

Do Executives See the Impact of Quality Improvement Projects?

Perhaps they would more often if they had accessible insights on the performance and ultimately the overall impact of their quality improvement projects. For example, 60% of the organizations surveyed by the American Society for Quality (ASQ) in their 2016 Global State of Quality study asserted *they don't know or don't measure the financial impact of quality*.

Evidence shows company leaders just don't have good access to the kind of information they need about their quality improvement initiatives.



The ASQ study indicates that more than half of the executives are getting updates about quality only once a quarter, or even less. You can bet they make decisions that impact quality much more frequently than that.

The 2013 and 2016 *ASQ Global State of Quality* study uncovered some shocking insights about the effectiveness of quality improvement initiatives.

Even for organizations that are working hard to assess the impact of quality, communicating that impact effectively to C-level executives is a huge challenge. The 2013 study revealed that the higher people rise in an organization's leadership, the less often they receive reports about quality metrics. Only 2% of senior executives get daily quality reports, compared to 33% of front-line staff members.

Moreover, a quarter of the senior executives reported getting quality metrics only on an annual basis. That's a huge problem, and it resonates across all industries. The Juran Institute, which specializes in training, certification and consulting on quality management globally, also concluded that *a lack of management support is the No. 1 reason quality improvement initiatives fail*.

Quality practitioners are a dedicated, hard-working lot, and their task is challenging and frequently thankless. Their successes should be understood and recognized. But their efforts don't appear to be reaching C-level executive offices as often as they deserve.

Why do so many leaders get so little information about the impact of their quality programs?



5 Factors that Make Reporting on Quality Programs Impossible

In fairness to everyone involved, from the practitioner to the executive, piecing together the full picture of quality in a company is daunting. Practitioners tell us that even in organizations with robust, mature quality programs, assessing the cumulative impact of an initiative can be difficult, and sometimes impossible. The reasons include:

Scattered, Inaccessible Data

Individual teams are very good at capturing and reporting their results, but a large company may have thousands of simultaneous quality projects. Just gathering the critical information from all of those projects and putting it into a form leaders can use is a monumental task.

Disparate Project Applications and Documents

Teams typically use an array of different applications to create charters, process maps, value stream maps, and other documents. So the project record becomes a mix of files from many different applications. Adding to the confusion, the latest versions of some documents may reside on several different computers, project leaders often need to track multiple versions of a document to keep the official project record current.

Inconsistent Metrics Across Projects

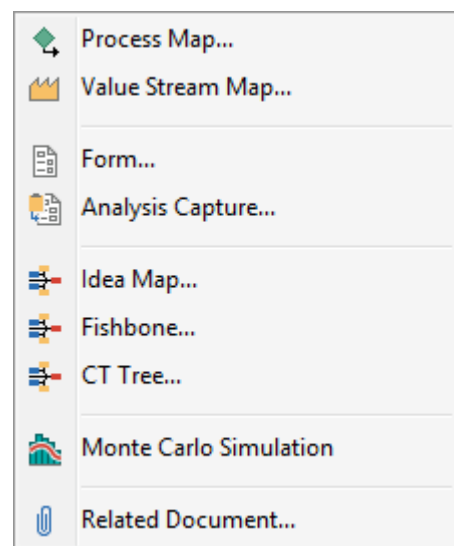
Results and metrics aren't always measured the same way from one team's project to another. If one team measures apples and the next team measures oranges, their results can't be evaluated or aggregated as if they were equivalent.

Ineffective and Ill-suited Tracking

Many organizations have tried quality tracking methods ranging from homegrown project databases to full-featured project portfolio management (PPM) systems. But homegrown systems often become a burden to maintain, while off-the-shelf solutions created for IT or other business functions don't effectively support projects involving continuous quality improvement methods like Lean and Six Sigma.

Too Little Time

Reporting on projects can be a burden. There are only so many hours in the day, and busy team members need to prioritize. Copying and pasting information from project documents into an external system seems like non-value-added time, so it's easy to see why putting the latest information into the system gets low priority—if it happens at all.



