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Lean Six Sigma for Healthcare Expert Jay Arthur Interviewed by Business901

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In a recent Business901 Podcast, Simplifying Lean and Six Sigma for Government and Healthcare, Jay Arthur author of numerous books on Lean And Six Sigma and most recently, Lean Six Sigma for Hospitals discussed making these methodologies available to the masses.

While Washington is struggling to figure out how to pay for healthcare reform, Jay Arthur, author of Lean Six Sigma for Hospitals, says that a handful of Lean Six Sigma tools will shave an estimated trillion dollars of preventable expense from the \$2.5 trillion cost of healthcare. The right tools used in the right order can accomplish the savings in two-to-three years. In essence, performance improvements will pay for healthcare reform by providing fast, affordable, flawless healthcare.

While most Lean Six Sigma implementations are long, arduous, expensive efforts, it's overkill for healthcare. Post-it™ Notes, control charts, pareto charts and fishbone diagrams will solve most of the problems facing healthcare.

Only four percent (one action step out of every 25) causes over half of all medical mistakes and errors. Laser-focused improvement in these areas can deliver immediate bottom-line reduction in healthcare costs and adverse patient outcomes. Reduction in preventable costs will be offset by increases in overall care.

Why should Healthcare “pay” for healthcare reform by getting dramatically faster, better and cheaper? According to Press Ganey, Emergency Department (ED) turnaround times are stuck at four hours, *unchanged for a decade*. The 1999 study, *To Err is Human*, found that 99,000 patients a year die due to medical mistakes. In 2010, 99,000 died due to preventable hospital acquired infections, 150,000 died due to surgical complications. When asked if healthcare had made any progress on the challenge to improve over the last decade, the answer is not really.

Most of these costs come from preventable mistakes and avoidable procedures. Some of the solutions are already well known and proven in practice. Dr. Peter Pronovost created a five-item checklist for preventing central line blood stream infections (CLBSI) that dropped infection rates to zero in participating hospitals. Dr. Atul Gawande helped the World Health Organization develop a three-part surgical checklist that reduced deaths due to surgical complications by almost half. Nationwide implementation of these lifesaving checklists is still less than 20 percent.

The remaining problems facing healthcare—sluggish, error-prone processes that inflate costs—can be addressed with Lean Six Sigma. “Healthcare doesn’t need the rigid training that most Six Sigma training companies recommend,” Arthur says. “Most Six Sigma training is designed for the one person out of 100 that works on a manufacturing factory floor, not in a nursing ward or emergency department. There are a handful of tools that will solve most of the problems facing healthcare.”

Jay has found that even the largest companies cannot train more than about 250 Six Sigma “belts” per year. To simplify and accelerate the learning process, Jay has created a Lean Six Sigma “Money Belt” curriculum on YouTube for Healthcare. Healthcare clinicians and operations people alike can learn how to apply the essential tools of Lean Six Sigma in 5-to-10 minute videos at www.lssmb.com.

Jay worked with one hospital system to save \$5 million per year in denied insurance claims. He helped one hospital lab eliminate 54 percent of technician travel and shave seven hours of delay from the lab’s turnaround times. “It’s easy,” Jay says, “if you get the right people in the room, laser-focused on solving a specific problem involving delay, defects or deviation.

Jay started many years ago simplifying the Lean Six Sigma process which eventually led to Lean Six Sigma Demystified: A Self-Teaching Guide (McGraw-Hill 2011) and Lean Six Sigma for Hospitals. Jay has always been a master at simplifying these processes and reducing the cost of entry. His belief is that you can get to 5 sigma using only a few basic tools that he discusses in his money-belt videos.

Jay Arthur works with companies that want to plug the leaks in their cash flow using Lean Six Sigma. Jay is the only improvement specialist that understands and can help you pinpoint areas for improvement in processes, people, and technology. Jay is first and foremost a Money Belt; he knows how to use data to pinpoint broken processes. Jay helps teams understand their communication styles and restore broken connections. Jay has 30 years experience developing software on everything from mainframes to PCs.

Jay Arthur is the President of KnowWare International Inc., a company dedicated to making Lean Six Sigma easily accessible to businesses small and large, manufacturing and healthcare. Jay works with hospitals that want to solve the problems of delay, defects and deviation—the three silent killers of productivity, profitability and patients. Jay is the author of Lean Six Sigma for Hospitals and the [QI Macros](#) Lean Six Sigma software for Excel.

[Listen to the podcast here.](#)

There is also a [link for a transcription of the podcast.](#)

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