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LEAN THOUGHTS

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Employees or Owners?

OK, so you and your organization have adopted and implemented Lean Principles to become and remain competitive ... congratulations!!! So the next question is ... are you staffed with owners or employees?

We have all experienced the effects of dealing with a business owner. The business owner is always the individual that gives you that personalized service, is highly attentive to your needs and does not seem to know any boundaries when it comes to satisfying your needs ... in essence they are the individual that is truly emotionally attached to the business. Be honest ... how many of you would rather do business directly with the owner instead of the employee?

So how do we create owners within our organizations? Those folks filled with passion, empowerment and engagement to satisfy your customers.

First you need to look at your basic organization infrastructure. Look for clues that erode employee empowerment even before they begin to start work. What level of empowerment is allowed before they need to obtain additional approval or seek support from another department or individual. Quite often we are asking these folks to look after inventory or equipment valued in the tens of thousands of dollars so how much do you trust your team.

Usually the first downer ... is the time clock. Nothing speaks louder to a team member that the organization does not trust them when you request that they "punch in" before starting work or "punch out" at the end of the shift. The time clock is a poor surrogate of leadership within your organization. I always love discussions with Human Resource departments that have an "attendance management" program for folks that are delinquent.. it usually is pretty hush hush to respect the privacy of the employee ... give it up. The organization already knows who the bad attendees are and wait impatiently for the organization to respond and correct the situation swiftly. There are tricks to insure solid attendance which can be obtained from me ... but the key is to leverage the use of peer pressure.

Next, departments are not responsible or accountable for anything ... people are! So as you walk through your organization can you identify an individual's name to a specific attribute or process? This also includes common areas like a coffee area, the photo copier and fax machine. A great trick to instill pride and accountability is to post an ownership sign complete with a photograph of the designated team member. Watch just how quickly the environment improves.

Next, look at how much latitude you allow your employees to satisfy customers. Take a close look at your approval requirements internally and what are these rules truly suppose to accomplish. Be careful, accounting loves lots of rules and approval gates, many well founded, but does it impede the ability of the organization to satisfy a customer. Recently working with a company I was in shock just how difficult it was to obtain approval for a less than a 20 dollar expenditure ... we spent more collective brain time figuring out how to circumnavigate the system.

I am constantly shocked at how little latitude employees in a retail setting are allowed in their ability to process me promptly or the endless transfer of my telephone enquiries within certain organizations.

LEAN CONSORTIUM MEMBERS:

- ACE Bakery
- CGL
- CTS Canada
- EATON Cutler Hammer
- KRAFT
- LA-Z-BOY- Residential
- MESSIER-DOWTY
- MORRISON LAMOTHE
- ORENDA
- NESTLE WATERS CANADA
- STACKPOLE



Where “Lean Thoughts” Become Reality



Someone quite a while ago told me that if you want to find out how the public feels about an organization use Google to type in the organization's name followed by the word “sucks”. Although not a very scientific survey it will often reveal the discontent of employees or customers who still remain dedicated to the product or organization. It is said the highest state of commitment is anger ... and it does take a considerable amount of energy to write a letter or post a blog.

Creating owners within your organization is not an easy task and since it is primarily a culture thing. As a leader, look at those things that would hamper your performance to satisfy a customer and then change them with trust.

So I challenge every leader to create eyes for “owners” within your organization. I have never seen anyone refuse to take an ownership role within an organization as long as you also provide the empowerment to insure success. Success is what you will get since at the end of the day owners are frugal, savvy and emotionally committed to the cause ... sounds similar to what we are attempting to accomplish using Lean.

“ Employees” are those folks that kinda follow the rules and lack any empowerment to truly engage and attach your product or service to the customer. I am not saying that having employees are a bad thing ... but can it really make you truly competitive?

Lean will open capacity and a positive result is your ability to gain speed and agility in delivering your product or service. Speed will always be the most sustainable competitive weapon of survival and business growth anywhere you happen to be located. Speed will always beat a Low Cost Country strategy every time ... but maybe not if all you have is employees.

A Thought starter ...

Every once in a while you come across a quote that really resonates in the soul. Recently I was reading about the Mercedes-Benz Classic Centre, a 26,000 square foot facility located in Irving California. The reporter commented to the General Manager about the cleanliness of the facility to which he responded ... “if it looks like a dump, it shows your attitude toward your work, we don't operate that way. We're clinical”

Christmas Divorce

An elderly man in Phoenix calls his son in New York and says, “I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough.”

“Pop, what are you talking about,” the son screams.

“We can't stand the sight of each other any longer,” the old man says. “We're sick and tired of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Chicago and tell her.” And he hangs up

Frantic; the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone.

“Like Heck they're getting a divorce, she shouts.”I'll take care of this.”

She calls Phoenix immediately, and screams at the old man, “You are NOT getting divorced! Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then don't do a thing, DO YOU HEAR ME?” And she hangs up.

The old man hangs up his phone, smiles and turns to his wife. “They're coming for Thanksgiving and paying their own way.”

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



Special Note !!!

The Consortium Event schedule attached each week with this newsletter has now been updated to reflect all of the currently scheduled 2008 events.

Contact me if you wish to have scheduled events added to the 2008 schedule.

2008 Consortium Event Schedule



Tour Workshop Conference

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