

# Improvement Initiatives

"Change – for the better!"

MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

## QUOTABLE QUOTE

" There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure. " - Colin Powell

July 2010

*Just Do It !*



**"Go and See"**

## Who wants to work in a Factory anyway?

*by Jay Watson*

I particularly remember one time I returned to the Watson household, with achy feet and bloodshot eyes. As an independent contractor, I had been leading business improvement teams all day and then teaching that very same night at a Motorola Semiconductor Fab (factory) from Midnight till 7:00am the next morning.

Walking in the house my wife, Gina, was busy finishing up breakfast with our four children and then preparing them for school. In between gathering backpacks and packing lunches, she asked how my day went... she could tell I was tired and I said, "It was good, but quite a long

day indeed." Glancing my way, 11 year daughter, Kristina, then said, "Daddy, who wants to work in a factory anyway?" I answered that many, many people work in factories to make things that we need and buy and that Daddy had been up all night helping train them do better. "Oh, okay", she said. After a quick kiss, she was off to what she knew - school.

Later that day I thought about what I knew – work in a factory. In Lean Thinking, we talk about "Gemba" – go and see...*go and see what??* The action, that's what. The factory has something for everyone. The

[continued on next page](#)

## Do It on the "Floor" ...

*Jay Watson, center, coaches a work team using Kaizen Newspaper and other visual management techniques.*

To break the 4-day project into manageable steps, the team developed an activity-by-the-hour chart and split the department of eight into two sub-teams of four. One team worked in the morning, and one in the afternoon - thereby, not disrupting critical production requirements due that week.





Jay Watson is a freelance web developer and technology writer who supports free web sites and lean application workbooks.

As editor-in-chief, Jay launched www.freeleansite.com, a web site on organizational and personal productivity. Jay also authored a book compiling the free training modules from the site's archives, entitled Lean. On Me. (Improvement Initiatives, 2010). Technically, it's "free", but processing and shipping is \$15.00 a copy, (wink, wink)

A second web page is in the works, www.freesixsigmasite.com is set to launch in 2010. It will provide complete foundational six sigma concepts at no cost.

Jay earned the CEO Quality Award while with Motorola University for his contribution in Six Sigma development and deployment. He offers a six-week on site Lean Leadership boot camp experience entitled: POWER / TRAIN UP with a 10:1 ROI fee guarantee.

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Who wants to work in a Factory? (continued from page 1)

transformation of raw materials into a quality product Customers want and are willing to pay for – produced safely at the lowest possible cost. On time, everyday. (aka Value-added)

FACTORY: the only place it all comes together - customer satisfaction, marketing and finance, IT support systems, materials management, engineering new products and new processes, product feature enhancements, machines and maintenance, quality and cost, scheduling and planning, technology, flow and innovation, assembly, test, packaging and shipping - plus safety, health and environmental concerns to be managed... Don't forget facilities management (the physical plant itself) and security, plus being a "corporate citizen" of the community you live in. Now, throw in all the people issues – supervision and

leadership, training, payroll, employment, staffing and succession planning, promotional opportunities and organizational development issues. Sometimes there is even an "employee fun club" – a much needed respite - just for a little breather from it all! (Especially after a 4-hour power outage shuts it all off momentarily...) Well, I may have missed a few ... but you get the picture.

So, for those of us marshalling our forces to meet, manage, and most importantly improve all that insanity and uncertainty that only a FACTORY setting can bring – I can't think of a more diverse, exciting, and exhilarating place to be! So come on, let's get America producing again.

Who wants to work in a factory? I do - in any and every way!

How about you?



WASTE: Money on the table. (Comes out of profit...)

Basics of Six Sigma Training Courses

Aveta Business Institute

6 Sigma, or Six Sigma, training has grown in popularity at an almost exponential rate since the time of its inception. More and more people are opting for this sort of training to improve the quality of the business they are running or to improve their career outlook in the future.

Now that 6 Sigma training is in such high demand, there are now institutes and universities that have developed basic 6 Sigma training courses. A general review of the Six

Sigma training courses that are available shows that they may vary widely in their central focus, but they seem to keep the fundamentals of the Six Sigma methodologies strong within the curriculum work.

Throughout the independent universities and institutes that have adopted Six Sigma classes into their curriculum, the classes resemble one another, so there is a kind of

## Three keys to Gemba Kaizen

- by Alik Levin

Gemba Kaizen means "workplace productivity" in Japanese. Not just productivity but effective low cost no-friction productivity.

I have read a book [Gemba Kaizen: A Commonsense, Low-Cost Approach to Management](#) by Masaaki Imai. I have no doubt it is highly relevant management book for our tough times.

