

No.	Red Flag	Comments	Countermeasures
1	<b>No or Weak LSS Program Champion</b>	Choosing the wrong person to be in charge of the LSS Program - often called the LSS Champion - can have many negative effects. A weak Champion is not able to gain buy-in from management, to advocate for the success of the program, or to help overcome obstacles. LSS Programs led by weak Champions tend to wander along making minimal progress, with lots of potential benefits left unclaimed.	This is a critical role, and the right person can have a huge impact on program success. While technical prowess is a plus, it is not necessary for the Champion to be an MBB. He/she should be trained in LSS (preferably as a BB) and also trained as a Champion. Much more important than technical skills is the ability to understand company goals and objectives, how to engage with senior leadership, and how to get things done. Champions represent Senior Management to execute the Strategic Objectives of the organization through the LSS program.
2	<b>No Executive Champion</b>	Having a strong LSS Champion is no guarantee of success. Another key is to have strong support from a senior member of the leadership team. Without such support there can be many negative outcomes. Most notable is simply the fact that LSS teams will not be asked to work on the most important and compelling problems of the business. Another major issue is the fact that mid-level managers are not held accountable for their role in a LSS Program.	Ideally a member of the C-suite serves as the Executive Champion. It can be the President or CEO, and having the LSS Champion report to this individual helps ensure alignment in actions. At one very successful LSS Program the CFO was the executive champion. With his support the executive team began participating in report-outs of kaizen events on a regular basis. The position on the leadership team is less important than the level of engagement in the LSS Program.
3	<b>No formal Steering Committee</b>	Some companies think implementing a LSS program consists of sending staff to GB or BB training and assigning them to work on improvement projects. But provide little in terms of general program support. This approach almost guarantees poor results, for both the company and the belts.	A LSS Program Steering Committee performs multiple functions: Selecting belts for training, Choosing & prioritizing improvement projects, Drafting project charters, Establishing standards, and a dozen other duties. These action items can be a challenge for smaller companies. Small firms can perform these activities on a basic level with one person, provided periodic support is available from key stakeholders. Larger firms should commit to a more formal group that meets on a regular basis. Another option is to assign some of these duties to an outside resource.
4	<b>No formal Project Selection Process</b>	We sometimes find the projects assigned to new GBs and BBs are not really a priority. Such projects sometimes have no clear connection to strategic objectives. Other times projects are important, but have a huge scope. Or the opposite - have a tiny scope. In some cases new belts are left to their own devices in choosing projects. Most have no clue how to do so, resulting in wasted time and effort.	The best practice is to establish a formal process to choose projects linked to strategic objectives via a Steering Committee that meets on a regular, ongoing schedule. MBBs can help by performing due diligence of potential projects AND confirming project status of active projects. With this info, the Steering Committee can function effectively, and use LSS to help accomplish company strategic objectives.
5	<b>No formal system for documenting projects</b>	When a LSS project is completed, the Control Phase Gate Review occurs. If the project documentation remains with the GB/BB and/or sponsor the knowledge gained will likely be lost. In other instances, we found while there was documentation, there was no standard for doing so, leading to inconsistencies in format and details.	A centralized and organized database of completed LSS projects will have many benefits. First, it allows others to learn from past efforts. Second, it helps in aggregating quarterly or annual program results. Third, it can be a resource for instructors and/or coaches to use as case studies. Finally, it is a resource for the Program Champion and Executive Champion.
6	<b>No formal process to identify Replication/Spin-Off Opportunities</b>	In some cases a completed project is a success and the solution can be easily replicated to other areas of the business. But the company has no process to identify and leverage such ideas. Without identifying and promoting these ideas the LSS Program is missing out on the true potential impact it may have on the business.	One easy way to ensure these ideas are captured is through a Control Phase Project Checklist. Another method is through formal Project Coaching, and the documentation of coaching notes. The important thing is for a formal mechanism to be established to leverage such ideas.

7	<b>Project financial impact not properly quantified</b>	Sometimes the estimation of financial impact is left up to the belt. Depending on that person's knowledge of finances the figures can be grossly overstated or understated. If the reported financial figures for LSS projects are found to be incorrect on a regular basis this impacts the overall credibility of the program.	A best practice is to develop Financial Guidelines for LSS Projects (another function of the Steering Committee). And to train belts and finance staff on those guidelines. Financial impact should be estimated at the beginning, be updated during the project, and validated at the end of the project. Finance should be actively engaged in validating the final impact and ensuring numbers are realistic.
8	<b>Kaizen events not encouraged</b>	Some companies do not consider a Kaizen event project as a full DMAIC project. Hence it cannot be used for certification. This mindset can lead to missed opportunities on an effective method to address small-to-medium scope problems. It also results in longer project timeframes.	Kaizen events can provide early momentum to a continuous improvement program. Project completion can take a 4-6 weeks with a kaizen approach (including prep and follow-up) in comparison to multiple months with a traditional DMAIC approach. Companies should seek a blend of kaizen events and traditional DMAIC projects.
9	<b>Selection of poor candidates for Green or Black Belt</b>	Not everyone is cut out for a GB or BB role. Leading a team can be very stressful and some people aren't comfortable working in a team-based environment. Others struggle at communications and meeting timelines. The end result is staff members drop out of the LSS Program after the company has invested in their training and coaching.	A formal Belt Selection Process is the best practice. Some companies have an interview with potential belts. Others start with more basic training to assess interest and potential. At the very least a checklist of desired traits/skills should be used. Traits we look for in a belt are to critical thinking skills, communication skills, facilitation skills and a 'Can Do' attitude.
10	<b>Assigning BB-level problems to GBs</b>	This has become a bigger issue over the past 10 years. We have seen GBs assigned projects that require advanced tools such as Multiple Linear Regression, Design of Experiments, complicated Measurement System Analysis, replenishment pull system, etc. In other cases the scope is too large for a typical Green Belt.	Sometimes this issue is due to a poor Project Selection Process. A more robust Selection Process will result in several project ideas at different levels of difficulty. Other times it is simply a matter of not understanding the nature of the problem until the project begins. In such a case the answer is to either reassign the project to a BB or to provide extra coaching to the GB.
11	<b>No or limited rewards and recognition for Belts and Teams</b>	LSS projects require hard work for GBs/BBs and their Teams. Most individuals are willing to put in the time and effort necessary if they feel the management team appreciates what they do to be successful. When management acts like they don't care about the LSS Teams the belts will pull back, and in some cases leave the LSS Program altogether.	Establishing Rewards and Recognition is the joint responsibility of the LSS Program Steering Committee and Human Resources. One TMAC customer held periodic luncheons to recognize not only GBs but also project teams and their families. The CEO personally presented their GB certificate to them. Other companies feature project teams in company newsletters and give belts time off upon project completion.
12	<b>Root cause is outside scope of the project</b>	If the root cause of the problem is outside the scope of the project then there is not much the belt can do to actually solve the problem. As an example, a former BB at a homebuilder was working to decrease the time from contract signing until construction began. The process included getting building permits - something the builder could not impact. In other cases the root cause resides in the suppliers or the customer.	While root causes of problems are often unknown when starting a new project the potential for root causes outside project scope should be identified as part of Project Selection. The scope and/or project goals can be adjusted accordingly during the Define Phase. Or the project canceled outright.