

# The 5 Steps to Data Collection

## **Step 1: Clarify your data collection goals**

This sounds straight forward enough, but it is often overlooked. For example, **what problem are you trying to solve** by collecting this data? Be sure to be clear about your purpose for data collection.

## **Step 2: Develop operational definitions and procedures**

What are we measuring? How will it be measured? Who will measure it? Having clarity in these questions is of utmost importance. Often times we will employ **sampling** in which case we need to define a sampling plan.

## **Step 3: Validate the measurement system**

Confirm your measurement system by doing a test run before the actual data collection strategy is implemented. Try to insure that all persons collecting data are following the same measurement system.

## **Step 4: Begin data collection**

Using all the knowledge from the previous steps, we now go off and collect our data.

## **Step 5: Continue improving measurement system and ensure people are following the data collection guidelines**

Measurement systems need to be verified often. Also, as with anything related to continuous improvement, sustaining a process is the hardest part. Data collection is no different.