

The Power and Magic of Lean

By Michael Stickler

I was asked the other day... What is your overall view of Lean Production? I struggled with an answer for a few moments...then it hit me like a bolt of lightning.

Lean is a never ending journey to be the very best, the most innovative, and most effective and efficient organization in any industry. Your never done...look...Toyota has been at it for over fifty years and they're still at it.

The Power and Magic of Lean is to continually discover the millions of hidden opportunities existing all around you and in your business.

Many of you have heard me say, "The performance in your company today is a function of all of the problems that you have taken on and solved...and all of the problems that you have yet to address". The waste that exists today in your business, is directly associated with all of problems that have not been solved. The bad news is that there will always be problems to solve and waste to be identified and eliminated. On a day-to-day basis, problems and waste seem to grow just like dust in your house.

The good news is...you and your people have virtually unlimited creative energy and ability, that daily, must be challenged, encouraged, empowered, and respected. All of you must be expected to continually identify the waste and solve the problems that created it in the first place. Continuous improvement must become a way of life for all of you. To do this you must become obsessed with the elimination of all waste: inventory, wasted motion, transportation, quality defects, changeovers, transactions, handoffs and the biggest waste of all the underutilization of your peoples talents and creative ability.

The reality is that Lean is not complicated...but it requires the discipline of a relentless pursuit for perfection by everyone in your business, led by you. You start by asking lots of questions, you encourage experimentation, you appreciate that your people have the answers and you give them what they need to solve the problems and be successful. Remember Lean is about process!