

Developing A Lean Culture

All organizations have cultures, whether the Leadership Team has guided its development or the culture develops on its own. Culture can have a positive or negative impact on the organization's performance.

What is organizational culture?

Culture is a set of rules and standards shared by members of an organization, which when acted upon by the members, produce behavior that falls within a range the organization considers proper and acceptable.

Culture is a learned process and is developed by the organization as a response to the working environment established by the organization's leadership and management team.

A culture is established in all organizations, regardless of whether its development is guided or unguided.

Culture can have a positive or negative impact on the organization's performance.

What is the purpose of culture?

Culture helps us **SURVIVE** in the environment in which we live and work. Survival is a very strong word. Without culture, everyone in an organization would act or behave differently. No one would be able to anticipate someone else's behavior, and no one would understand why people behave the way they do. The organization's performance would be very chaotic.

Why would culture change?

Culture is a **learned process** that aids us in surviving in the environment in which we live and work. If the environment changes, then the culture would have to change in order to increase the chances for the organization to survive.

Notice we say "increase" our chances of surviving. There are no guarantees in life. The more flexible and adaptable a culture is to an ever-changing environment, the more chance it has in adapting or responding to environmental pressures.

Lean Culture - One of the four components of a successful Lean implementation

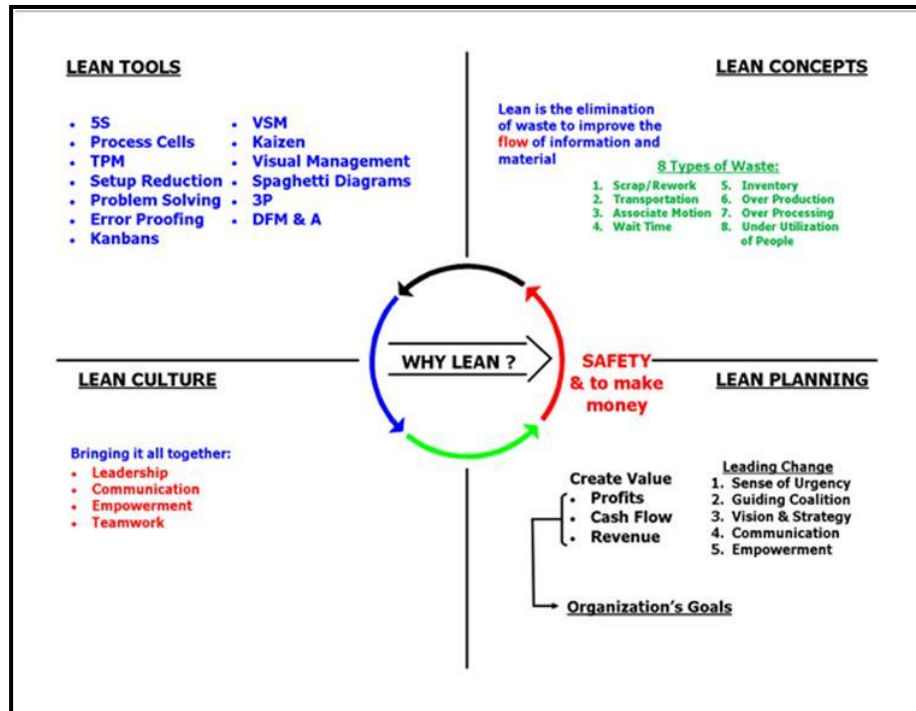
Shown on the picture below they are: Lean Planning, Lean Concepts, Lean Tools, and Lean Culture. Policy Deployment, which connects an organization's goals to the Lean Tools, is part of the Lean Planning activity.

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ronald. E. Osborn

DEVELOPING A LEAN CULTURE



It is important to note that this order of component implementation may seem incorrect to current Lean Practitioners. This results from our tendency to jump to the Lean Tools first. However, the roadmap to using Lean as a System and becoming World Class starts with the end in mind - Lean Planning. Lean Planning ensures that we are not using Lean as an add-on or appendage in our organization, but as the system to accomplish the organization's goals.

All four of these components must be implemented to their fullest extent throughout the organization, in a timely manner, to be successful. Most organizations like to pick and choose what elements of Lean they would like to implement. This is primarily because they do not understand that Lean is a total system and represents a complete and comprehensive culture change in their organization. Lean represents a completely new way of managing the organization.

How do you establish a Lean culture?

A Lean culture is established in two parts:

Part 1 - Developing a cultural framework or structure (this can be done quickly)

Part 2 - Establishing a "people and team-based" environment and filling in the framework (this generally takes years)

Lean Thoughts

Part 1 - Developing a cultural framework

A Lean cultural framework is developed and sets the boundaries for a positive culture by:

- 1) Establishing "Guiding Principles" or "Behavioral Expectations" for the entire organization
- 2) Linking HR policies and procedures to the Behavioral Expectations and the Lean vision and implementation
- 3) Establishing organizational leadership and management principles

As noted, the Leadership Team can jump-start the culture change process by issuing organizational behavioral expectations. Behavioral expectations or codes of conduct are short statements, usually in the form of a laminated pocket card, that are "a set of rules or standards" that members of the organization use to guide their behavior and actions.

Behavioral expectations will only produce culture change if they are modeled by the Leadership Team. Since the culture change process can take years, the Leadership Team must be committed to the guidelines as a new way of doing business

Behavioral Expectation Examples

Shields Bag and Printing

We will use 5S to maintain a **SAFE**, clean, neat, and organized work environment

We will strictly adhere to customer requirements and to all Shields Bag and Printing policies, procedure, and work instructions, first time, every time!

We will never knowingly walk by a nonconformance without taking action

We expect everyone to wage a "war on waste" and actively participate, in a team environment, to continuously improve all work processes

It is everyone's responsibility to provide and seek out training and development opportunities

We will respect company property and institute an action plan to restore all of our equipment to "like - new" condition

We will demonstrate & encourage effective and timely two-way communications throughout Shields

We expect punctuality and preparedness to support our team environment

We seek out root causes and make decisions based on valid data

We will take pride and ownership in our work, respect people and diversity in the workplace, and behave in an ethical manner (Do the right thing even if no one is watching)

With the behavioral expectations established, the next step in Part 1 is to connect these expectations and our Lean implementation plan to our Human Resources (HR) policies. We must revise our HR policies and people measures in the areas of:

Job Descriptions, Performance Evaluations, Promotions, Reward Systems, Bonus Systems, Recruiting ,and New Associate Orientation in order to align with the new Lean culture.

Step 3 of Part 1 is a crucial step and is all about organizational leadership principles. How do we begin implementing culture change in our company? All successful and sustainable business change starts with top management (Leadership Team).

A new Lean culture will not develop unless the organization's Leadership Team is willing to model and be the examples of the new behaviors. As noted author Tom Peters states it; "your people will watch your feet, not your lips."

This leadership starts with culture but extends throughout the Lean Implementation.