The author distills the approach into three keys: **Housekeeping, Cutting Muda, and Standardization.**

### Key #1 - Housekeeping

According to Masaaki Imai **Housekeeping** is key to effective management and employee self-discipline. You can describe this process with the "Five Ss."

1. Sort – Separate everything unnecessary and get rid of it. Put a red tag on unnecessary items (for example, unused machines), then remove them.
2. Straighten – Put key items in order so they can be found readily. Straighten logically, so items can be located with a minimum of wasted effort.
3. Scrub – Tools and workplaces should be clean. Dirt and foreign particles can cause machinery to malfunction.
4. Systematize – Make a schedule for cleaning and for checking that all is in order. This ensures that housekeeping is maintained.
5. Standardize – Make the preceding steps part of a regular process.

Bullet #1 resonates a lot with Covey's prioritization approach that I have adopted (more on it, here - [Prioritize What You Do – Steven Covey Way \[The Way That Works\]](#)). It really encourages spending your energy on most important things.

Bullet #2 is another view on David Allen's GTD (Getting Things Done) approach, using simple lists of action items that are easy to process one-by-one. Read more on it here - [The Secret Behind GTD \[Getting Things Done\] Revealed.](#)

Bullet #3 - more on it in the second key - **Cutting Muda**

Bullet #4 - I am a big fan of scheduling. In fact I treat time as budget. This helps me allocate it systematically to the most important activities that get me results - daily, weekly, monthly, and annually. More on it - [Time Is Not Money. Time Is Budget.](#)

Bullet #5 - creating a routing proves to be very effective. I applied it for my professional needs (Security Development Lifecycle, Performance Development Lifecycle) and life too - [Personal Development Lifecycle.](#)

Seems like I was practicing first key of Gemba Kaizen for some time.

### Key #2 - Cutting Muda

Masaaki Imai suggest that the second key element **Cutting Muda**, or waste. Muda is anything that does not add value. Not cutting budgets, not cutting jobs - but eliminating waste. It resonates a lot with #3 in key#1 - Scrub. Everything should be clean - work desk, work plan, everything. Reduce noise; eliminate waste, focus on what's important. Keep the objective before you.

### Key #3 - Standardization

Masaaki Imai describes **Standardization** as the four-step, plan-do-check-act cycle:

1. **Plan** – Set a goal for improvement and formulating a strategy.
2. **Do** – Put the plan in motion.
3. **Check** – Determine if the plan is working.
4. **Act** – Standardize the new procedures.

To me such simple procedure encourages incremental results over short periods of time. It reduces the risk of low ROI when heavy investments are made.

Adopt Gemba Kaizen for work;  
adopt Gemba Kaizen for life...

## Eliminate DOWNTIME

**"Easy acronym to remember..."**

By definition, Lean process improvement means reducing the resources consumed from receipt of an order to delivery of the product or service to a customer. The Japanese word 'Muda' defines categories of waste more specifically, which – with addition of underutilized people – can be remembered with the acronym "DOWN TIME"

...

**Defects**  
**Overproduction**  
**Waiting**  
**Not-necessary** - Excess processing, Mass Inspection, Adjustment, Alignment etc

**Transportation**  
**Inventory**  
**Motion**  
**Employees underutilized**

Frontline associates need to quickly understand and apply Lean process improvement to their day-to-day activities. As many of these workers are in departments where staffing has already been cut to a minimum, it's important that any training or process improvement workshops in which they are involved are based on Lean principles.

## **BPR**

**Business process reengineering** is, in [computer science](#) and [management](#), an approach aiming at improvements by means of elevating [efficiency](#) and effectiveness of the [business process](#) that exist within and across organizations. The key to BPR is for organizations to look at their business processes from a "clean slate" perspective and determine how they can best construct these processes to improve how they conduct business.

The main proponents of reengineering were [Michael Hammer](#) and [James A. Champy](#). In a series of books including *Reengineering the Corporation*, *Reengineering Management*, and *The Agenda*, they argue that far too much time is wasted passing-on tasks from one department to another. They claim that it is far more efficient to appoint a team who are responsible for all the tasks in the process.

## **Free Money !!**

As hard as it is to believe, there are actually many places online that give you **free money**. Some are real easy free money; you just have to open a free account to get free money. One of the most popular sources of free money online is through get paid to surf programs, where you actually get paid to surf the web, listen to the radio, chat online, read email, etc. Other sources of free money are free lotto sites that payout million dollar jackpots. You can also play fun free online games that give the winner real cash and prizes. Another source of free money is through free cash back programs that give you free money for opening an account or shopping.

- [Easy Free Money](#) (free money with little effort or commitment)
- [Best Credit Card Deals](#) (apply for a card and get free money)
- [Free Cash Back Bonuses](#) (free cash back for shopping or opening accounts)
- [Free Lotto](#) (free online sweepstakes and lotteries)
- [Free Online Games](#) (free online games with real cash prizes)
- [Get Paid to Surf](#) (the Web, read email, listen to the radio, etc.)

