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LEAN THOUGHTS

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It's Time For Sales, Marketing To Get Lean

In these tough economic times, any discussion of philosophy, strategy or process aimed at thinning the organization and reducing cost always gets this writer's attention. A concept that seems to be capturing the notice of smarter and larger manufacturers is "lean manufacturing." Its most recognized incarnation is the now famous Toyota Production System (TPS), which as Fortune Magazine notes "evolved during the transition from mass production to mass customization. Unlike the old "push" systems designed to build inventory, TPS aims to build to custom demand in the shortest possible time and with minimum resources. Its Westernized version is now known as lean manufacturing."

But the plot thickens. TPS is, in turn, built on the concept of Kaizen (Japanese for "continuous improvement"). The Kaizen process is initiated with the formation of study teams made up of production-line workers, managers, supervisors and administrative, sales and marketing functionaries who analyze existing workflow and identify weaknesses and barriers to quality and productivity. The teams then design, and set up prototype lines/systems and practice the changes before they are introduced onto the floor. Prominent US companies such as Maytag and Pella Windows are committed Kaizen disciples.

Applying Kaizen to Sales and Marketing

When 173 CEO's were polled and asked the question, "Are your sales people calling on the right customers, at the right time, with the right offer?" 99.3% responded, "I don't know." Which shouldn't be a surprise. Sales and Marketing are still the last bastions of protected turf, limited management scrutiny and lack of accountability. Unfortunately, the important lessons learned and the gains in effectiveness and efficiency derived from lean manufacturing have not been successfully translated to the Sales and Marketing environments. And, it's understandable. Leading sales trainer Chuck Reaves, of XXI Associates, makes the valid point that, "Sales involves people doing business with people, not people doing activities with machines and processes. Sales are perceived to be more of an art form than a science. Yet, ironically, Sales is virtually a pure science and, as such, is both measurable and predictable." If Reaves is correct, the disciplines of Kaizen can easily be applied to the Sales and Marketing functions resulting in significant increases in effectiveness and bottom line results.

Why should we apply lean practices to Sales and Marketing? The litany of reasons is familiar to anyone who operates in those environments. Existing response times are woeful. Customer service practice continues to decline. The concept of "zero-defect" performance, which has been successfully incorporated into the manufacturing cycle, seems to have escaped the notice of many sales and marketing types. Quality in delivery and performance varies significantly from sector to sector and company to company. But worst of all, sales and marketing productivity has never been known for its improvement gains. In truth, we are a sloppy profession that has been able to evade accountability for too long.

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Where "Lean Thoughts" Become Reality

How might we apply Kaizen techniques? According to Reaves, companies interested in applying "lean" techniques to the Sales and Marketing functions can begin the journey by:

- Asking whether or not a certain step is necessary, thereby reducing habitual behaviour.
- Determining how necessary steps can be done better, thereby demanding continuous quality improvement.
- Asking whom else could perform the step if necessary, thereby building team performance while improving results.
- Determining how each step can be done better, faster and cheaper, thereby forcing sales and marketing personnel to start focusing on cost of sales. (COS)

Concludes Reaves, "Like the folks in manufacturing who examine each individual element associated with building the product, professional sales and marketing people are going to have to sit down and apply the same rigorous scrutiny to their own processes."

Source: Alf Nucifora www.nucifora.com

"Recently, I was asked if I was going to fire an employee who made a mistake that cost the company \$600,000. No, I replied, I just spent \$600,000 training him. Why would I want somebody to hire his experience?"

—Thomas J. Watson

Daddy, how was I born?

A little boy goes to his father and asks 'Daddy, how was I born?'

The father answers, 'Well, son, I guess one day you will need to find out anyway! Your Mom and I first got together in a chat room on Yahoo. Then I set up a date via e-mail with your Mom and we met at a cyber-cafe. We sneaked into a secluded room, where your mother agreed to a download from my hard drive. As soon as I was ready to upload, we discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall, and since it was too late to hit the delete button, nine months later a little Pop-Up appeared that said:

Ready for this...

'You got Male!'

Ten Tips for Top Managers

1. Communication: effective, two-way communication systems are the lifeblood of an organization and should be a top priority for managers.
2. Think strategically: decision-making should be based on the organization's overall aims and objectives.
3. Be creative: in times of change the need for innovation is high. You and your team should be ready to adapt to diverse situations quickly.
4. Inspire the team: managing your own time and workload effectively will provide an example of best practice to your team.
5. Show trust and confidence: research shows that individuals are motivated by managers who delegate effectively and do not micro-manage.
6. Say thank you: make sure your team know when they have exceeded your expectations or achieved good results.
7. Provide a clear sense of direction: your agenda for what the team needs to achieve should be clear and well communicated.
8. Be accessible: managers who are locked in an ivory tower and are out of touch with how their staff feel will find it difficult to get the best from their team.
9. Be honest and open: research shows that individuals respond better to managers who deliver relevant information in a straightforward and honest manner.
10. Get involved: showing you are willing to contribute where possible will break down barriers at all levels and help individuals realize their value to the wider success of the organization.

Source Jo Causon, IET Newsletter
www.theiet.org

Contact me if you need coaching or facilitation help in the areas such as but not limited to; 5S, Value Stream Mapping, Set-up Reduction, Problem Solving or Policy Deployment and Consortium Development



2008 Consortium Event Schedule



Tour Workshop Conference

January	February	March	April	May	June
<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 16 <u>Eaton Electrical</u>, contact Joe Fisher, JoeRFisher@eaton.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 13, <u>ACE Bakery</u>, contact Cindy Grolleman, cgrolleman@acebakery.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 19, <u>Nestle Waters</u>, contact Mariela Castano mcastano@perriergroup.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 16, <u>CTS Corp.</u>, contact Bob Garces, Bob.Garces@ac.ctscorp.com</p> <p>Consortium Shareshowcase</p> <p>Saturday 05 <u>Eaton Milton</u>. Contact Cindy Grolleman cgrolleman@acebakery.com or Joe Fisher JoeRFisher@eaton.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 14, <u>Stackpole CSD</u>, contact Don Barber Don.Barber@stackpole.ca</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 18, <u>Morrison LaMothe</u>, contact Tony Vita tvita@morrisonlamthe.com</p>
July	August	September	October	November	December
		<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 24, <u>Kraft Foods</u>, contact Hanif Jivraj hjivraj@Kraft.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 08, <u>CGL Manufacturing</u> contact Dave Deskur daved@cglmfg.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 12, <u>Messier-Dowty</u>, contact Mike Smith Mike.Smith@Messier-dowty.on.ca</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 10, <u>Orenda</u>, contact Brenda McIntosh brendamcintosh@orenda.com</p>