

# Improvement Initiatives

Change – for the better

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FREE NEWSLETTER

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**"Don't Second  
Guess,  
Think Safety  
First"**

- Jack Morrow



## Here's your sign: Lean Linking *is* Forward Thinking!

Time to set goals for next year, but - how will you do better?

Organizational objectives may include: increase throughput rates and improve process reliability to reduce defects. The obvious way to accomplish that is to improve quality. Implementing "Six Sigma" problem-solving methods help.

Another way to increase productivity is to boldly and brashly incorporate 'Lean Linking' – an innovative, evolutionary approach offered exclusively through Improvement Initiatives LLC, a Phoenix-based management coaching service.

Embarking on a path of **lean and six sigma** isn't easy. It requires careful planning, and a well-planned and systematic methodology driven by Top Management.

By utilizing **Hoshin Planning** to chart the course, and linking key performance indicators to customer requirements, on-site consultants co-lead and implement improvement projects linked to the bottom line. During their 6 or 12-month stay, they also coach implementation leaders to manage future projects identified in a multi-year Continuous Improvement plan developed by the Leadership Team. This hands-on approach, linking improvement around Safety, Quality, and Speed of Execution guarantees success to the bottom-line by addressing waste discovered by an operations audit, conducted prior to the engagement.

Another feature requires project team leaders to 'report-out' implementation status, so projects don't stray too far from expectations of Executive Management.

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## On Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Part 1 of 2)

*by Jay Watson*

PPE can be defined as any equipment that is worn by a worker to eliminate or minimize exposure to a specific occupational hazard.

Throughout the ages, the human mechanisms could cope with most onslaughts from Mother Nature. The industrial age brought a completely new set of challenges that normal defense mechanisms could no longer cope with during exposure to those hazards. Control measures had to be developed.

Control measures that are implemented at the source of the hazard are considered the most effective and safest. These include, for example, the substitution of a hazardous chemical with a non-hazardous one or the elimination of the hazard all together.

The use of *respirators, gloves, aprons, fall-protection devices, personal warning devices and full body suits, as well as head, eye, and foot protection* are other forms of control measures.

[continued in next issue](#)



## ***but, I don't like wearing a Suit!***

*-by Jay Watson*

A business partner from my past – whom dressed very, very well indeed – once said to me: "Jay, that's what they're paying us for!"

Today, after a successful career in manufacturing, I'm in business to help people help themselves. I provide tools, techniques, training, ideas, and inspiration for improvement.

I enable organizations to do better. I coach leaders to win. I hold the spotlight on executives, directors, and managers who will lead organizations to new heights of safety, quality, and productivity measures.

I facilitate work teams to identify waste and eliminate excess costs. I train the trainers to keep it going, after I leave. My success depends on theirs.

Ultimately, I want them to look good, with or without a suit ...

## **Lean Linking ... (continued from page 1)**

These team presentations enhance communications and let the leadership team, and other process champions, identify roadblocks, direct, and guide process changes if mid-course corrections are necessary.

Lean Linking through this 'SQS' focus also encourages leveraging improvements from one area to another - maximizing return on investment, thereby getting more people involved more quickly in the business of improving. Training sessions typically run between 1 to 3 hours in duration allowing participants to learn and apply improvement techniques quickly. All teaching follows a "know, show, do and review" learning cycle. Like the Lean Linking approach, most sessions are hands-on involving active learning **and** active teaching - emphasizing problem-solving application, not theory.

More teams, doing more things to improve quality, enhance safety, and reduce cost. Isn't that what productivity - 'Forward Thinking' – all about?

**Learn from one the best ...  
Call Jay today! (480) 820-0877**


## ***Chapter 11: Here's One You can Believe In !***

### **An Action Plan from Lean Thinking, Womack and Jones (Chapter 11, page 247)**

***Find a change agent.*** This could be you - or anyone of the organization: the key is that this must be a leader who will take personal responsibility for the lean transformation.


***Get the lean knowledge.*** It's important to draw from a true and thorough source of lean, whether from an ex-Toyota sensei or some other reputable source, so your internal change agents master lean thinking to the point where it becomes second nature.

***Find or create a crisis.*** Unfortunately, few if any firms will take the necessary steps to adopt lean thinking across the board unless they are facing a crisis.




***Thank you Jay, for your excellence ... as one of the top "outstanding instructors" teaching for Motorola University.***

***"On behalf of Precipart Corporation ... thank you Jay, for your motivation, discipline, experience, and leadership towards our successful implementation of the 13-week AlliedSignal / Honeywell On-Site Supplier Development (OSD) Program. [LSS initiative] Your efforts are greatly appreciated!"***



***... they compared our [DMAIC] materials to others... and felt ours was far superior!  
Thank you, Jay, for your leadership in this area!***



***Forget grand strategy for the moment.*** Start by simply eliminating waste everywhere.

***Map the value streams,*** beginning with the current state of how material and information flow now, then drawing a leaner future state of how they should flow and creating an implementation plan with timetable.

***Begin as soon as possible*** with an important and visible activity. ***Demand results!***

***As soon as you have momentum, expand your scope.*** Link improvements in the value streams and move beyond the shop floor to office processes. Practice kaizen, or constant improvement, relentlessly!

