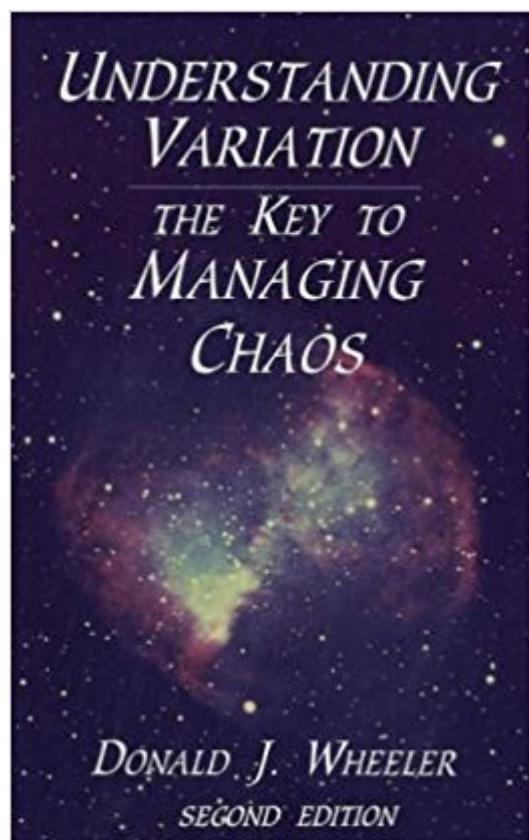


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# Understanding Variation: The Key To Managing Chaos



## **Synopsis**

We live in the Information Age, and much of that information comes to us in the form of numbers. But before numerical information can be useful it must be analyzed, interpreted, and assimilated. Unfortunately, teaching the techniques for making sense of data has been neglected at all levels of our educational system. As a result, through our culture there is little appreciation of how to effectively use the volumes of data generated by both business and government. This book can remedy that situation. Readers report that this book has changed both the way they look at data and the very form their monthly reports. It has turned arguments about the numbers into a common understanding of what needs to be done about them. These techniques and benefits have been thoroughly proven in a wide variety of settings. Read this book and use the techniques to gain the benefits for your company.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The major theme of this book is Variation. Wheeler does an excellent job at explaining this important idea. Although these ideas have been around for over 70 years I have found no other book that even comes close to presenting this topic in such an accessible manner. Wheeler provides managers a rational way to look at daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly figures and tell whether the actions they take have resulted in improvement. This is the greatest value of this book - with an understanding of variation it is possible to define what improvement looks like when presented with numbers. This is sure to become a classic. Every person, Managers in particular, looking to improve

any operation will be served well by reading this book. How many times has someone declared that an improvement has taken place only to find out later it was all smoke and mirrors? This book will provide the concepts and tools to be able to see through the smoke and mirrors. No more opinions, no more tap dancing, "show me the data" and we'll see if there is improvement. Read it - you will see figures in a new light.

I am a non-technical, non-mathematician, steeped in Deming-oriented Continuous Improvement, which I teach at university-level. This is simply the best (and easiest to read) book on the subject of 'control-chart' based SPC. It's in a class all by itself. It's an enlightening book about Life. It will change the way you look at and understand phenomenon. I wish Wheeler would write a series of such books, treating the rest of mathematics in as enlightening and cogent a fashion.

Bought this book to get a glance to topic "process improvement" and to gain understanding in process improvement practices. Reading the book really impressed me, especially the way how the author manages to explain everything from the beginning. Considering myself as inexperienced in mathematics and in process improvement, this book really bursted my understanding of managing process variation! Understanding Variation is a well-written book and easy to understand. I recommend it to everyone interested in process improvement!

Wheeler serves up the best concise easily understood description I have ever seen for both statistical process control and the Deming management philosophy. No executive or manager responsible for improving an organization can afford ignorance of the information in this compact volume. A leader blessed with competent statisticians may find that Wheeler's book suffices without other material covering the matter in greater depth. Leaders lacking support from statistically sophisticated staff may feel a need to stiffen their understanding with Deming's Out of the Crisis and The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education. Even without a thorough understanding of continuous improvement philosophy, Wheeler's book, properly applied to your business, should easily offer an ROI well over 1,000,000%.

Dr. Wheeler has given a major contribution to the field of statistical process control in this work. With depth and breadth of material, Wheeler has created a simple yet powerful guide to a topic that at times can be quite intimidating to the statistically untrained. With his simple and illustrative presentation style, this book is easily accessible to all levels of practitioners - professional

statisticians will enjoy and benefit from the book as well as novices in the field. While only taking two or three hours to read, it is a treasure-trove of information and we have successfully used it as a textbook in a basic seminar in statistical process control. I think this is an important and landmark piece of work, quite worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with works from legendary figures in the field such as Deming and Shewhart

My manager at work recommended this book to me as I was about to begin an SPC project. This book was a lifesaver. Wheeler has made SPC easy to understand. As a beginner, I found the work invaluable and I still use it for reference material today

This book will introduce you to the prevailing practices of understanding data in business and how it is limited and weak . The process behaviour chart ( a.k.a control chart ) provides a better and more meaningful understanding of your data. This book will tell why and how . Buy this book its a very good introduction on how to make sense of your data. Dr. Wheeler did a very good job !

Don Wheeler, former colleague of W. Edwards Deming, explains how VERY SIMPLE statistics can transform any business process. As a young boy in Tennessee, I sometimes uncovered "white lightning" (moonshine whiskey) hidden in forests. Might his East Tennessee roots give Wheeler his rare sense of humor and fascination with how data and KPI's can be used to "cheat?" This book is very rich in actual examples of data being used to mislead as well as KPI's which actually promote THE OPPOSITE behavior intended. Wheeler takes the reader through multiple "cycles of learning" in this short read which is easily completed in under 2 hours on a flight. But be warned; once you read this book you will want to reread it and apply the lessons many times. Are your processes "predictable" or are they "unpredictable?" With his jargon free, reader friendly style, Wheeler explains clearly 3 kinds of "Voice of the Customer" specifications, as well as sharing multiple examples and pitfalls which leaders make converting data into knowledge. If you suffer from "rare" but important defects, be sure to read the next to last chapter. Brilliant! The cases on pages 86 and 131 will inspire you to gain new insights building on the easily understandable histograms. A must read for any Lean Six Sigma Executive, Sponsor or Belt. I buy this book in boxes of 10; I often find my colleagues and contacts asking to have my copy!

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