## **Six Sigma Training ... (continued)**

uniformity to the 6 Sigma training courses that are available. There are some main factors that are always included in the curriculum of these Six Sigma training courses and we will discuss these factors further.

One main factor, or element, that is always included in the curriculum of these Six Sigma training courses is the complete education and training centered on the DMAIC paradigm. Students will be taught the statistics and applications of the DMAIC methodology. Students will be taught the five elements of the DMAIC process and how to implement its methodology. Another main factor, or element, in all of these classes will focus around the roles of each key person in the project group.

There is a hierarchy to the Six Sigma methodologies and each person has a specific role to play and tasks to complete for a project to be completed. Communication skills must also be worked upon. Students in these classes will focus on the streamlining of all business processes as part of the Six Sigma training courses.

To learn more, check out:

[www.freesixsigmasite.com](http://www.freesixsigmasite.com)

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## Off the page ...

### Lessons I Learned from Japanese Consultants

By Jeff Hajek

Over the years, I have worked with some premiere Lean consultants from Japan. Here are some of the many lessons I learned from them...

1. ***Watch before asking.*** Observe a process before asking any questions about it. You'll prevent biasing what you see.
2. ***Listen.*** Listen to the **noise** around you—you'll be surprised how much **waste** you can **identify by sound**.
3. ***Keep shelves and benches short.*** It opens up the work area, making the area more visual. It also improves communication by removing barriers.
4. ***Eliminate hammers.*** Hammers are an indicator of poor **quality**. They increase the risk of injury and they often cause **defects** when a blow misses its mark.
5. ***Go to Gemba.*** Improvement doesn't happen in a conference room. **Kaizen** teams should spend more time in **gemba** than they do in meetings.
6. ***Be flexible.*** Be ready to change tack on a project if something upstream or downstream might have a bigger impact. Sometimes the champion selects the wrong process; don't stick with a mistake. (Note: If this is happening more than rarely, you have a problem with your *kaizen* planning process.)
7. ***Don't let internal suppliers behave worse than external suppliers.*** If you wouldn't tolerate certain behaviors from another company, why would you allow them within your own?
8. ***Don't let preconceived ideas limit you.*** This light bulb went on for me when a Japanese consultant pointed out that two machines were only a few feet apart from each other, but on opposite sides of a wall. We ended up with a doorway between them.
9. ***Don't argue something that can be measured.*** Hard feelings and wasted time can be avoided simply by grabbing a stopwatch and a clipboard.
10. ***You probably have lots of what you need lying around.*** Often a piece of equipment can be used elsewhere. Look around before you buy, or better yet, get a good red tag process to manage idle equipment.
11. ***Practice 5S.*** You probably also have lots of what you *don't* need lying around. Get the clutter out of your work areas and keep it out.
12. ***Communicate kaizen changes daily.*** Many people wait too long to bring leaders and teams up to speed. Plan daily leader meetings to report progress of the *kaizen*, and communicate the plan to the frontline employees in the work area before making changes. (Note: This should not be the first time the team is talking to them! No surprises.)
13. ***Learn what you are building.*** Physically touching and seeing parts helps a *kaizen* team understand what they are trying to improve. Lay all of the parts of a product out in a sort of exploded view. It gives great insight into how to produce it better.
14. ***Use sketches prolifically.*** The old saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" applies to *kaizen*. Even a badly drawn picture can often demonstrate something that paragraphs can't.
15. ***Try rather than talk.*** Instead of allowing **kaizen** teams to endlessly argue whether something will work, try ideas out. Teams constantly accomplish things that they thought could not be done.

16. **Build models.** Use clay, cardboard, wood, glue guns, tape, and pipe cleaners. Prove your concept on a small scale before you utilize a lot of resources on a big project.
17. **Big isn't better.** One piece [flow](#) through the [value stream](#) is important in the office and the shop floor. Small, slower machines in the right place are often much better than big, fast ones in the wrong place. For example, having multiple small printers located close by reduces walking waste and the [errors](#) created by [batching](#) projects in a centrally located print station.

### **About The Author**

Jeff Hajek, MBA, author of the [Lean book, Whaddaya Mean I Gotta Be Lean?](#), is a Master Black Belt, a continuous improvement expert, and a leading authority on managing change at the front line. Jeff is a successful author, speaker, and entrepreneur. In addition to earning his MBA, he also holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering with a concentration in Aerospace from the United States Military Academy at West Point.

He is the founder of Velaction—a training and publishing company dedicated to making continuous improvement easier, more effective, and more rewarding for managers and their teams.

Learn more at:

**[www.velaction.com](http://www.velaction.com)**