operational aspects of marketing process. They facilitates efficiency, stability and most importantly, measureable results of Six Sigma. The benefit of integrating SS into marketing process includes better information (management by fact) to make better decisions.

Data forms the essential part of fact-based decisions, whether it is marketing or sales. The relevance of data characteristics, data quality, data reliability, and data relevancy are important features of marketing and sales. We have also seen the necessity of leaning and greening the business for environmental sustainability. It is apparent that every project is bound to maintain discipline and commitment towards their business output adhering to environmental concerns. In this chapter, we propose various quality guidelines to promote sustainable business practices through SSM in the organization. We recommend and hope that these guidelines should be made an integral part of every project.

### **9.1. Six Sigma Marketing: Some quality guidelines**

As mentioned earlier, Six Sigma project execution is a highly responsible job. Greening a SS project is further a coordinated effort comes through the management and stakeholders including the customers. In order to develop a roadmap for policy makers to improve the efficiency and quality of the marketing process, we propose some guidelines below. These guidelines will help improve the efficiency of the marketing activity and also help to assist individual firms in adopting best innovative practices adhering to environmental regulations and improve performance. These guidelines are stated on the basis of various categories like business innovations, performance (financial and environmental), environmental regulations, and sustainable business practices. They are briefly stated below:

## Business innovations:

- Treat marketing as Science than arts: Taking marketing decisions based on insights engendered through data and facts propose immense opportunity to get scientific rigor in the art of marketing. Instead of hindering creativity of marketing field, SSM propose frame work where creativity can take it tall with required reckoning of cost benefit analysis. How SSM can synchronize different stages of marketing activities to realize marketing goals is illustrated through a case study in chapter 7.
- Make all business ideas practically viable: Marketing is the activity through which organization proliferate their value proposition. Hence, what matters most is not only to make glittering promises through marketing but also to follow the business model which is practically viable. Success of marketing is realized not only through campaigns and promotions but majorly through meeting the promises that are made through marketing.
- Convert all ideas into value creation: Crafting all the marketing activities like designing website, developing content, making promotions etc., by keeping strong gaze on customer value helps to coordinate actions required at different stages. For example as shown in chapter 7, to improve upon DVC website the first phase was understanding customer value. Further alignment of rest of the marketing efforts was based on this customer defined expected value.
- Declare the sigma level of business promotions: Identifying KPI for successful business promotions and developing their measurement strategy for their objective performance evaluation is important part of SSM efforts. Along with other organizational processes it is important to assess performance of business promotions through their sigma level. Declaring sigma level of business promotions helps to check healthiness of process and provide insights for improvement.
- Make sure that Six Sigma organizations declare Six sigma certification mandatory for all product and services: once the decision regarding managing processes through sigma level has been decided the next step in line is to assess quality of product or service based on Six Sigma certification.
- Establish a clear environmental management system to collect data and responsibilities: as it reiterate many time SSM is managing marketing activities through data, it brings additional responsibility to different people in organizational hierarchy to supervise their activity part with transparency.

#### Performance (financial and marketing):

- Always track on the cycle time, Takt time, and execution time for each activity: to increase the contribution of VA activities in process it is always important to reduce cycle time, Takt time and execution time of activity.
- Assess performance of the company in terms of the growth and market share: though financial indicators are not the only indicators to assess performance of the company, they are by product of SSM approach.
- Assess product reach in terms of customer demand and like: designing offerings based on customer requirements is not the only strategy for successful SSM approach, it is also important to make them available to the market. Looking for best characteristics which suits to the offering is equally important for instant assessment of the marketing activity.
- Assess product reach in terms of local and geographical importance: understanding requirement of prospective customers belongs to particular geographical area and addressing it through scientifically designed offerings is the key of successful SSM program.
- Assess performance in terms of sales volume before and after: examining sales volume before and after using SSM approach gives clear idea about how marketing function can be benefited from this approach.
- Assess achievements of the company in terms of energy conservation, cost saving through sustainable business practices: being cost effective, achieving step increment in market share is not the only thing responsible marketers need to focus upon now a days. In the era of climate change it is equally important for companies to examine their energy consumption and highlighting their golden flick in marketing program though SSM.
- Company must maintain a documented product identification system to identify eligible products for marketing: having superficial non scientific ways leads to messy product identification system leads marketing managers to feel helpless while communicating with their customers. To develop message that results into expected customer response, documented product identification system is required.

- Corrective action audit should be made public: all the efforts company is making to address customer's requirements and making all quality improvement efforts public can bring view of prestige to the company.

