

## Madison Area Technical College A Model for Success

### Overview

#### THE CLIENT

Madison Area Technical College, or Madison College, is one of the largest schools in the Wisconsin Technical College System, which includes 16 community and technical colleges. Madison offers more than 175 associate degrees and technical diplomas, including traditional, in-class courses, and online degree programs. Madison College's Adult and Continuing Education programs offer professional and personal development classes, especially for students seeking to increase or strengthen their business acumen and management capabilities. In 2014, Madison College partnered with The Quality Group to create courses in Process Improvement and Lean Six Sigma methodology for both contract training and open enrollment contexts.



**MADISON**  
AREA | TECHNICAL  
**COLLEGE**

#### THE CHALLENGE

Madison College was receiving requests for LSS and Process Improvement training from corporations and individuals interested in building their skills through education. In order to respond to this growing interest, the team at Madison needed to create an effective, engaging, and profitable Process Improvement program for its clients and students, but it faced several challenges along the way. When Madison College and The Quality Group first teamed up, the college was experiencing a shortage of quality instructors and sales professionals with a background in Lean methodology. Madison also needed access to flexible, customizable training materials that would truly meet their students' needs. Dennis Wessel, Client Services Manager with Madison College, explains the challenges this way:



*"First, we needed a bench of strong instructors, and more than that, we needed to overcome resistance to change with our existing instructors. We were proposing a new way of teaching LSS, using a blended classroom to reach a wide variety of learning styles, but we had instructors who were used to traditional teaching methods, creating their own course materials and teaching their own brand of LSS. That made it hard to get consistency of training across different courses. Second, we needed sales people with a good foundation in LSS and Process Improvement. We're offering a solution product to our clients, but solution selling on its own won't help as much as a team that is able to explain the product with some depth and experience. Finally, we really needed courses that weren't bogged down with information that was irrelevant for our students. You know, a lot of the people we train are front-line employees, and it's essential that we don't waste their time with rigid course structures that don't address their actual concerns."*

The people at Madison College knew they had a unique opportunity to reach clients and students with the skills and training they need to compete in today's economy, but it would take strong leadership and an effective partnership to help address these challenges.

## THE SOLUTION

Dennis Wessel and the team at Madison College partnered with The Quality Group to design a cost-effective course with the flexibility to meet the needs of a wide range of companies and individuals. First, with support and education from The Quality Group's own LSS Master Champions, Madison began to recruit and train the instructor base necessary to run a sustainable, high quality program. TQG Master Black Belt John Best worked closely with the team at Madison to build their roster of instructors and train a sales force versed in Process Improvement. At the same time, Madison College was able to create a strong curriculum base, tailored to the needs of their students and clients, using The Quality Group's library of content.

Dennis Wessel says, *"Before working with The Quality Group, the LSS Green Belt program was (88 hours) traditional in-class instruction. It was very time-consuming, and the course structure was too rigid. We got feedback from students saying that some of the material they'd spent weeks learning just wasn't relevant to their contexts. So, we took advantage of the flexibility offered by The Quality Group's library of modules. We were able to focus on the material that was really important, and leave out what wasn't. Now our courses can be completed with less than half of the traditional instruction we previously provided, and we feel we are providing more targeted instruction with a real, measurable ROI."*

Madison College was able to successfully create courses for their contract training clients and also build a program for open enrollment students interested in expanding their Process Improvement skills. The Quality Group made it easy to adapt training materials to a wide variety of needs, so Madison is able to offer fully customizable training that saves both time and money.

## THE RESULTS

Madison College did all the right things in starting their new program—mentoring instructors, educating their sales team, and building a strong curriculum. Their approach has paid off. In the year since they launched the open enrollment course, Madison has built an impressive program in both volume and profitability. Nearly 100 students have successfully completed the course, and interest is still growing. Likewise, their contract training client base continues to expand. When Dennis Wessel reflects on their first year with the new program, he says



***"It takes a lot of little things to be successful. Attention to what your clients need, commitment to mentorship and support, and you have to be willing to take risks and try new things. But, if you believe in what you're offering, you'll make it happen."***

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