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LEAN THOUGHTS

Richard Kunst

Tel: 519 841 0150

E-mail: rkunst@kunstartofsolutions.com Web: www.kunstartofsolutions.com

Another Perspective look at Lean

What is a significant difference between the Toyota Production System and most others? Why are we working very hard to emulate the attributes of TPS and do we truly understand the root objective? I offer you the following thought to be considered ...

“Brilliant Processes managed by Average People” Vs. Average Processes managed by Brilliant People.”

Indeed, many of the tools contained within the Toyota Production system focus on the identification and elimination of waste, hence creating a more competitive and profitable stance for the organization but there is more and with robust processes Toyota is able to expand quickly with predictable results.

Another corporation that embraced this concept early in their evolution was McDonald's. Now McDonalds does not get the respect it deserves as being a truly sustainable Lean Enterprise. We have fallen out of favor with their menu and initially their marketing model was geared to attracting children ... but look at the organization from an operational perspective.

At the on-set McDonalds recognized that they would have an employee model that would have a high-turnover rate. A large contingent of their employees would be teenagers, and most likely this would be their first formal employment opportunity.

They designed very brilliant processes that could be managed by average and temporary employees some only who worked a few hours per week. Remember when we laughed watching the cook line and hearing all of the bells and buzzers going off? Is this not the ultimate of standard work combined with error-proofing? Remember looking at the cleaning check-lists mounted in their washrooms? I truly believe McDonald's presented us with a good operational model even before we truly became exposed to Toyota.

Almost every industry sector is greatly concerned about their aging workforce and how can they capture the intellectual knowledge to insure an uninterrupted transfer of this knowledge without a detrimental impact on their product or services. But how did we get into this situation? Of course, we are in the constant chase to satisfy our stake holders with sustainable profits ... this at time has forced us to eliminate training, documentation, simplification and the changing market has added complexities to our processes and products because of the increasing customer demand of wanting products and processes faster, cheaper and better!

To reverse the trend and allowing you to build your processes to be more robust and predictable make sure you view the tools and how they assist in creating a brilliant process that can be managed by average people. By changing perspective on a few key principals see how it can change your perspective ...

Workplace Organization (5S+1) ... yes a place for everything and everything in its place. How can proper workplace organization support a training organization so that an employee can enter the work area and clearly understand the function to be performed and how.

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Where “Lean Thoughts”
Become Reality



Value Stream Mapping ... yes one of the best tools to create eyes for flow and eyes for waste within your operation. It is a great vehicle for the identification and prioritization of projects that will enable you to achieve the perfect process. Have your team look at your maps to identify how to migrate to brilliant processes that can be managed by average people.

Error Proofing (Pokeyoke), in many cases we use this tool to prevent errors from occurring ... but the same process can be used to manage both the standard work and Takt time of your processes. Just look at the buzzers McDonalds uses for both their French fry fryer and heating trays to insure a consistent product is offered to the customers.

Standard Work ... establishes the cadence of required tasks within process to create predictable and repeatable results.

Visual Standard Work Instructions ... an excellent methodology to capture tribal knowledge that can be repeated and replicated by average employees. This is also an excellent opportunity to review process and insure simplicity has been integrated.

Automation ... can be a good thing but can also add another level of complexity. Due to a labor shortage one company decided to invest heavily into automation ... now they are struggling to find knowledge workers that are capable of running the complex automated processes ... so was the automation solution correctly designed as a brilliant process that could be managed by average people?

If you review the task lists of your leadership team how much of the time is spent in reactive management vs. pro-active management? The development of people? Harvesting and implementation of new simpler ideas? A good initial Key Performance Indicator of whether you have brilliant processes is just to look at the activities of your maintenance department ... how much of their time is spent reacting to urgent requests to repair broken processes vs. spending time conducting scheduled preventative maintenance?

I am sure that like many of you that travel to foreign lands until we can get a bearing of the local cuisine we find reasonable comfort in dining at McDonalds because we have come to accept that through-out the corporation they have a brilliant process that will provide you with a predictable product ... good or bad it is predictable.

Save Headcount!!

We can be a cost effective extension of your CI Department without adding permanent resources.



NEW WORKPLACE PARADIGMS

From Jim Pinto's e-newsletter

Traditional manufacturing dates back to the industrial age with the growth of large-scale production in hierarchically structured organizations. Most factories had full-time workers, and most people remained with the same company till they exited with a pension.

This kind of employment has little place in today's workplace.

Rising health costs are making company-sponsored long-term health plans unaffordable. Further, long-term pension funds are becoming an unacceptable financial burden.

Today's factories have geographically dispersed knowledge-workers operating round-the-clock. At the end of an individual's workday, activities are transferred to team-members in other parts of the world - US, India, China, Europe - who are working during the daytime in that country.

This use of sequential workers is similar to the shift-style workforce that evolved during the industrial revolution, which had a profound impact on manufacturing. This same concept is relevant for semi-structured work in many professional arenas such as finance, product development, marketing comm. and IT.

For what is left of traditional workplaces, walls and square offices should be turned into open environments with common work areas and quiet spaces. The old, prestigious personal spaces should be replaced with team space.

New office tools - computers, PDAs, wireless connectivity - should be readily available for all employees, facilitating effective communications and productivity. Offices should provide quick and easy file transfer and e-mail connectivity, whether the worker is in the office or at a remote location. Follow-me telephone numbers should be assigned to individuals rather than tied to physical locations. The concept of the "personal secretary" anchored to the office location is obsolete.

In the new paradigm, old-style HR departments disappear.

New "facebook" style networking should link employees (local as well as international) to develop camaraderie and a close-knit family atmosphere.

Factories and manufacturing work places should, like offices, make strong efforts to be warm, welcoming places; they should look good - small, efficient, clean and happy places to work. Productivity and efficiency will follow.

2008 Consortium Event Schedule



Tour Workshop Conference

January	February	March	April	May	June
<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 16 Eaton Electrical, contact Joe Fisher, JoeRFisher@eaton.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 13, ACE Bakery, contact Cindy Grolleman, cgrolleman@acebakery.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 19, Nestle Waters, contact Mariela Castano mcastano@perriergroup.com</p>	<p>C</p> <p>Consortium Shareshowcase</p> <p>Saturday 05 Eaton Milton, Contact Cindy Grolleman cgrolleman@acebakery.com or Joe Fisher JoeRFisher@eaton.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 14, Alumicor, contact Barry Wood barry@Alumicor.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 18, Morrison LaMothe, contact Tony Vita tvita@morrisonlamthe.com</p>
July	August	September	October	November	December
		<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 24, Kraft Foods, contact Hanif Jivraj hjivraj@Kraft.com</p> <p>C</p> <p>Executive Forum Tuesday & Wednesday 23rd & 24th Contact Richard to register rkunst@kumstartofsolutions.com</p> <p>C</p> <p>22nd Transportation Thursday 24th http://www.transportconference.net/emaplan.html</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 16, CTS Corp., contact Navneet Mann, navneet.mann@ctscorp.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 12, Messier-Dowty, contact Mike Smith Mike.Smith@Messier-dowty.on.ca</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 10, Orenda, contact Brenda McIntosh brendamcintosh@orenda.com</p>