

Letter to the Editors

Rebranding SF?

This evening we had another interesting conference call for the SFCT UK chapter on the subject of how to increase credibility for SF in organisations. The call raised a number of interesting points that I consider worth sharing with a wider audience.

The group agreed that SF lacks credibility in organisations. To clarify, by credibility we mean that SF is understood, recognised and accepted and organisations are willing to buy SF consultancy and training.

The group discussed how other approaches such as Six Sigma, Total Quality Management, Agile Software and even Safety have gained credibility in organisations. A list of points included articles, journals, books, industry conference appearances, case studies showing real success in organisations (preferably with a financial value), academic interest and inclusion in academic courses, famous champions (e.g. Jack Welch at GE), competitors using the disciplines and easy measurement and branding.

The group raised the issue of time, agreeing that it takes a long time for approaches to gain credibility. One needs only to think of Deming and Quality to recognise this.

However, the question of branding was raised as particularly important, that Six Sigma, Agile Software and TQM are perceived as brands (quite literally for the first two named). SF on the other hand is often misunderstood (for example, people believing it to be purely about looking for solutions), which does not help raise credibility.

Finally the group considered some small steps that might help gain credibility. One idea was for practitioners to position SF as a complementary approach to those already used,

not an alternative (the use of SF in Toyota was raised as an example here). This helps reduce defensiveness.

Another was to consider finding a “brand name” for SF so that people can immediately recognise what it is. A discussion arose around using a Japanese, Chinese or even Gaelic name!

It is for this reason that I am writing. On the call there were five people. It would be interesting to understand the views of others in SFCT. Ladies and gentlemen, should we rebrand SF and if so, what name would you give it? Please discuss.

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Yes! And... PO Box 123, Pinner HA5 3PJ, United Kingdom, hi@yesand.co.uk

Note from the Editors: This discussion is underway in the SFCT UK Chapter LinkedIn group. Members are encouraged to join and contribute their views. We hope to publish a digest of the results in the next issue of Interaction.