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LEAN THOUGHTS

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What is Kaizen ?

Kaizen, by general definition, means 'improvement'. It is, in fact, a Lean tool to help you change your process capability within a very short period of time using a minimum of capital.

In so doing you maximize your employee capability and involvement. *The whole concept of a Kaizen event is to make your process better at the end of the event than it was at the beginning.* The structure of such an event is very important to be able to effect the changes that you want to make on the shop floor. The first portion of that is to properly identify the challenge, or the goals of the team. This is done well in advance of the team formation. *It has been said that a problem well stated is more than half solved.* Understanding their responsibilities and empowerment will enable the team members to concentrate their efforts on the attainment of their goals.

The basic structure of every Kaizen event is the same. The team is trained in the concepts of Lean manufacturing and the role that Kaizen plays in Lean.

This is done to allow the participants to understand why they will be making changes to the existing processes as well as identifying the process by which they will make the changes.

The challenge is then introduced to the team. The goals that are set for any team should be stretch goals that will challenge the team to address any and every potential cause for the existing situation. The team will then watch the existing process in operation.

While some of the team members will be very familiar with the process, others will not have that foreknowledge and will have to be walked through the system. During this initial process identification there will be, almost invariably, some recognition of some of the deficiencies of the existing process.

The team then does data collection and/or verification. This is important. The people involved must be able to measure against the existing standard to be able to identify the gains that they will make through the course of the event. They are now ready to identify potential problems within the existing process.

Done by brainstorming, all issues can be identified, categorized, prioritized and acted upon. The 'acting upon' is easily the most important aspect of Kaizen as a Lean tool. The team determines what changes would be required to improve the existing process and then *they make the changes*—as much as possible, by themselves.

The true value of Kaizen is in the changes that are implemented during the course of the blitz. Too often companies will assemble a team to determine how to correct a deficient process. That team will identify potential corrective actions and will make recommendations in that regard. Very often, this is as far as the process goes.

Sometimes companies already know what they'd have to do to improve but are stymied for any one of a number of reasons:

- We're too busy to change it right now;
- We don't have the time to shut the line down to change it;
- We tried that before and it didn't work;
- Charlie won't change how he does it;
- It costs too much to change; etc.

The next step is for the team to view the existing process. Because the team would normally be made up of people from several functional areas of the plant this is an important part of the learning process for them. This might be the first time some of the people have ever seen this particular process.

LEAN CONSORTIUM MEMBERS:

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- NESTLE WATERS CANADA
- STACKPOLE



Where "Lean Thoughts" Become Reality

At this stage the 'area expert' gets to describe the existing process and identify why they do things in this manner right now. During this step it often becomes obvious to the team what some of the changes might be that would be necessary to improve the process. Team members are encouraged to speak with people in the area at this time to understand what they might feel are some of the challenges within the existing system.

The Kaizen team has both the responsibility and the authority (within predetermined criteria) that allows them to make the necessary changes that will improve the process. These changes can be as simple as cleaning the area or purchasing hand tools and putting them where they are needed. They could be as complex as moving machinery, developing new procedures or reallocating personnel to a different job function.

They complete the changes, run a trial that will validate the changes that they have made, and then they are able to establish a new standard from that time on. Training for each person who will work within the newly established procedures ensues so there will be no confusion as to the requirements of the workplace from this point on. A presentation to management that identifies all of the changes completes the event and then the company can identify and plan the next improvement potential.

The resulting improvements that can be gained from a Kaizen event can be dramatic and far-reaching. A 50% performance improvement is not uncommon with some of the additional benefits being cross training (in problem-solving), improved process knowledge and improved personal motivation for team members.

Source: Bill Petch, Solutions Plus, EMC e-newsletter www.emccanada.org

THINKING QUESTIONS

I call these types of questions "thinking questions." These are one of the most useful tools I have ever found for improving performance. Asking thinking questions means you are now focused on one thing: people's thinking. If people are being paid to think, isn't it about time we helped them improve their thinking?

Thinking questions ask about the nature of people's thinking, in ways that have them become more self-aware and take more responsibility.

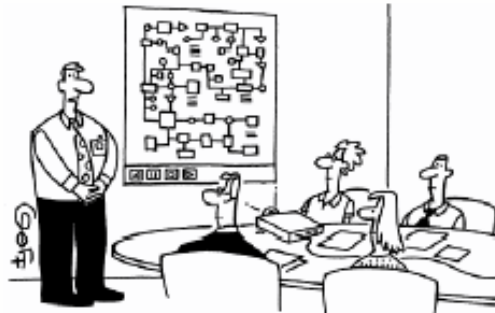
More examples of thinking questions:

1. How long have you been thinking about this?
2. How often do you think about this?
3. How important is this issue to you, on a scale of one to ten?
4. How clear are you about this issue?
5. What priority is this issue for you in your work or life right now, top five, three, or top one?
6. What priority do you think it should be?
7. How committed to resolving this are you?
8. Can you see any gaps in your thinking?
9. What impact is thinking about this issue having on you?
10. How do you react when you think that thought?
11. How do you feel about the resources you have put into this so far?
12. Do you have a plan for shifting this issue?
13. How clear is your thinking about the plan?
14. What are you noticing about your thinking?
15. What insights are you having?
16. How could you deepen this insight?
17. Would it be worth turning this insight into a habit?
18. Do you know what to do to turn this into a habit?
19. Are you clear about what to do next?
20. How can I best help you further?

Source: **SBANC e-newsletter**, David Rock, "Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work"



When Metrics Run Amok



"As you can see on the real-time flow chart, my remarks are dragging on too long, causing a dip in this company's productivity."

"WHEN YOU INNOVATE, YOU'VE GOT TO BE PREPARED FOR EVERYONE TELLING YOU YOU'RE NUTS"

--Larry Ellison

Consortium Event Schedule

Tour Workshop Conference



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