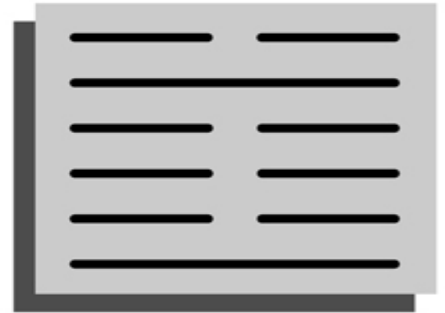


Change Management Associates



May 2012

Featured Topic



Finding the 'Scientist' in You!
Going to see is fine, but real learning comes in the 'journey'

Dear Drew,

Each week I must receive five inquiries from people about setting up a visit to another organization. I certainly appreciate and respect the desire to obtain knowledge. That is why I typically refer such inquiries to organizations that offer peer-to-peer shared learning opportunities. For example, AME regularly offers such events throughout the country and Canada. Other organizations arrange for 'study trips' to Japan.

Having arranged for and attended a countless number of these events, I am often concerned by comments that I hear. Let's take a recent inquiry. Someone asked me to arrange a visit to another organization that has a "well established 5S system in place" and it should be a "private tour for our company". First, if the quest is for knowledge, why would you want to limit the number of participants? Certainly much can be learned from other organizations in attendance as they have a common interest and probably are at similar points in their 'journey'.

Second, the person stated that only so much can be learned from seeing "before and after photos". This is certainly true. However, going to a company with a "well established 5S system", you probably won't have the ability to see the 'before' photo, only the 'after'. Simply looking at the 'after' really has limited learning potential. After all, the attendee's company has a different facility, different processes, different contents, and different culture with its people. To expect that by visiting another company you will

Upcoming Events



CMA and our network affiliates have the following events scheduled:

AME Events:

7-Steps to Process Improvement

White Marsh, MD
June 12, 2012

Hosted by GM Powertrain, the morning tour will highlight how the host is applying a wide array of lean concepts including; Cells, TPM, Mistake Proofing, Pull/Kanban, and others. The afternoon workshop will review a 7-step process improvement and problem solving methodology. GM has recently 're-shored' an entire line from Mexico to this site. Part of their continued success is a 'living agreement' with the union. For more information [click here](#)

Operational Excellence in a Job Shop

Newark, NY
July 12, 2012

Hosted by IEC Electronics, the morning tour will highlight how lean concepts can be applied in a non-repetitive production environment. In the afternoon, IEC will

determine what will work or not work within your organization with your people is really unrealistic. What you will not see are the multiple iterations and learning cycles that the host company went through to arrive at the point that they have a "well established 5S system".

This is an important point. Attendees to such events must ask questions about the host company's 'journey'. Simply asking for copies of their 5S audit sheet or to take pictures misses this point altogether. Otherwise you won't realize that the audit form is in its sixth revision. Therefore, questions about the lessons learned might provide more useful information.

Third, the person asked for the host company to be in the same industry. Why? People are looking to be given a 'solution'. They expect to be able to replicate something that they saw during the visit back in their own organizations. But there is near zero learning when someone is given the solution. And in all likelihood the approach will fail. Again, even in similar industries, at the very least the people are different which means a different approach is probably warranted.

Next, in the case of 5S (as with other lean concepts and tools) looks can be misleading. What can one really learn about 5S in the course of a 1 - 2 hour tour through several areas? Probably very little. One can see the appearance of good workplace organization, but the real objective of 5S is to have a functionally organized workplace. This can only be seen via longer periods of observation of people performing work in a particular area.

Expanding on the discussion, too often people visit other companies or hear presentations at conferences and the like and all they see is the 'end' result (not that there is really an end). They return to their own organizations and become quickly frustrated by the lack of progress. "We should be further along" "Why can't we do what we saw at Company X?" Lost is a sense of the journey - the years of effort and learning that took place to bring the company who hosted the tour or delivered the presentation to the point in time where they are presently.

On a recent peer-to-peer learning event, many of the attendees were very impressed by what they were seeing, and rightfully so. The host company had successfully applied many of the lean concepts and tools, and was clearly embracing continuous improvement in their day-to-day activities - the real objective of lean. I had to inform the attendees that the host company was first introduced to the concepts 15 years ago with the implementation of their first production cell. In spite of the results achieved in that pilot, the production manager at the time did not embrace the concepts, and the owner at the time was still skeptical. It took several years for them to apply additional concepts, and several years after that (and after a transition in ownership) to try Lean Accounting. More recently they began to apply Lean Product Development concepts. The point being that the host company was

provide a 'deep dive' review of their journey. IEC is a 2011 recipient of an AME Excellence Award, and is a tremendous 'turn-around' story.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Mid-Atlantic Lean Conference

Timonium, MD

November 5 - 9, 2012

Hosted by the MD World Class Consortium, the weeklong conference will include presentations from manufacturing, government, and education. Workshops on various topics will also be available.

For more information [click here](#).

Be sure to check out our publications!

"Lean Office & Services Simplified" (2012 Shingo Prize recipient)

This will become the definitive how-to book on the subject.

"The Complete Lean Enterprise" (2005 Shingo Prize recipient)

VSM for Administrative & Office Processes

"Value Stream Mapping for Lean Development"

(Reviewed in the 2nd Issue 2010 of AME's Target magazine)

Books are available at www.productivitypress.com

going through a journey over many years, not over night.

Michaelangelo supposedly said, "if people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it would not seem so wonderful at all." This is true of any successful lean transformation. So, if you want to replicate anything from another organization that has gone before yours on the lean journey, replicate their willingness to experiment. Without exception, those organizations have been willing to try things, learn from their experience, and adapt the concepts to meet their unique needs. It is only through practical experience - the 'journey' - that one gains the deep knowledge needed to successfully apply the concepts. We call this a 'learn by doing' approach.

So find that inner 'scientist' - heck find that inner child - who loves to try things, and learn from the successes and the failures (typically more can be learned from the latter). And let the experiments begin!!

Best Regards

Drew Locher

Managing Director, Change Management Associates

"Lean Office & Service Simplified" is a 2012 Shingo Prize Recipient!

"Lean Office & Service Simplified: The Definitive How-to Guide" has received a 2012 Shingo Prize for Research. The book published in February 2011 provides detailed step-by-step methodologies to apply all of the key lean concepts to office and service environments.

Entire chapters are provided on the subjects of Standard Work, Visual Management Systems, Value Stream Management, Flow, and Level Pull - all in the context of office and service. The book finishes with a chapter on leadership - the key to sustainment and the transformation to a culture of continuous improvement. The book is available from [Productivity Press](#).

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