#### Environnemental régulations:

- Prepare environmental mission and vision statements for each organization: with financial goals to realize through health business practices, companies now a day's should also have mission and vision statement with integrated environmental sustainability goals.
- Set a defined standard of environmental regulations for each major activity in the organization: to be responsible towards environmental sustainability integrating green practices in accordance with vision and mission statement of the company is very necessary. Organizations should demonstrate their sincerity towards environmental sustainability through their practices. This can be done by identifying possible environmental hazard generated by different organizational activities and deciding regulatory standards for that.
- Involve pollution control and waste reduction in every process: as explained in chapter-6, waste reduction realized through LSS approach propose ample opportunities to the organization to implement green initiatives.
- Check for harmful emissions and unnecessary energy consumption frequently: the first step towards green business practices is managing in house activities in sustainable way. Changing conventional habit of pinheaded energy consumption to conscious energy usage is the practice green organization should follow.
- Specify emission target, greenhouse gases and carbon budgets for each SS projects: practicing SS is not only about realizing financial benefits. With prescribed sigma level of the processes it is also desirable to prescribe environmental sustainability standards in the form of emission target, greenhouse gases and carbon budget etc.
- Record and act upon all environmental compliance violations: with all in house regulations and trying to practice environmental goals it is desirable to take obligatory actions against companies who consciously try to break desirable standards.

#### Sustainable business practices:

- Promote reuse, reduce and recycle policy

- Promote e-Business activities
- Review and act on customer complaints and resolutions frequently
- Allow customers to rate and grade the products and services
- Promote own sources of electricity generations
- Implement economically viable waste resources for collection and disposal
- Develop innovative processes and IT savvy technical know-how's
- Promote eco-friendly vehicles and transportations for goods movement
- Any other specific methods adopted by the company for energy recovery and saving

The sustainable business practices discussed above overlaps most of the other ingredients for the quality and productivity movement in the business processes. Thus, SSM balances quality assurance along quality practices in true spirit. However, depending on the company environment, one may revise or modify the guidelines to suit one's purpose. Studies have shown that environmental performance, financial performance and business innovations are strongly correlated; rather, business innovations always contribute to environmental performance and financial performances. Thus the regulations stated above are very important for the business to sustain and improve the quality of the organizations. Some of the above guidelines have a strong base of quantitative and qualitative characteristics and therefore, can be evaluated for assessment anytime in the organization. And it should be made mandatory for any quality certification.

## **9.2. Six Sigma Marketing scores**

Marketing Score is an online assessment tool that examines the strength of your business and marketing foundations, forecasts potential and aligns expectations. It's a platform for *subjective analysis from the viewpoint of internal stakeholders, including sales and marketing management, and company executives*. (Accessed through, <https://www.pr2020.com/story/marketing-score>). Marketing Score is based on the principle that every element of an organization, as it relates to marketing, can be divided into one of three categories: assets, neutrals and liabilities. By evaluating and scoring these elements, organizations can devise integrated marketing strategies; allocate time, money and talent; and adapt resources and priorities based on performance.

For the case study discussed in chapter 7, we recommend that, the marketing score and quality should be evaluated on the following aspects:

1. Content
2. Navigation
3. Design and structure
4. Appearance and multimedia
5. Uniqueness

According to Vassillis et al. (2004), the framework of web site content is composed of a hierarchical structure of criteria and sub-criteria and makes use of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to enhance criterion and sub-criterion weight value assessment. The International Standards Organization (ISO) standards 14598-3 and 9126 incorporate models for quality of web sites, which focus on general software external characteristics that must be accomplished when the software is in use.

AHP is based on the idea that a complex issue can be effectively examined if it is decomposed into many parts (Saaty, 1985). AHP entails a hierarchy whose top level reflects the overall objective: the focus. Criteria on which the focus is dependent are listed at intermediate levels, while the lowest level includes the alternatives, e.g., the travel company websites. An element at main criteria is said to be a governing element for those elements at the sub-criteria. Elements at a certain level are compared to each other with reference to their effect on the governing level. For the case study discussed in this thesis,

The elements at the main criteria are:

- Over all business model through market differentiator
- Specification of offerings based on customer value analysis
- CRM aligned with business goals
- Customer focused value chain management
- Pleasurable TCE

With focused elements of main criteria DVC decided to go for its online presence. As mentioned earlier this was done by developing company's website. Perceived website quality (also called sub-criteria here) can be realized based in following elements:

- Completeness of information
- Means of navigation
- Links to other sites
- Convenience of navigation tools
- Uniqueness of content
- Aesthetics of content presentation
- Uniqueness of design characteristics
- Reliability of content
- Readability of content
- Site map
- Information structure

Through our data analysis (factor analysis), it has been found that there is strong association between the main-criteria and sub-criteria factors. Improved performance of these sub criteria leads to expected execution of main criteria. Hence, DVC tried to address improvement in sub criteria through customer value analysis and Different SEO techniques. One can also use these marketing scores to assess company's market value and growth. Raval and Muralidharan (2017b) have discussed SSM quality guide line in great detail.