

Candidate Selection Criteria

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Background

Continuous improvement results are a combination of the right strategy, projects and people. In this article, we will focus on how to identify and select candidates for the project and program leader roles. But what criteria should be used to select the right candidates? Fortunately, roles such as Green Belts, Black Belts, Kaizen Leaders, Master Black Belts and Champions have existed for decades and the best ones have had certain things in common.

What are the roles?

The main project leader roles, in continuous improvement terms, are Green Belts, Black Belts and Kaizen Leaders. The main program roles are Master Black Belts and Champions.

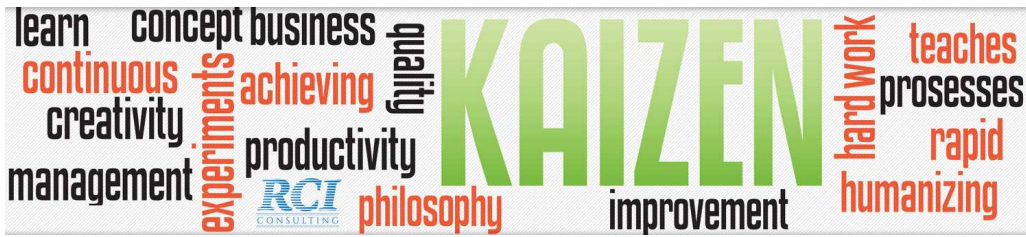
Green Belt (GB) – a part-time project leader, usually assigned to a project in their own function; GB certification is based on attending two weeks of training and complete one project

Black Belt (BB) – a full- or part-time project leader, which can be assigned projects in any function; BB certification is based on attending four weeks of training and complete two projects

Kaizen Leader (KL) – a full- or part-time position, which can be assigned projects in any function but usually at their main location; KL certification is based on attending two to three weeks of training (two weeks of KL, or attend GB/BB plus one week KL) then completing one kaizen event.

Master Black Belt (MBB) – a full-time position that can be assigned any continuous improvement project, usually having a large scope and covering multiple functions. MBB certification varies, but normally requires that the candidate already be a certified Black Belt plus additional requirements which could include teaching a full wave of Black Belt training, coaching a number or dollar amount of Green or Black Belt projects, and personally leading projects at the enterprise level. They report administratively to a Champion.

Champion – a full- or part-time position, depending on the number of project leaders they will support. The champion is a business leadership role, to help translate the needs of the business into a pipeline of specific projects that can be executed by Lean Six Sigma project leaders. There is no certification, but training should include (at a minimum)



attending sponsor training and getting deployment guidance from outside experts. The overall Deployment Champion usually reports to the executive sponsor, and works with additional Champions to standardize and coordinate across different locations or divisions.

Criteria to Select Project Leaders

In order to identify and select project leaders, several criteria have been developed. The number of desired traits generally increases, as the complexity of the role increases. Not all candidates need to meet every criteria, but the more they have the better.

Green Belt and Black Belt Criteria

- Leadership
- Interest in running lean six sigma projects
- Results orientation
- Communication skills
- Ability to learn technical and statistical tools

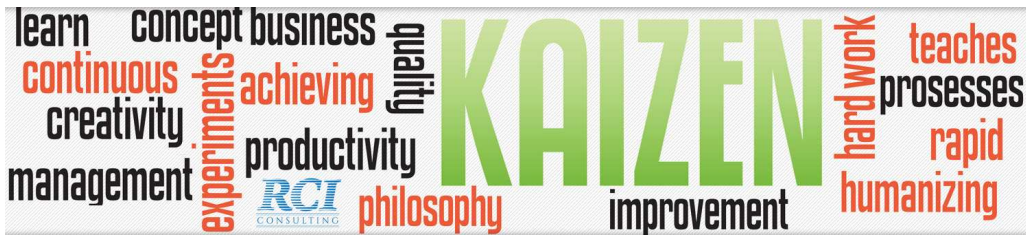
Leadership is the main attribute of any project leader. This is not organizational authority, so much as demonstrated ability to work with and lead people. Black Belt candidates are usually on the high potential employees list.

Kaizen Leader Criteria

(In addition to the criteria for Black Belt or Green Belt, add the following)

- Planning skills
- Interest in running kaizen events
- Ability to facilitate teams to meet daily timelines during kaizen events
- Mental flexibility

It takes a certain kind of person to facilitate kaizen events. Kaizen events require intensive preparation before the event and both flexibility and lateral thinking during these week long workshops.



Criteria to Select Program Leaders

Master Black Belt Criteria

(In addition to the criteria for Black Belt or Green Belt, add the following)

- Teaching skills
- Commitment to the role for 3-5 years
- Willingness to travel (often required)
- Ability to learn advanced lean and statistical tools

In addition to mandatory technical skills, it is highly desirable for Master Black Belt candidates to have demonstrated soft skills to help other project leaders understand new concepts and remove barriers to project completion.

Champion Criteria

- Trusted business leader at the company (typically Director – VP level)
- Experience with the company products, processes and people
- Proven ability to communicate and manage change within the company culture

Trust is the most important attribute for a Champion, because other business leaders are asked to share their top issues as projects, and their best people as project leaders and team members.

RCI consulting experts have over twenty years of experience using rapid continuous improvement methods to execute strategy, train teams and deliver hard savings to the bottom line. If you would like to learn more, please contact us at 800.732.9394 or visit our website www.rapidci.com.