



## AGSM Executive Education - Lean Six Sigma Customer Experience & Compliance: A Balancing Act

Never Stand Still

Business School



### Ebru Kotwal

Manager, Advice Delivery  
Perpetual Private – Business Operations

Ebru Kotwal was thinking 'lean' before she was even aware of the methodology. "I was continually trying to improve process and make changes, but without a defined framework to bring it all together."

Strong process is pivotal in Ebru's role at Perpetual Private. After nearly seven years climbing the ladder in financial services, she was recently appointed to a newly created role, Manager Advice Delivery, responsible for managing all the collateral in the client advisory process. The focus of her role is on engaging business units across the country to identify opportunities to work smarter and deliver the strongest possible results for clients.

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The financial services industry as a whole is undergoing rapid transformation and Perpetual is continually looking for ways to improve the delicate balancing act of exceeding client expectation within a heavily regulated environment. "We've always done things as efficiently as we can at Perpetual, but balancing client service delivery with risk and compliance demands can be a challenge. Client needs are constantly evolving, there is always more we can do to make sure we adapt and respond quickly."

When Ebru's manager recommended completing the Green Belt certification, she was eager to take full advantage of the opportunity. "Lean development was not something I had thought about before so I researched a few programs. The AGSM Green Belt structure and content really resonated with me; it was the most relevant and more than just building technical skill, it focused on real-world application. The exceptional reputation of the AGSM was also a great added bonus."

To become a certified Green Belt, candidates on AGSM's Green Belt program must select and complete a suitable workplace project in consultation with the program team. "Choosing a project was easy for me – continuously improving our client advisory process to reduce risk, ensure a high-level of compliance and make the end-to-end process as client-centric as possible is one of my key deliverables. It was the obvious choice to get maximum impact from the program."

Ebru was initially concerned that lean was more suited to manufacturing than a private wealth environment, but after beginning program she immediately felt comfortable she was on the right course. "(AGSM Program Director) Dr Paul Walsh led the program in a way that was really inclusive and worked for everyone in the room regardless of industry and professional background. "

As her project mentor, Dr Walsh worked closely with Ebru to build a contextualised toolkit. "I quickly saw how tools that enhanced manufacturing could be applied to back office process. The truck moving from point A to B became a business unit delivering results. I could use these tools immediately to make significant, sustainable change to both our internal procedures and the client experience."

Ebru found the diversity of the group incredibly beneficial. "Learning from other participants was invaluable. It didn't matter that my background was in private wealth and someone else's was in engineering. The context may have been different, but the core challenges and desired outcomes were the same – every organisation is interested in increasing efficiency and adding value for the customer simultaneously."

Back at work and armed with a practical toolkit, Ebru unearthed a number of new ways of thinking that led to strong results. "I was able to deliver on a number of objectives that seemed conflicting on the surface. As a result, we have greatly improved the end-to-end process and the client experience." Ebru is quietly confident about the future too. "We are expecting a significant improvement in client satisfaction this year. It's been a win for me, the business and most importantly, the client."

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Ebru feels that gaining her Green Belt certification gave her so much more than a process toolkit. "My experience with AGSM definitely had a strong impact. It changed lots of the ways I work, but also the way I solve problems and lead others to reach effective solutions."

Being invited to present on lean thinking at an upcoming company off-site is a personal highlight for Ebru. "Lean thinking is so important and relevant in today's financial services industry. There are many lessons anyone in business can take from it. It fundamentally changes things for the better."