

Improving the Quality of a Bank's Services

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In a competitive marketplace, the quality of a company's products or services is a key to satisfying customers. Using data is a key to improving quality. That's what I do: as a Quality Analyst, I use statistical tools to analyze data, whether they describe the time to process a new hire or the results of a customer satisfaction survey.

My work is organized by a rigorous and disciplined methodology called "Six Sigma." Yes, "Sigma" is the standard deviation. The Six Sigma method emphasizes improving quality through measuring, analyzing, and eliminating any weaknesses that the data reveal. I have been trained as a "black belt," an expert in this methodology. Six Sigma originated in the manufacturing industry but is now applied by leaders in service industries, such as the large bank that I work for.

I use an assortment of tools to analyze processes. Many are standard statistical methods such as analysis of variance (ANOVA). Using tools like ANOVA, I can tell if the responses of subgroups in a customer satisfaction survey differ. Once I identify a group's responses as unusual (whether good or bad), we investigate to find causes and make changes that will improve our service to our customers. When looking at the complex process of hiring an employee, our team used simulation to model the process. We entered historical data into a detailed map of the process to simulate a year's worth of new employee hires and predict where bottlenecks would occur and what level of budget and staffing would make the process run most smoothly. Management then used the model results in planning for the next year.

I enjoy the variety and complexity in my work—I solve problems from many areas of business, I cooperate with different groups of colleagues, and I use a variety of statistical tools, all with the overall goal of improving what we offer our customers. The most important aspect of my job is that everything is backed by factual data. Unlike in the past, whenmere opinion usually dictated how and when improvements were made, now I can be much more certain of my conclusions and recommendations.