

# Continuous-Improvement Specialist

Reports to: Head, Operations Manager, or Manager, Operational Excellence



## Main Duties

may vary from one company to another

- **Participates in the implementation of the continuous-improvement program:** contributes to define the program parameters; identifies areas of improvement; implements a deployment plan for the continuous-improvement program; ensures the plan's follow-up; evaluates performance of the improvements; ensures processes are in compliance with legislation, standards, and regulations.
- **Improves policies, procedures, and processes:** identifies opportunities for improvement and defines the issues; identifies objectives; considers current procedures and measures performance; recommends and implements optimal solutions; measures observed improvements; drafts documents and reports.
- **Manages the continuous-improvement program:** defines continuous-improvement needs; identifies team members and the role of each person; plans activities; determines corrective measures; implements the project and performs follow-up.
- **Advises and assists personnel:** ensures the management of changes; proposes solutions to achieve objectives; facilitates the implementation of continuous-improvement projects; supports employees and the management team; provides training.

## Evolution of the Profession

- The current context encourages companies to restructure themselves and implement continuous-improvement processes in order to, among other things, increase process efficiencies and reduce costs.
- There is a rising demand for Continuous-Improvement Specialists, even in large companies. Several companies are establishing well-defined, dedicated continuous-improvement teams.
- The role of Continuous-Improvement Specialist requires an understanding of statistical methods as well as enhanced analytical abilities in order to confidently propose appropriate recommendations.

## Best Practices

- Upgrade knowledge in order to remain effective in the profession.
- Attend conferences as well as continuing-education and development activities.
- Continuous-Improvement Specialists have access to training that, in particular, leads to certification at the Green-Belt, Black-Belt, and Master Black-Belt levels. They are required to take more general courses in areas such as communications and change management. This training is available both internally and externally (e.g., Mouvement québécois de la qualité [Quebec Quality Movement], universities, American Society for Quality [ASQ]), Knowledge Management Institute of Canada [KIM]).

## Main responsibilities<sup>1</sup>

### Involvement in the implementation of a Continuous-Improvement Program

- Clearly defines program objectives and scope.
- Secures employee commitment for proactive change management.
- Appropriately implements principles of governance. Evaluates and prioritizes potential improvements based on gains and required effort.
- Establishes a clear and well-articulated implementation plan.
- Establishes criteria for the project's success and prepares a sound statement of constraints.
- Realistically defines specific project charters.
- Resolves technical problems: e.g., formulation, equipment, product, interpretation of regulations, resource availability.
- Implements performance indicators and establishes focus groups.
- Appropriately verifies the sustainability of these measures.

### Management of Continuous-Improvement Projects

- Conducts a detailed analysis of the current situation and accurately describes the issues.
- Identifies intervention priorities and indicators.
- Secures commitment from process managers and mobilizes other involved parties.
- Specifies deliverables, outcome indicators, and performance-measurement indicators.
- Identifies available resources: people, material, finances, etc.
- Clearly identifies team members and associates, and clarifies their roles and responsibilities.
- Maps out in detail the desired situation.
- Analyzes and identifies gaps.
- Clearly and rigorously defines methodology.
- Accurately analyzes options as well as their impact and feasibility.
- Specifies obstacles and ways to overcome them from the perspective of continuous improvement.
- Regularly monitors the implementation of solutions to achieve objectives and expected benefits.

### Advisory Role and Change Management Support

- Scrupulously analyzes the issues pertaining to a project's intent, deliverables, and leadership.
- Provides managers with sound advice and support in developing communication strategies.
- Realistically identifies issues and program obstacles.
- Appropriately investigates or analyzes constraints and compromises.
- Develops and drafts an action plan tailored to the continuous-improvement project.
- Accurately identifies training needs.
- Imparts relevant work methods and tools.
- Ensures that personnel from concerned departments receive appropriate training or coaching.
- Provides appropriate support to department managers in maintaining implementation of the continuous-improvement initiatives within their respective sectors.

<sup>1</sup> As per the company's mode of operations.

## Qualifications

### Continuous-Improvement Specialists have:

- A university degree in science, engineering, management, or a related discipline or a college degree in industrial engineering, technology, or science.
- Three to six years of experience in the pharmaceutical field or another regulated field.
- Continuous-improvement certification at the Green- or Black-Belt level (an asset).

### Employers are seeking candidates who possess the following skills and attributes:

- Ability to communicate with all levels within the organization.
- Ability to weigh and manage priorities.
- Analytical and synthesis skills.
- Flexibility and diplomacy in interpersonal relationships.
- Ability to influence decision-making.
- Methodical and rigorous work habits (safety- and quality driven while focused on productivity).
- Delivers on time.
- Organizational skills and ability to multitask (work on several projects at once).
- Fluency in French and English (written and spoken).
- Proficiency in commonly used and specialized software.

## Career-Path Options

With experience, depending on their interests, Continuous-Improvement Specialists can aspire to various management and executive positions.

Competencies	Behavioural Indicators
<p><b>Engaging Leadership</b> Ability to exert influence to achieve the objectives of continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the issues.</li> <li>• Correctly evaluates facts and unforeseen situations in order to make the best decisions.</li> <li>• Is skillful in the art of negotiation and persuasion.</li> <li>• Influences decisions.</li> <li>• Adapts approaches according to the complexities of change management.</li> <li>• Listens and is receptive to the views of others.</li> <li>• Creates a work climate that motivates and mobilizes employees in the same direction.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication and Interpersonal Skills</b> Ability to inspire confidence and shows political acumen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates clearly and effectively with all levels within the organization and uses plain language to make information accessible.</li> <li>• Is comfortable speaking in front of people, using tact and nuanced speech.</li> <li>• Builds fruitful interpersonal relationships.</li> <li>• Develops effective working relationships and facilitates dialogue.</li> <li>• Drafts reports within prescribed time frames and in compliance with existing regulations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Problem Solving</b> Ability to implement relevant solutions to situational problems or changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopts a diligent approach to problem resolution within a regulatory context.</li> <li>• Assesses the urgency of situations.</li> <li>• Makes realistic and appropriate decisions.</li> <li>• Proposes win-win solutions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Innovation</b> Ability to identify improvement opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is proficient with regulatory requirements and good manufacturing practices.</li> <li>• Applies change management and continuous improvement concepts.</li> <li>• Benchmark trends and practices.</li> <li>• Reviews practices and considers other people's suggestions.</li> </ul>