

For this example, a telecommunications provider's Internet business unit found themselves with rising costs in 2002. One of the areas singled out for particular scrutiny was the business unit covering technical support for Internet users. The managers encouraged their staff to look for opportunities to cut costs and improve operational efficiency.

As a result, there were over 30 cost cutting or operational improvement initiatives in progress or being planned. Six Sigma was being introduced across the company and managers and staff were diligently looking for projects to demonstrate their new found capabilities.

To cut a long story short, it took just two workshop sessions of about two hours each to find immediate savings of 10% of the total technical support costs. We used a very simple priority setting tool, based on the two factors of Impact on Objectives and Ease to Implement, to show only five of the 30+ initiatives were going to be really beneficial, and just one of these could be implemented in a period of a few weeks in order to make immediate savings. Others of the five were implemented later to make even greater improvement to the performance of the business unit.

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