

Seek Cadence within Process

I currently have several clients that are in the midst of implementing new business systems and I see a potential flaw in how they are managing the implementation. They are not taking into consideration Cadence. Cadence being the gait that needs to be observed with your information and communication flow and the repeatability of tasks.

Cadence is almost the inverse of Takt time. takt time being where you take the available time divided by the customer demand to determine the pace of which your customer demand needs to be fulfilled..

Fact, managing process whether through Takt time or cadence is pretty easy to do on the shop floor. Process is visible through product sitting as pile of work-in-process in and around work centres. But is in a different story in the support and administrative areas.

In the office it is a battle of technology silos and “C” drives of the office inhabitants. Normally when you review position descriptions they do a great job of describing function and accountability but seldom cover the area of cadence. Plus, you need to remember that folks like to do the easy stuff first ... and when the more difficult errands surface people are more prone to distraction.

Why is cadence important? If you ignore it ... it can dramatically add days to your process lead-time invisibly. For example if people are entering orders as they arrive within the facility how often are they being released for scheduling, material procurement etc? As we conduct Enterprise Value Stream exercises people make a point of emphasis to dramatically explain what they do first thing in the morning as a priority ... which then makes you wonder what they do for the balance of the day as “value add”.

So how do we develop cadence?

The following is a fairly robust methodology that will deliver results;

Have people develop a list of tasks that they complete on an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. Include in the building of the task list what kind of business system they are using and potentially updating. Of course, they should be recording the amount of time it takes to perform each task. Be prepared ... the times will be under-stated but you can deal with that later.

Next, conduct an Enterprise Value Stream Map using much of the data collected on the task lists but also walking the Value Stream using all of the traditional mapping rules.

Determine the critical path of the communication and information flow. Also gain an understanding of what your system capability can provide ... can the system and people keep pace with the potential information and communication flow. Even if your system is capable of doing a re-schedule by the minute, chances are you do not want to utilize this capability until you have process capability to support the desired cadence.

Now take your task list and begin to sort the task by process into the frequency they will be completed and during what time period. For example, in the case of weekly tasks ... will they be completed on a Monday vs. a Thursday etc.

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

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You can then begin to plot the tasks into a time matrix chart ... do you see where this is going yet?

Line up the process task lists against your Enterprise Value Stream Map to make sure that hand-offs work in a synchronise manner with the most minimal time gaps between tasks. Not much sense to have folks drop everything to enter orders when they arrive if you only generate a schedule and order materials once per week. This is your opportunity to determine what is the most cost effective cadence for your value stream.

This is also a good time to compare your cadence to Takt time to determine if you have enough resources to support the cycle time in relation to customer demand, or if the resources are located in the right positions.

If cellular concepts work well in the factory why not apply the methodology in the office. I have never seen an office rule that states employees require an office or cubicle ... they are merely creature comforts normally filled with souvenirs and personal keepsakes. My most productive team was at CAMI where we all sat at a long table and could freely exchange information and overhear other's conversations. If you wanted a private conversation you went for a walk in the plant ... but I digress.

So now we have an Enterprise Value Stream Map and timed matrix of tasks by process. This is "viola" ... standard work !!! combined with a task checklist.

Have your employees report daily on the completion of their task list and take notice of tasks that could be completed on time and what created the Disturbance-To-Flow for resolution.

A new system is a great opportunity to change organizational behaviour and formalize the information flow cadence. However a new system is not necessary to invoke this review ... you can probably make significant gains doing the same task methodology with your existing system. You will be shocked at the improvement opportunities you will discover to create competitiveness.

SHAMPOO WARNING

It's so good to finally get a health warning that is useful!!!

INVOLVES THE SHAMPOO WHEN IT RUNS DOWN YOUR BODY WHEN YOU SHOWER WITH IT!!!!

Shampoo Warning! I don't know WHY I didn't figure this out sooner!
I use shampoo in the shower!

When I wash my hair, the shampoo runs down my whole body, and Printed very clearly on the shampoo label is this warning, **"FOR EXTRA BODY AND VOLUME."**
No wonder I have been gaining weight!

Well! I have gotten rid of that shampoo and I am going to start showering with Dawn dish soap instead.
Its label reads, **"DISSOLVES FAT THAT IS OTHERWISE DIFFICULT TO REMOVE."**

Problem solved!

If I don't answer the phone I'll be in the shower.