

Lean... is there something missing from your implementation?

What's Lean got to do with me?

Having worked with many companies from different industries it's not unusual for me to be challenged by clients about how applicable Lean is to them. In fact, it's a common misconception that Lean has no place in low-volume environments, and that it's only meant for longer, highly repetitive manufacturing production runs.

However, once given an improved understanding of Lean principles and a recognition that it's about identifying and removing waste in all its forms i.e. variation reduction, removal of excessive motion, transportation etc; we soon get to a point at which waste has been identified and novel ways to reduce or eliminate it all together are established.

“Identifying waste and generating the solutions that address the causes of it, is usually the part of Lean that most people recognise.”

Engaging people in the process using LMS

What's commonly missing in Improvement Programmes is the involvement of the people who own the process. Involving the people who form part of the process in the improvement activities and the ongoing continual improvement of the process can be done using a Lean Management System (LMS).

The Lean implementations that I have been involved with always consider the 'people in the process' and how they are engaged. In my experience it's crucial to the success of any Lean Improvement Programme or project that before work begins, stakeholders are identified, and their involvement assured.



“This LMS is often the missing link. It tends not to be emphasised during lean implementations, even though it's just as important as pull/push control systems, etc.”

So, what is LMS?

The Lean Management System (LMS) is a suite of five daily work disciplines which, when consistently adopted, enable leaders, teams and individuals to change their habits and build lasting culture change.

What is it used for?

It is used for building and sustaining a Lean culture.

What are the benefits?

It's simple to understand and straightforward to apply. Its implementation is fundamental in reinforcing “how we do things around here” and sustaining Lean thinking throughout the organisation.

How does it work?

The LMS can be comprised of five elements:

1. Daily Work Group Meeting (DWGM)
2. Primary Visual Display (PVD)
3. Kaizen Action Sheet (KAS) system
4. *20 Keys™ assessment and long-term improvement tool
5. Short Term Leadership

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In summary, it's a set of mechanisms that 'bake in' a routine of monitoring and *Continuous Improvement* into the team's day-to-day life.

Ok, but what does this look like in practice?

Daily Work Group Meeting - A short, mandatory, stand up meeting to focus the team on what is important and how they will work together to achieve it. It builds team ethos and provides the forum to identify improvement opportunities.

Primary Visual Display - A means of communicating and sharing key team focused information, including KPIs, and performance improvement activities. It provides the focus for the Daily Work Group Meeting and is maintained by the team themselves.

Kaizen Action Sheet - A simple format to capture improvement opportunities and ideas in words and pictures. It helps the team to decide what they can tackle themselves using the basic Lean problem solving tools and encourages them to adopt a structured approach to improvement.

20 Keys® - A tool to establish and track the extent to which the team is operating on a Lean basis. It enables them to set their long-term targets and progressively adopt daily changes that sustain continuous performance Improvement.

Short Term Leadership - Regular, frequent contact between team members and their leader to focus on achievements and overcoming obstacles. It reinforces the leader's role in engaging people in continuous improvement.

“Missing targets matter. This is a key aspect of the LMS which can help provide the momentum needed to meet output targets and keep on improving.”

Conclusion

Behind the [Kanbans](#), master production schedules and level scheduling, the Lean Management System provides a solid framework for implementing *Continuous Improvement*. This is critical for process sustainability, without which all the achievements resulting from Lean Improvement activity are at risk.



If you would like to find out more about this subject, or how we can help make your business, better then give us a call on 01926 633333, or email us at info@bourton.co.uk.