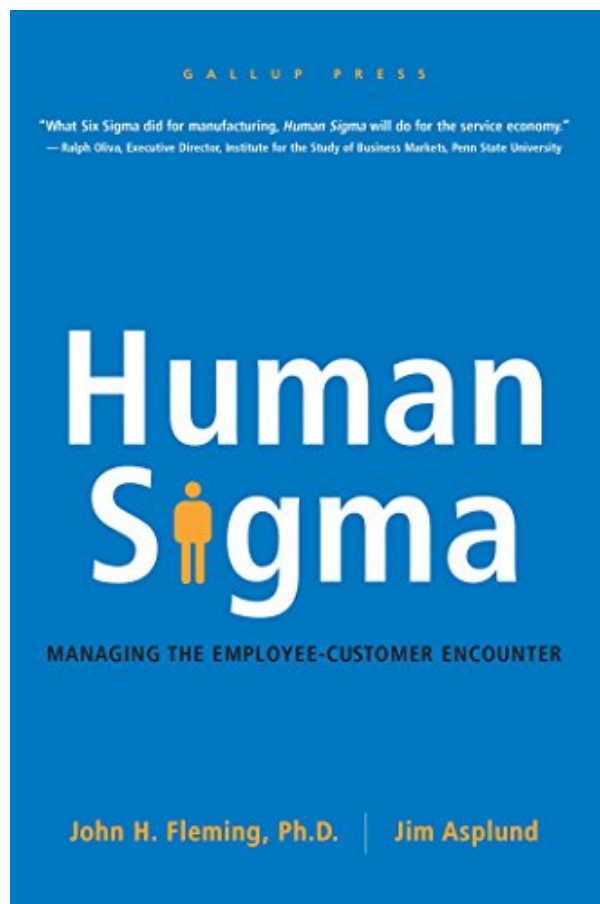


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"What Six Sigma did for manufacturing, *Human Sigma* will do for the service economy."  
—Ralph Oliva, Executive Director, Institute for the Study of Business Markets, Penn State University

# Human Sigma

MANAGING THE EMPLOYEE-CUSTOMER ENCOUNTER

John H. Fleming, Ph.D. | Jim Asplund

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## **Human Sigma: Managing The Employee-Customer Encounter By John H. Fleming, Jim Asplund.**

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Six Sigma changed the face of manufacturing quality. Now, HumanSigma is poised to do the same for sales and services. Human Sigma offers an innovative research-based approach to one of the toughest challenges facing sales and services companies today: how to effectively manage the employee-customer encounter to drive business success.

What would your company look like if you could increase the revenue and profitability potential of every customer by more than 20 percent? What if you could double the productivity of every employee? And what if these two phenomena together could drive overall organizational performance exponentially? What would your company look like? And how would you go about creating this kind of change? One thing is certain: Business leaders are never going to inspire higher levels of employee productivity and build more passionate customer relationships by doing the same things they have tried for the past 25 years.

Business leaders need something fresh. Something new. The last thing they need is more of the same old conventional wisdom about “satisfying” their employees and their customers.

Based on solid research by The Gallup Organization, Human Sigma will appeal to senior leaders and line managers alike who are looking for a way to dramatically increase productivity, retain a base of high value customers, and improve overall business performance. Human Sigma is:

- **Rigorous:** Based on research involving hundreds of companies, and over 10 million employees and 10 million customers around the world.
- **Innovative:** Cutting-edge management science supported by data, including brain imaging research into customer’s emotional connections to the companies they love.
- **Practical:** The principles in the book were developed from observations of real-life successes, not some fictional freaks-of-nature that exist only in a laboratory. As such, the lessons contained in the book have been tested in the real world, and can be applied in many situations.
- **Interactive:** The book contains a code that can be used to estimate the potential value of HumanSigma to readers’ organizations.
- **Sales Rank:** #184679 in eBooks
- **Published on:** 2007-10-28
- **Released on:** 2007-10-28
- **Format:** Kindle eBook

Most helpful customer reviews

36 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

## An effective antidote to "Terminator Management"

By Robert Morris

In this volume, John Fleming and Jim Asplund present and then examine with both rigor and eloquence what they characterize as "a new set of rules and a different way of thinking about managing [a] company's complex human systems, which we believe can serve as an antidote to Terminator Management. It's about a model and an approach that we call HumanSigma."

