



Everybody wins with AFSO-21 training

by Michael Dukes
315th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

2/26/2014 - **JOINT BASE CHARLESTON, S.C.** -- The 315th Airlift Wing hosted an Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century Green Belt Academics Course here this week and organizers say there's plenty of interest from people looking to help improve their work environments.

"We have a cross-section of ranks and career fields from the 315 AW members and one member from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.," said Maj. Kimberly Champagne, 315th AW performance planner.

Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century is a dedicated effort to maximize value and minimize waste in its processes. The training's objective is to establish a community of continuous process improvement that leverages the benefits of the collective experience, expertise, tools, and best practices.

In the course, attendees learned the AFSO-21 philosophy and tools for its practice. They also learned about other organizations using quality improvement programs similar to AFSO-21. Participants broke into work groups and chose a process relevant to them and their coworkers. They next identified the steps involved to complete that process and wrote them down on sticky notes to hang on the wall to create the overall picture.

"The goal is not to solve any problems here with these processes," said Matthew Arens, an Air Force Reserve Command contractor teaching AFSO-21. He said the focus was to use something attendees were familiar with to give them the building blocks and to better understand AFSO-21 methods. Once they return to their work areas they can then use the tools they learned to work with their coworkers to start making improvements.

As a retired colonel who served almost 30 years on active duty, Arens is well versed in the Air Force quality improvement programs and has seen them evolve over the years - especially in the early days of the movement with Total Quality Management was a strange new buzz word that leaders were trying to sell to Air Force members in the 1990s.

The goal of the course is produce green belt certified cadre' of members well versed in the process improvement tools. "So members can increase productivity of our most valued asset- People," Champagne said.

The training also helps identify gaps, with a goal to get results and it develops an Air Force-tailored model of continuous process improvement to fit Airmen culture.

"This is the first class we offered. I was overwhelmed by the response and now have to schedule 3 more classes just to meet the demand," Champagne added. "That tells me people want to improve their work environments and that is a huge win for the Wing."



Matthew Arens, Air Force Reserve Command contractor Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century instructor, works with attendees during a week-long course at the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston. AFSO-21 is a dedicated effort to maximize value and minimize waste in its processes. The training's objective is to establish a community of continuous process improvement that leverages the benefits of the collective experience, expertise, tools, and best practices. (U.S. Air Force Reserve photo by Michael Dukes)