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# LEAN THOUGHTS

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## People and Change

*This article by Chris McKellen was published in Metalworking Production in 2004. Chris also writes a regular newsletter for AME members located in the U.K. Thanks for sharing Chris*

Several years ago, in their vision statement, one major USA based multi-national stated that 'people were their most important responsibility', but later, when the vision statement was reviewed 'people' moved to the fifth place and was replaced by a statement about shareholder value. But why?

People **are** the most important part of any business – whether as employees, management, shareholders, customers or suppliers. People have ideas and often many years of latent knowledge which can be used to improve the business.

It is the relationships and communications between people that make businesses work successfully and profitably. Using people, developing them and empowering them is a vital part of a 'lean' implementation programme.

### Gemba

The Japanese word 'gemba' is associated with the introduction of 'lean' and translates literally as 'workplace', but the definition is somewhat harder to understand.

Ohno, the father of the Toyota Production System believed that 'management begins in the workplace'. The philosophy of 'gemba' can therefore be interpreted as: -

- Managing by walking about
- Spending more time in the factory than the office
- Having support departments such as manufacturing (production) engineering located within the factory area, and
- Not having offices with walls in the work area

Resulting in the breaking down of barriers, openness and better communications

### Resisting Change

On joining a new company, many employees find that there is a resistance to change, or acceptance of new techniques, processes or ideas. Similarly, when companies merge, there is often a feeling from some employees 'that I need to protect my job' and sharing my knowledge may 'dilute my standing' within the organisation.

Many of us have experienced phrases: -

- "Change doesn't come easily ..."
- "It's up to management to think of the changes and implement them".
- "It's been like this for years, so why change it now?"
- "All this change is demoralising".
- "Time will heal".
- "Well, let's allow nature to take its course ..."
- "We tried this, years ago, and it didn't work. So, why should it work now?"

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*Where "Lean Thoughts" Become Reality*

Achieving a lean transformation requires changes throughout the business, manufacturing, through administration departments to the suppliers. However, before we can change the business, we often need to change people's thoughts and the culture of the business!

We have two choices in implementing change – we can force it in and then address the repercussions, or, we can encourage all employees in the organisation to become part of the process, through planning the changes and then implementing them.

People who have carried out a task for several years often have many ideas on how to change their 'job' to make it better but often they have kept these ideas to themselves because 'nobody will listen'.

#### High Commitment Work Teams

High Commitment Work Teams are the ideal format to encourage communication and change. Properly organised, and with training and full management support, High Commitment Work Teams gather momentum to implement the change processes. In a High Commitment Work Team, each employee is motivated, trained, empowered and committed to customer satisfaction and continuous improvement.

The employees become involved in making decisions that will affect both them and the profitability of the company. At the same time, the latent knowledge of the employee is being utilised and the employee can therefore become challenged. Ultimately, the employee feels that their status within the organisation has been elevated.

From a company viewpoint, the empowered employee can help to achieve customer demands through increasing their productivity. Employee commitment is greater and the employee becomes more involved in reducing the company's operating costs.

#### Changing roles

The roles of both employees and the management change with the introduction of the High Performance Work team.

The members of the team: -

- Accept responsibility for achieving some of the goals of the organisation.
- Develop trust and respect for each other.
- Seek help when necessary, and give help to other work teams whenever it is needed.
- Communicate amongst themselves and within the whole organisation, regularly and actively.
- Prepare and implement their daily work program.
- Measure and manage their performance.
- Make their decisions based on fact.
- Deliver good results by Continuous Improvement.

The Management Team: -

- Set the strategy for the business.
- Provide resources and training.
- Shares information regularly and openly.
- Shares power – and must be prepared to give up some of its responsibility.
- Listens.
- Seeks ideas.
- Implements suggestions and supports those raised by the team members.
- Allows mistakes and does not apportion blame.
- Praises, supports and rewards.

Note that it is often as difficult for the management to change its role as it is for the employee to accept the additional responsibility.

People and Change is a major subject, so later, in this 'lean' series, we will come back to look at empowerment, motivation and mapping and managing a change programme.



Tour **W**orkshop **C**onference  
 Consortium Event Schedule



January	February	March	April	May	June
<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 25  <a href="#">Eaton Electrical</a>,                      contact Joe Fisher,  <a href="mailto:JoeRFisher@eaton.com">JoeRFisher@eaton.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 15,  <a href="#">CFN Precision</a>,                      contact Barry Wood,  <a href="mailto:bwood@cfn-inc.com">bwood@cfn-inc.com</a></p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p>Date &amp; location                      TBA                      Your own                      "STEP Diagnostic"                      to create Vision,                      Mission and                      Direction                      Contact Richard Kunst  <a href="mailto:Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com">Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 22,  <a href="#">Nestle Waters</a>,                      contact Mariela Castano  <a href="mailto:mcastano@perriergroup.com">mcastano@perriergroup.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 19,  <a href="#">CTS Corp.</a>,                      contact Bob Garces,  <a href="mailto:Bob.Garces@ac.ctscorp.com">Bob.Garces@ac.ctscorp.com</a></p> <p><b>Consortium                      Shareshowcase</b></p> <p>Saturday 29  <a href="#">Kraft Oakville</a>.                      Contact Cindy Grolleman  <a href="mailto:cindy.grolleman@stackpole.com">cindy.grolleman@stackpole.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 17,  <a href="#">Stackpole CSD</a>,                      contact Don Barber  <a href="mailto:Don.Barber@stackpole.ca">Don.Barber@stackpole.ca</a></p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p>Date &amp; location                      TBA                      "Compartmentalize                      the Noise"                      * Daily Report-outs                      * Standard work for                      Leaders                      Contact Richard Kunst  <a href="mailto:Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com">Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 21,  <a href="#">Morrison LaMothe</a>,                      contact Tony Vita  <a href="mailto:tvita@morrisonlamthe.com">tvita@morrisonlamthe.com</a></p> <p><b>C</b></p> <p><b>AME Regional                      Conference</b>                      Mon 12 to Thurs 15                      K-W Ontario                      Contact  <a href="http://www.ame.org">www.ame.org</a></p>
July	August	September	October	November	December
	<p><b>W</b></p> <p>Date &amp; location                      TBA                      "Establish                      Anchors"                      * VSWI ... Visual                      Work Instructions                      * TPM ... Total                      Productive                      Maintenance                      Contact Richard Kunst  <a href="mailto:Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com">Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 20,  <a href="#">Kraft Foods</a>,                      contact Hanif Jivraj  <a href="mailto:hjivraj@Kraft.com">hjivraj@Kraft.com</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 11,  <a href="#">Stackpole PMC</a>,                      contact Cindy Grolleman  <a href="mailto:cindy.grolleman@stackpole.com">cindy.grolleman@stackpole.com</a></p> <p><b>C</b></p> <p><b>AME National                      Conference</b>                      Mon 16 to Friday 20                      Dallas, Texas                      Contact <a href="http://www.ame.org">www.ame.org</a></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Wednesday 15,  <a href="#">Messier-Dowty</a>,                      contact Mike Smith  <a href="mailto:Mike.Smith@Messier-dowty.on.ca">Mike.Smith@Messier-dowty.on.ca</a></p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p>Date &amp; location                      TBA                      Your own                      "Get Organized"                      * 5S+1                      Contact Richard Kunst  <a href="mailto:Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com">Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</a></p>	