Many of those who read this brief commentary have seen the second Arnold Schwarzenegger film in which the Terminator acknowledges to John O'Connor (portrayed by Edward Furlong) that he has been programmed not to think. Fleming and Asplund suggest that is also true of a common management style, "an institutional mind-set that views people - customers and employees - as a necessary evil, a nuisance, or in extreme cases, as adversaries in doing business. Rather than viewing people as the reason a business exists, the Terminator School of Management views them as impediments to business that breed inefficiency, cost, and errors."

They offer HumanSigma as an alternative, indeed an antidote to that mind-set. They characterize it as a "map of the terrain" within which employee-customer encounters occur. They recommend five "new rules" that are best revealed within the narrative, in context. These rules have been validated by studies of 10 million customers and 10 million customers around the globe. They note that a recent Gallup study of 89 companies showed that the companies that built a critical mass of engaged employees grew earnings per share at 2.6 times the rate of low-engagement companies. Fleming and Asplund's conclude their book with the assertion that people who own their improvement makes them "more innovative, productive, and confident. Are there a better set of characteristics for companies facing an unknown future? We think not, and millions of employees and customers agree." As do I.

Those who share my high regard for this book are urged to check out Paul Spiegelman's *Why Is Everyone Smiling? The Secret Behind Passion, Productivity, and Profit*.

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

This book will transform the way you think about your company's employees and customers.

By Avinash Sharma, The Yogic Manager

You have heard several business leaders say something along the lines of "people are our greatest assets". But from an accounting and financial perspective, more focus is given to tangible assets that are easier to put into metrics than to intangible things like the contributions of humans. This model was alright for the industrial age, in which approaches such as TQM and Six Sigma (and their emphasis on materials and processes that behaved predictably) resulted in improved production. However, over the last few decades the center of gravity of business has gradually shifted from a manufacturing economy to a service economy. For sales and service firms, value creation is dependent upon human interactions (between employees and customers) that are not as consistent and predictable as materials and processes.

HumanSigma is a model and approach that will transform the way you think about your company's employees and customers, and the interaction between them. The concepts in this book are drawn from research involving over 10 million employees and 10 million customers across the globe. This book presents an alternative to what the authors call "Terminator Management", in which customers and employees are considered a necessary evil of doing business. Through five new rules, examples, case studies and research drawn from a variety of sources, the authors explain how to improve the performance of human assets. This book will help you think of employees as assets to be optimized, instead of costs to be minimized.

Like many other Gallup books, this book links employee and customer engagement to financial indicators. However, you would need the help of Gallup for advanced tasks, like determining the HumanSigma score (a number that "summarizes the overall effectiveness of the employee-customer encounter that is reliably

related to that unit's overall financial vitality") at a local unit level. That said, this book contains great concepts that will be valuable to all leaders and managers. I also recommend two other Gallup books - First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently and 12: The Elements of Great Managing.

20 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Human Sigma

By Kelly J. Clark

I am a Doctoral student studying Strategic Leadership. This book is a great resource for people leading campaigns to improve and increase their business's effectiveness and competitive position. By clarifying the differences between Six Sigma and Human Sigma considerable effort can be saved by focusing resources to affect positive outcomes. Gallup's research builds a solid foundation that challenges the old tenants of usefulness about customer satisfaction and surveys. This is a fairly thin slice of the process of building out strengths based organizations, but an important one. You may have to read several of their other works to fully comprehend the significance of this book. The field needs a good follow up book on how to build out human sigma in organizations. Gallup saves this (the really good stuff) for their consulting practice. It is a good read. KC in Lincoln,NE.

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