***Promote success! Say "Thank you."***

## Forms of Waste



## Waste accounts for 15% – 45% of Revenue

Lean thinking starts with a focus on customer value; fake lean companies continue to focus on the stock-price, profitability, and the owners. Real lean thinking has an end-to-end focus on the value streams that create the customer value; fake lean companies do largely uncoordinated "point kaizen" improvement and speak about low-hanging fruit.

**Using Value Stream Mapping** helps develop a prioritized, coordinated plan that shows which Lean tool should be implemented first to get the best results. Multiple Lean projects, such as 5S/ Visual Workplace, Cellular Flow, Pull/ Kanban and Standardized Work are then used to clear production bottlenecks, increase productivity, and quality, reduce lead times and inventory, and improve on-time delivery, and Safety.

Real lean thinking requires a passionate commitment to flow; materials flow, information flow, and cash flow throughout the value streams.

**With Kanban** the process breaks from the traditional "batch-and-queue" manufacturing system, in which big lots of product are assembled in discrete steps. In a real lean environment, a company moves a smaller flow of items through production in highly designated areas. Wasteful steps are easier to spot. And, if a mistake creeps into the process, it won't affect a huge amount of inventory and can be fixed quickly.

Fake lean companies continue to use push methods, departmental structures, and think that such things as sourcing from low-cost countries is a good idea.

Most importantly, real lean thinking places great value on the people within the organization. Toyota refers to "respect for people." This requires a completely new approach to the company's culture. The executive leadership needs to make radical changes in the way they run the business. Everyone must be involved on customer value and improvement; at every level, and every day.

**Eat, Sleep, and Breathe It** - Simply working at Toyota transforms even your home life. Consider Howard Artrip...

*The way he does his work is so compelling it has become part of his personal life. "When I'm mowing the grass, I'm thinking about the best way to do it. I'm trying different turns to see if I can do it faster," he says. He has analyzed his morning routine. "I do the same standardized work in the shower every morning. I have to get here at 6 a.m., and I know it takes 19 minutes, including walking into the plant." He smiles. "I've maximized my sleep time."*

Many of us in the lean world know exactly what he means... often to the amusement of our spouses. It's an incessant desire to improve the process... not just innovate the product.

Fake lean companies continue to use the traditional management methods the executives learned in business school. In addition, it just does not work - if you want to be a lean organization.

The final differentiating issue is the "pursuit of perfection." Real lean thinking companies are constantly improving their perfect, no-waste processes. [*refer to side bar*]

## 7 Forms of Waste and some of their common causes ...

- **Defects**

Long delays for rectification  
Costly rework  
Dissatisfied customers

- **Overproduction**

Large batches, raw materials  
High WIP, finished goods  
Making for the sake of it  
Ignoring customer demands

- **Transportation**

Unnecessary movement  
Extra handling

- **Waiting**

Waiting workers, machines, materials  
Long set-ups and lead times

- **Inspection**

Approvals of approvals  
High number of verification steps  
Reliance- Mass inspection techniques

- **Motion**

Incorrect layouts  
Lack of proximity of machines  
Off-line resources

- **Processing**

Long process cycle times  
Reduced efficiency - over processing  
High overall lead times

### Teams Drive Lean

Lean Thinking infrastructure consists of a core team, which removes roadblocks to implementation; a local steering team, which drives Lean implementation; and project teams, which work to improve efficiency.



*"The old fox sheds its old hair, but not its old habits ..."*



### Be More Productive! (Part 2 of 2)

- Maintain your focus and take action.

It's better to spend your energy getting things done instead of complaining. Take action even if you are uncertain. Actions produce results and feedbacks. Always think of what you can do to get more done. The more you think of how you can produce better results, the more remarkable answers will come.

- Learn and gather more knowledge.

Your competence will improve when you learn and gather more knowledge to develop your skills. Learning opens up your mind to see new things, provide new ideas that will make you do things differently.

- Create a sense of urgency.

Life is short. Make it a point not to hesitate. Do what you should and finish it as soon as you can. Once you are finished, start something else. Always cultivate the desire to make things happen.

- Stay away from idleness.

Eliminate negativity and idleness in your life. Idleness hinders progress and personal growth. Stay away from people and situations that obstruct your capacity to produce.

- Impose self-discipline.

Discipline yourself to take action consistently. Rest only when you should and get back to work as soon as you gather your energy. Make it a habit to practice the habit of being prompt.

- Measure your progress and productivity.

Measure your productivity on a regular basis. You gauge your output by looking at the number of problems solved, actions taken, issues resolved, and goals achieved. Review and ponder about the things that have worked out and what didn't. These feedbacks will help you identify the unproductive things that you did and ways to correct them.

### Hidden Meaning in Popular Logo



**Can you spot something in this logo?**  
The FedEx logo, designed in 1994 by Linden Leader & Landor Associates, at first appears simple and straightforward.

However, if you look at the white space between the "E" and "x" you can see a right-facing arrow. This "hidden" arrow was intended to be a subliminal symbol for *speed and precision!*

(Editor's note: Now – can they work in Safety somehow??)

