

Sit on Your Hands !!

I had just graduated from University and got a great job working as a field system engineer for a very reputable Dairy farm equipment provider. My positions required that I train and assist our dealer network with the installation of milking equipment.

My territory was supposed to everything east of the Mississippi river and Canada while my former roommate had the area west of the Mississippi River and Mexico ... but the challenges often has us both within the same area.

But the most important aspect is the lesson that I learned about training and later how important the term "slow down, go faster" would be in my life ...

We were dispatched to a farm in California where they were installing a sophisticated milking parlor. As we worked with the dealer we of course ran into some start-up issues which included an electrical issue. The problem was a simple fix that required a jumper to be installed within the electrical junction box .. I did the fix and then asked the dealer rep if they saw what I did and understood the remedy

Of course they replied that they understood ...

Fortunately or unfortunately our Boss was present ...

His name was "Specs"

He immediately stated "Richard you are going to have to learn in life to sit on your hands" I responded with a "what do you mean?"

Specs responded look at you ... you are 6 foot-6inches and the electrical box is 6 inch by 6 inch ... there is no way that the dealer rep saw what you did. He is being polite and simply acknowledging that he understood what you did.

If you had sat on your hands and then instructed the dealer rep to conduct the procedure that you did he would have learned and understood the process, instead you took the simple route and did it for him because you thought it was faster and simpler.

Rather being a bit slower and sharing your knowledge and experience by guiding and coaching him to perform the procedure. In this manner He would have solidly learned from your experience.

Later I would learn just how important this lesson would be.

Many years later my son was taking a math course in High School ... after a long day at work he was toiling to Complete his home work which required him to create a Pivot Table in Excel ... He asked me how to create one.

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ronald. E. Osborn

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

Sit on your hands!

Being tired ... I decided it was easier just to show him. I created his Pivot Table and then asked him if he understood what I had done ...

His response ... “Yes”

I resumed my position of assisting gravity to insure the sofa remained attached to the floor while I watched TV ... comfortable !!

But Patrick need to make another Pivot Table for his homework assignment ... so what did I hear ? “Dad can you help me?”

Once again I had not “sat on my hands”

This time I sat in the chair next to him and provided instructions on how to create that pivot table he needed. Of course it took longer but by him doing it he finally understood.

It also made me understand that the learning process occurs through 3 channels;

- Visual
- Touch
- Orator

In some cases show me (Visual) and I understand how to do it. In others let me do it and then I understand or if you are like my father, give me the manual and allow me to read it completely I will then be able to perform the task. So as you develop training it is important that your training covers at least 2 of the learning attributes.

Since we also know that there is no common cookie cutter solution for the application of Lean Methodologies into any organization and that we are hampered by the culture speed of absorption by the organization. We truly live by our philosophy of “Learn, Apply, Audit” approach to the deployment of our training.

I truly love the following since it illustrates just how important it is to provide ongoing training to your employees ...

“What happens if we train our employees and they leave?” but ... “what happens if we don’t train our employees and they stay?” ...

I cannot share how many times we have witnessed organization have not invested in their employees and a new leadership enters the organization and then terminates a long tenure employee due to being incompetent.

Was this the employee’s fault or the organization?

As an employee it is your responsibility that you at minimum gain at 80 hours annually of new insights ... or as an employer your provide 80 hours of training. If you don’t train you are on the path of obsolescence.

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