Companion by Minitab provides the tools you need to efficiently run Lean Six Sigma projects. Companion puts all of your tools into one easy-to-use application, so you spend less time managing projects and more time making them progress. Give your team access to more than 100 industry-tested process improvement tools.

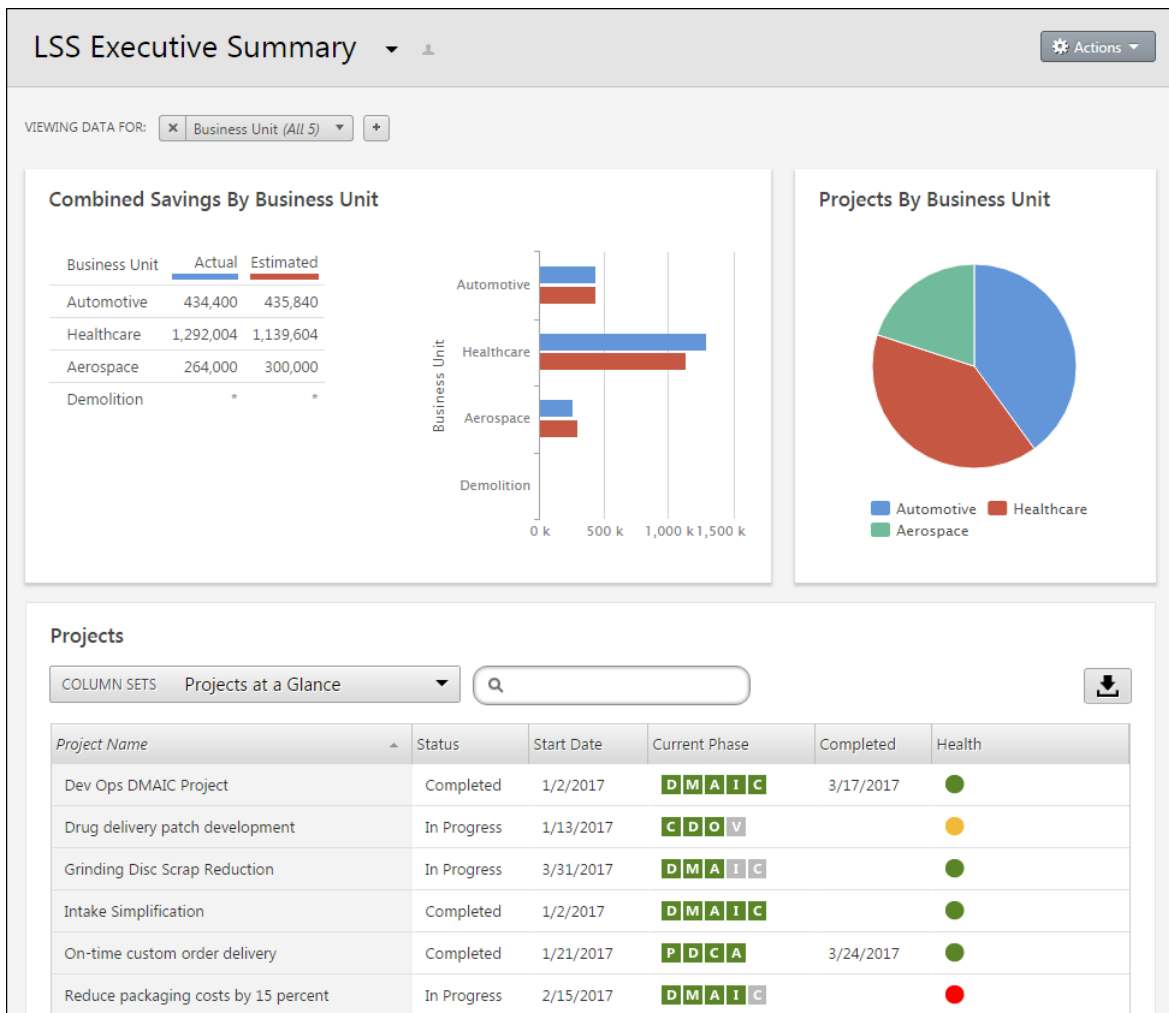
Reporting on Quality Shouldn't Be So Difficult

Given the complexity of the task, and the systemic and human factors involved in improving quality, it's not hard to see why many organizations struggle with knowing how well their initiatives are doing.

