

Advanced Lean

All businesses or organizations are impacted by on-going change such as the constant evolution of markets or organizational priorities, the impact of the digital economy and shifting customer or client preferences, needs, demographics, culture and diversity.

So your challenge for Lean is to provide effective project change systems and processes that are realistic in these existing and emerging circumstances.

Lean typically focuses on the measures and processes needed to directly address business and customer requirements such as:

- ✓ Process and product quality
- ✓ Process/product lifecycle
- ✓ Costs of poor quality and/or of the poor life cycle.

The emerging Lean approach may narrow the scope of the project to focus on:

- ✓ Obtaining the highest return on investment
- ✓ Feasibility of each process change in relation to producing the required outcomes within the constraints of time, budget and resources.

Lean now is adapting to the world in which:

- ✓ Life cycles of products and processes are often shorter than the expected process change project duration. Things can move too quickly for the traditional approach.
- ✓ It maybe difficult to find a time period long enough for analysis of the process's current performance, when the process is stable. Shorter time frames need a rethink of the project process.
- ✓ Added complexity for your project occurs because rapid changes are also occurring in suppliers' and customers' organizations, and are almost inevitable during the project life cycle. Long project stages limit the outcomes and may not be viable. Shorter stages within the overall project framework area is a means of addressing this.

It all means that Lean must provide the responsive systems and processes for your project so your business can adapt to the moving targets and changing process environments and constraints that apply. This is the emerging challenge and the exciting opportunity.

Most applications of lean thinking begin with an assumption that there is a theoretical "perfect state" for each organizational process and that the current state deviates from the perfect state due to inefficiencies and waste.

Lean Practitioners need a different focus. Instead of focusing on what is not working and inefficient, it teaches how to identify what is already working efficiently and generates value in existing processes and systems. They also provide motivation for everyone to face the challenges and opportunities ahead.

If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always got.

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

Excellence Accelerator Ideas you can use

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Razor-thin margins, pressures to cut costs, increased competition from existing vendors as well as new players in the market have made it tough to remain in the manufacturing sector today, especially when it comes to gaining a true competitive edge.

For these reasons, it is important for manufacturers to increase productivity, control costs, optimize labor resources, and align them with the most important project or goal. Conceptually, all of this sounds good, but for many manufacturers, the question remains: How?

Lean labor can help manufacturers improve the way they align employees with production demand. For example, scheduling applications — a critical component to a larger workforce management solution — helps shift supervisors create each shift with the right mix of employees and skills. Not only does this increase total production and help achieve revenue targets, but it also helps decrease overtime costs for any replacement workers who may have to be called in to fill a gap.

While it is true that it is extremely tough to compete in the manufacturing industry today, lean labor can help. With lean labor, manufacturers can acquire a proven way to gain new efficiencies, reduce and control costs, and increase overall productivity. In turn, this allows them to focus on revenue-generating activities, strengthen the bottom line, and increase their overall competitive advantage.

This brings us to the new 5S+1 ... although many organizations think they have matured into a robust Lean model they have merely just scratched the surface. To insure that a process has been optimized you need physical evidence that the process has been simplified at least 5 times and then you can seek to automate.

It's no coincidence that 3-D printing is gaining fame as lean manufacturing is on the rise. Lean manufacturing and 3-D printing go together naturally. While 3-D printing isn't a new technology, it is getting more attention lately because of the potential cost implications for everyone involved. The leaner you are, the more you can save and create. The catalyst is 3-D printing. Below are a few reasons why 3D printing and lean manufacturing go hand in hand:

- Easier prototyping
- Easily customized products
- More creativity and efficiency
- More consistency
- Shorter lead times
- Local manufacturing

Customers and businesses are becoming aware of the efficiencies that 3-D printing is making possible. This fuels customer's excitement regarding customized products, resulting in potential cost savings associated with it, for both the manufacturer and the customer. With this excitement comes innovation, and with innovation comes new ways to be lean in manufacturing. Therefore, one way to jumpstart lean manufacturing is with 3-D printing. It will also likely lead to newer, leaner processes.