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**Off the page ...** (by Steve Pavlina) more info at... [www.stevepavlina.com/](http://www.stevepavlina.com/)

Productivity ideas (some general, some situation-specific) can help us get things done more efficiently. Here are some of my favorites:

**Nuke it!** The most efficient way to get through a task is to delete it. If it doesn't need to be done, get it off your to do list.

**Daily goals.** Without a clear focus, it's too easy to succumb to distractions. Set targets for each day in advance. Decide what you'll do; then do it.

**Worst first.** To defeat procrastination learn to tackle your most unpleasant task first thing in the morning instead of delaying it until later in the day. This small victory will set the tone for a very productive day.

**Peak times.** Identify your peak cycles of productivity, and schedule your most important tasks for those times. Work on minor tasks during non-peak times.

**No-comm zones.** Allocate uninterruptible blocks of time for solo work where you must concentrate. Schedule light, interruptible tasks for your open-comm periods and more challenging projects for your no-comm periods.

**Mini-milestones.** When you begin a task, identify the target you must reach before you can stop working. For example, when working on a book, you could decide not to get up until you've written at least 1000 words. Hit your target no matter what.

**Timeboxing.** Give yourself a fixed time period, like 30 minutes, to make a dent in a task. Don't worry about how far you get. Just put in the time.

**Batching.** Batch similar tasks like phone calls or errands into a single chunk, and knock them off in a single session.

**Early bird.** Get up early in the morning, like at 5am, and go straight to work on your most important task. You can often get more done before 8am than most people do in a day.

**Cone of silence.** Take a laptop with no network or WiFi access, and go to a place where you can work flat out without distractions, such as a library, park, coffee house, or your own backyard. Leave your comm gadgets behind.

**Tempo.** Deliberately pick up the pace, and try to move a little faster than usual. Speak faster. Walk faster. Type faster. Read faster. Go home sooner.

**Relaxify.** Reduce stress by cultivating a relaxing, clutter-free workspace.

**Agendas.** Provide clear written agendas to meeting participants in advance. This greatly improves meeting focus and efficiency. You can use it for phone calls too.

**Pareto.** The Pareto principle is the 80-20 rule, which states that 80% of the value of a task comes from 20% of the effort. Focus your energy on that critical 20%, and don't over engineer the non-critical 80%.

**Ready-fire-aim.** Bust procrastination by taking action immediately after setting a goal, even if the action isn't perfectly planned. You can always adjust course along the way.

**Minuteman.** Once you have the information you need to make a decision, start a timer, and give yourself just 60 seconds to make the actual decision. Take a whole minute to vacillate and second-guess yourself all you want, but come out the other end with a clear choice. Once your decision is made, take some kind of action to set it in motion.

**Deadline.** Set a deadline for task completion, and use it as a focal point to stay on track.

**Promise.** Tell others of your commitments, since they'll help hold you accountable.

**Punctuality.** Whatever it takes, show up on time. Arrive early.

**Gap reading.** Use reading to fill in those odd periods like waiting for an appointment, standing in line, or while the coffee is brewing. If you're a male, you can even read an article while shaving (preferably with an electric razor). That's 365 articles a year.

**Resonance.** Visualize your goal as already accomplished. Put yourself into a state of actually being there. Make it real in your mind, and you'll soon see it in your reality.

**Glittering prizes.** Give yourself frequent rewards for achievement. See a movie, book a professional massage, or spend a day at an amusement park.

**Quad 2.** Separate the truly important tasks from the merely urgent. Allocate blocks of time to work on the critical Quadrant 2 tasks, those which are important but rarely urgent, such as physical exercise, writing a book, and finding a relationship partner.

**Continuum.** At the end of your workday, identify the first task you'll work on the next day, and set out the materials in advance. The next day begin working on that task immediately.

**Slice and dice.** Break complex projects into smaller, well-defined tasks. Focus on completing just one of those tasks.

**Single-handling.** Once you begin a task, stick with it until it's 100% complete. Don't switch tasks in the middle. When distractions come up, jot them down to be dealt with later.

**Randomize.** Pick a totally random piece of a larger project, and complete it. Pay one random bill. Make one phone call. Write page 42 of your book.

**Insanely bad.** Defeat perfectionism by completing your task in an intentionally terrible fashion, knowing you need never share the results with anyone. Write a blog post about the taste of salt, design a hideously dysfunctional web site, or create a business plan that

guarantees a first-year bankruptcy. With a truly horrendous first draft, there's nowhere to go but up.

**30 days.** Identify a new habit you'd like to form, and commit to sticking with it for just 30 days. A temporary commitment is much easier to keep than a permanent one.

**Delegate.** Convince someone else to do it for you.

**Cross-pollination.** Sign up for martial arts, start a blog, or join an improv group. You'll often encounter ideas in one field that can boost your performance in another.

**Intuition.** Go with your gut instinct. It's probably right.

**Optimization.** Identify the processes you use most often, and write them down step-by-step. Re-factor them on paper for greater efficiency. Then implement and test your improved processes.