But for quality professionals and leaders, the challenge is to make sure that reporting on results becomes a critical step in every individual project, and that all projects are using consistent metrics. Teams that can do that will find their results getting more attention and more credit for how they affect the bottom line.

The ASQ and Juran Institute findings dramatically underscore the challenges Minitab has been focusing on recently—in fact, our [Companion by Minitab](#) software tackles many of these factors head-on.

Companion takes a desktop app that provides a complete set of integrated tools for completing projects, and combines it with a cloud-based project storage system and web-based dashboard. For teams, the desktop app makes it easier to complete projects—and since project data is centrally stored and rolls up to the dashboard automatically, reporting on projects is literally effortless.

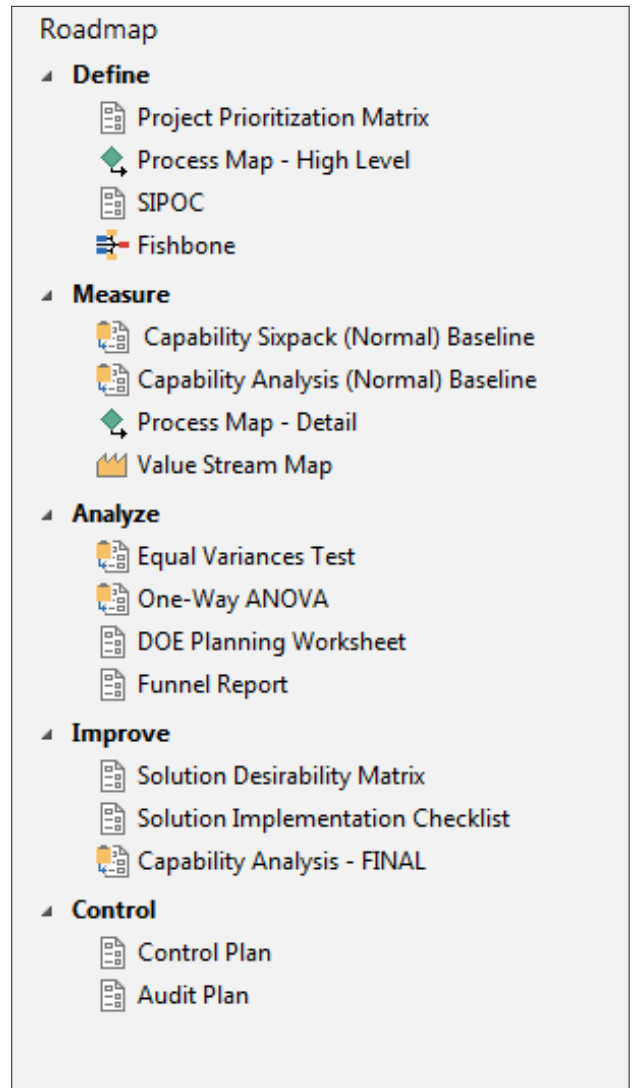


The Companion dashboard provides customizable, real-time reports on your entire enhancement program so you never miss hours collecting project data. Project data is automatically distributed to your Companion dashboard, so you get up-to-date reports on direct and indirect savings, project duration, number of projects started, and more.

For executives, managers, and stakeholders, Companion delivers unprecedented and unparalleled insight into the progress, performance, and bottom-line impact of the organization's entire quality initiative, or any individual piece of it.

Regardless of the tools used, the challenge of ensuring the results and impact of quality improvement initiatives are understood throughout an organization—is one that every practitioner is likely to grapple with in their career.

How will you make sure the results of *your* work reach your organization's decision-makers?



Companion project Roadmaps™ make it easy to execute, share, and replicate projects throughout your organization.

Attend a free webinar to learn more
about Companion by Minitab
...or try it with your team now,
absolutely free for 30 days!