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The Consultant's Role

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Consultants can't always offer their services at a price small companies can afford, says Subir Chowdhury, chairman and CEO of American Supplier Institute Consulting Group and best-selling author of *The Power of Six Sigma* (Dearborn Trade, 2001) and *Design for Six Sigma* (Dearborn Trade, 2002).

Big corporations can afford a quarter of a million dollars or more to train Black Belts, says Chowdhury. "But for a mom-and-pop shop to afford Black Belt training is almost impossible," he acknowledges. "Consultants have no mechanism to handle small companies." This means that for Six Sigma to reach small businesses, the onus would be on the consultants to find a way to do so.

"The people at the forefront of Six Sigma training, like us, Mikel Harry and others, have to come forward to help these organizations," says Chowdhury. "These organizations have a lot of interest in Six Sigma, and we--consultants in general--are not coming up with solutions for these companies."

Chowdhury says that ASI is adapting its programs to fit the needs of companies that can't afford a full-blown Six Sigma program. Even at that, he admits that it's cost prohibitive for most consultants to help companies that fall below \$50 million in sales.

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