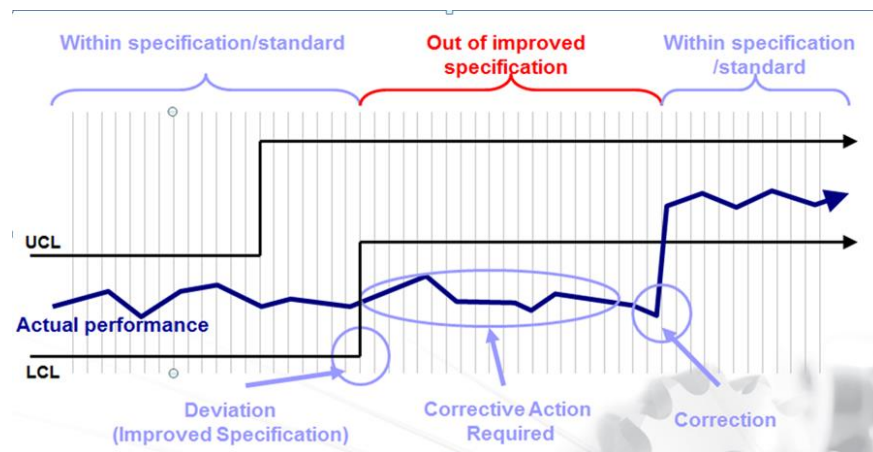


# Improving performance in tough times

It seems that we have a huge business challenge ahead of us in a tough economic environment, and it looks like it is going to be survival of the fittest. Who will be the fittest? At the end of the day, it will be those who can implement sustained improvements in their business which impact the bottom line. Sustained improvements start with setting ourselves improved performance targets.

But often achieving those is easier said than done! What do we do if we don't hit the target? We can throw in the towel and accept that we can't do better than we did before. Or we can investigate why we aren't reaching the target and introduce some kind of corrective action.



***If you set yourself more ambitious targets, previous levels of performance are no longer acceptable and corrective action is needed to get to the improved levels***

This is where Root Cause Analysis (RCA) techniques come into their own. While many of us only use them when we have severe safety or quality incidents, we often don't think about using them for improving performance.

Whether it is RCA or any other problem solving technique, the question is: who is going to do it? What is the situation in your organisation? Do engineers solve all the problems and everyone else tries to prove why their solutions won't work? Or is there a system that tries to involve everybody in organisation wide problem solving? World class organisations involve everybody.

Those of you that have tried to introduce organisation wide problem solving will know how difficult it is to do this. But it is something that we have to do to survive ...