

PROCURE CON 2006
The Comprehensive Strategic Sourcing & Procurement Event
The Rise Of The CPO: Strategic Sourcing For Long Term Sustainment
[Advertise with us](#)

ma NEWS

[View all industry news](#)

QualPro Offers a Challenge to Six Sigma

by [Chris Chiappinelli](#), MA Editorial Staff

Posted on Monday, September 4, 2006 2:00:00 AM EDT [Sign Up to receive Daily News Alerts in your E-mail Inbox](#)

Abstract: QualPro's multi-variable process testing aims to streamline quality improvement efforts within an organization by handling many variables simultaneously.
Keywords: Six Sigma, multi-variable testing, MVT, QualPro, business process improvement

QualPro, Inc. (Knoxville, TN), which has been in the business of multi-variable process testing since 1982, has recently positioned itself as the answer to Six Sigma projects that it says have become too costly and too short on results.

Over the past two decades-plus, according to QualPro, the company has deployed its consultants to 1,000 companies to improve basic business processes. Like Six Sigma, QualPro's multi-variable testing (MVT) focuses on improving quality within an organization.

"The underlying methodology [of Six Sigma] is statistical in nature, but it's not strong," says David Cochran, QualPro's vice president of operations. "There's not a process like... MVT that can cause very fast, large breakthroughs with any reliability." One of the main differentiators of the two methods is the testing phase. While Six Sigma projects test how an individual variable affects the overall process -- the speed of a conveyor belt, for instance -- multi-variable testing vets many variables simultaneously.

To start the process, QualPro asks a company to generate 100 or so possible ideas for process improvement, which QualPro then helps trim to around 20. Next comes the industrial-strength math. If the final list of ideas is trimmed to 19, Cochran says, the statistics engine determines approximately 20 of the most promising combinations thereof. Then the company tests those various combinations -- usually one combination per hour -- in the operational setting, and the results show which will deliver the most improvement. The whole process can take a matter of weeks, Cochran says, as opposed to months or years with Six Sigma projects.

Ralph Rio, a research director at ARC Advisory Group who studies process improvement methods including Six Sigma, sees the two processes as more complementary than competing. Rio doesn't contest that Six Sigma these days demands a lot of time and resources. But, he says, that is due to how it is managed. The underlying process, he stresses, is sound.

"I strongly believe that the Six Sigma methodology -- define, measure, analyze, improve, control -- is an excellent methodology," Rio says. "The problem is with how the Six Sigma community implemented it and the amount of overhead required for the average Six Sigma program."

In fact, according to Rio, if MVT were added to the Six Sigma process, it would make for a better outcome. "I think if you take the Six Sigma methodology... and you say, 'We're going to include multi-variable testing as part of our measurement phase,' I think that's a win," Rio says. In the meantime, QualPro forges ahead, many variables at a time.

This article originally appeared in the September 2006 issue of Managing Automation magazine.

Ask the ERP Expert
Standing by to resolve your most pressing issues

Joshua Greenbaum,
Principal, Enterprise Applications Consulting
[Advertise with us](#)

Page Tools
[E-mail this to a colleague](#)
[Printable View](#)
[Add this to MY ma](#)

Free Digital Edition

[Subscribe to the digital edition of ma](#)

Tools
My ma
[+ SAVED PRODUCTS](#)
[+ SAVED COMPARISONS](#)
[+ NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS](#)
[+ SAVED RESOURCES](#)
[+ SAVED NEWS](#)
[All MA News](#)
[+ SAVED ARTICLES](#)
[GO TO MY ma](#)

Related Resources
[+ COMPANIES MENTIONED](#)
[+ MORE](#)
[Articles by Chris Chiappinelli](#)

The Brousell Blog
[The Auto Industry Crisis](#)
Technology was supposed to help yet the U.S. auto industry is a mess. What could the industry have done better?

Your assets move...
...so why shouldn't your RFID reader?

symbol
[Advertise with us](#)

[Ads by Google](#)
[MES - Product Tracking](#)
Low cost MES for Product & Job Tracking, Data Collection, etc.
[www.unisoft-cim.com](#)
[Advertise on this site](#)

[Ads by Google](#)
[US Customs' Import Data](#)
Develop Competitive Intelligence Who, what, when, where & how much.
[www.zepol.com](#)
[Advertise on this site](#)

[Ads by Google](#)
[SyteLine Solutions](#)
Radley provides data collection and EDI Solutions for SyteLine Users
[www.radley.com](#)
[Advertise on this site](#)

subject to our [Terms of Use](#). Read our [Privacy Policy](#). Reproduction in any form without the express written permission of Thomas Publishing Company LLC is strictly prohibited.
v.2-5d

 Video
 Audiocast