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# Institute for Lean Systems

## May 2010

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### Upcoming Events

**Applying Lean Across the Supply Chain Workshop, June 7 - 11, 2010, Penn State University, State College, PA.**  
[Register](#)

**Lean Executive Course August 2 - 5, 2010, Greensboro, NC.** [more info](#)

**ILS Australia Graduate Certificate Series in Competitive Enterprise begins August 9 - 13, 2010 in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.**  
[For details, click here.](#)

**ILS Lean Systems Certification Series coming this fall. If you are interested in attending, [send David an email. Just click here.](#)**

**For more information about any of these programs, [visit our website.](#)**

Join Our Mailing List!



Dear David,

Spring has arrived, and the only thing wilder than the weather seems to be Wall Street. Triple-digit fluctuations in the Dow are occurring almost daily, spooking some investors. But the truth is, the U.S. economy appears to be on the mend.

Last month's employment gains were the largest in several years, consumer confidence is rebounding, retail sales are up, and inventories are down. We're busier, and that's a good thing.

But is your business poised to take advantage of the economic recovery?

Now is a good time to assess what you can do to improve your competitiveness. Are there steps you can take to make your organization more efficient, eliminate waste, improve productivity and boost employee morale?

The answer is almost surely yes.

ILS can help you to transform your organization and pay for that help with the savings you gain. We guarantee results, and we don't get paid until you realize these savings on your bottom-line, making your ILS supported transformation cost neutral to your budget and virtually risk free. To schedule a visit to your site, [click here.](#)

Spring has arrived. Are you planting the seeds for future growth?

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While I have you, I want to ask about your training needs. Last year, in the US, when companies were slashing training budgets, we decided not to offer many public workshops, focusing instead on conducting dedicated workshops at client locations. I need to know if the demand for those public workshops is growing. If you have people in your organization who are interested in attending our Lean Systems Certification, our Lean Leadership Certification, our Executive workshops, or any of our skills development courses, please send me an [email](#) and let me know. We'll get them on the schedule if enough people plan to attend. Thanks!

Feedback is always welcome. Let me know what you think of the newsletter!

Sincerely,

David

## 5 major misconceptions about lean

*(First in a series of five articles)*

Even though lean business principles have been around for more than two decades, a number of misconceptions persist. Here are five major myths about lean:

1. Lean means eliminating people
2. Lean works only for manufacturing operations.

3. Lean is expensive to implement and maintain.
4. Lean is more stressful for workers.
5. Lean is just the latest fad.

These misconceptions might deter some organizations from implementing a lean transformation program - a program that could ultimately save their business.

Over the next several issues of the ILS Newsletter, we'll examine each of these misconceptions and explain how lean really works.

### **Myth No. 1: Lean = layoffs**

I met recently with the CEO of a good-size manufacturing operation in Louisville, and he was interested in a lean transformation program, but not if it meant reducing his workforce.

"The average length of service here is 14 years," he explained. "Our people are highly skilled, and they've been loyal to us. We don't want to do anything to betray that loyalty."

That's exactly the kind of attitude I like to see when an organization undertakes a lean transformation. At its heart, lean is a people-focused system. A basic premise of lean is that people are an organization's most important asset. Developing people to their highest level of performance separates great companies from the merely good.

Instead of trying to free up people and get them out the door and off the payroll, lean tries to free up people to increase the organization's capacity. That way, when demand comes back, the organization can satisfy that demand without hiring more people.

Lean focuses first on improving people - helping workers develop the problem-solving skills that will enable them to make continuous process improvements.

Done right, lean offers a way of escaping the endless cycle of hiring when demand is up, and firing when demand is down. Developing a dependable, stable workforce enables the organization to develop a higher level of skill. Each team member becomes a more valuable employee, capable of more flexibility and increasing the responsiveness and capacity of the organization.

For more information about how lean can help your organization, contact me at [david.veech@theleanway.com](mailto:david.veech@theleanway.com).

**Next month: Myth No. 2 - Lean is just for manufacturing.**

### **Lean Tip of the Month**

When you find yourself running around too much trying to get things done, whether you're at work or at home, stop and think about creating some Flow. You can do this in four steps that we call One Place, One Piece, One Pace, and One Resource.

One Place means do everything you can in one place, without having to move your feet. Most people do things in stages, with each stage occurring in a distinct place for one reason or another. Bring all those together in one place and half the battle is won. You'll get more work done without working so hard. For a simple example, just think about how you make coffee at home. Is the coffee pot next to the sink to get your water without walking? What about the filters and coffee? How about cups, sugar, cream, and spoons? If you can round up all these without taking more than a step or two, you've achieved the goal!

We'll talk about One Piece next time!

Thank you for being a subscribed member of this newsletter, and keeping up with the Insititute for Lean Systems. We hope to hear from you soon, and appreciate your support over the years.

**Sincerely,**

David Veech  
Executive Director  
Institute for Lean Systems

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