Chapter 5: Lock In the Gains

You did the work: you picked the right processes, found the gaps, fixed what needed fixing, and got your people on board. Nice job! But here's the thing about process improvement: If you don't lock it in, people will drift back to the old way — guaranteed.

So, this chapter is all about how to make improvements stick so you don't waste time redoing the same fixes over and over.

Update Your Documents

- ✅ Make sure your new process steps are clearly written down.
- ✅ Put them where people can find them
- ✅ Archive or delete the old versions

Train (and retrain)

Even a small process change can fail if people aren't comfortable doing it the new way.

- Run short, focused training sessions.
- Use real examples and let people practice.
- Have job aids or checklists handy so folks don't have to remember everything perfectly.

Put Controls in Place

This is your *Control* step in DMAIC: build guardrails so the new process runs smoothly by default.

Some practical controls:

- Automatic reminders or system prompts
- Mandatory signoffs for key steps
- Dashboards or reports that flag when things go off track.

Monitor Performance

Keep an eye on:

- Are people following the new process?
- Are you seeing the results you expected? (Fewer errors? Faster cycle times?)

Use simple metrics — you don't need fancy software. A weekly or monthly check-in often does the trick.

Recognize and Reinforce

People like knowing their efforts matter.

- ✅ Call out teams or individuals who do a great job using the new process.
- ✅ Share small wins with everyone — "Since we changed XYZ, errors dropped 25%!"
- ✅ Tackle slip-ups early. A friendly reminder beats letting bad habits return.