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ILS Newsletter

Dear David,

Thank you for letting us share our update with you. Our goal is to give you information that will help you navigate this competitive global market place. Let us know if we do that and how we can improve this newsletter.

I also want to remind everyone that even if you don't have money budgeted for consulting help, we can help with our cost-neutral financing for any of our programs. We want to keep you competitive in this global marketplace. We know you're under pressure and we know we can help, so we make it as easy for you as possible. Call us and schedule a site visit first, and we'll be able to tell you that day how we think we can help.

David Veech, Executive Director
david.veech@theleanway.com
 502-517-1845

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Solving Problems for Savings



Teach your people to solve problems. That's nothing new in the lean community; Toyota's been teaching us that since the 70's. But problem solving isn't just about completing an A3 and checking the block. The most important step in any problem solving process is defining the problem. This one step teaches critical thinking, quantitative analysis, perspective taking and creativity. When defining the problem, we always start too big and end up not solving any of the contributing problems because we just don't have time to tackle some massive concern.

We recommend two things: 1) Break big problems into tiny ones, and 2) Find out what the problem is really costing you.

1) To get from a global problem (Too much downtime) to a solvable problem, map the process surrounding the problem, then identify your angry clouds. These are bigger chunks of the overall problem (Too much downtime in packaging; or too much finished goods inventory). Then decide which of the angry clouds to attack, but don't just assume that one is more important.

2) Dig through the costs of each. When you can say that a problem is

Solving Problems
 February 2012

Compression & ILS



We've built a close partnership with the Compression Institute whose mission is to create and support Action Learning Groups to transform work organizations and communities using Compression Thinking.

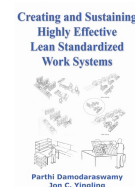
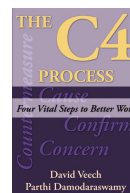
We've established one of these learning groups in Kentucky. This group will be meeting monthly to define what Compression Thinking means for the participants and how companies can grow their bottom line while compressing their use of resources.

Send an email to david.veech@theleanway.com if you are interested in participating. The next meeting is Feb 10, 2012 in Louisville.

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costing you either direct costs in material or overtime, or indirect cost such as lost productivity with a real dollar figure, you have a good start on real analysis. Not that money is everything, but we're accustomed to assigning teams of people to solve these monster problems but most of us will spend more money on the team than we will gain from the solution. It would be nice if the solution saved us more than the problem was costing us.

Back to 1). After selecting the Angry cloud, go back out and observe that one piece of the value stream and list all the tiny problems you can see.

To force you to think harder, do a 6-3-3 brainstorming activity (six rounds where team members have 3 minutes to list 3 problems) focused on the angry cloud. Then take that list of problems, cluster them into similar groupings and decide which of those to solve first. As you progress into cause analysis, you further break this problem down to one or two priority causes which we can address relatively quickly.

This takes practice and it takes leaders insisting that people work through the problem definition without taking short cuts. For more information, visit www.thec4process.com, where you can read excerpts from our book, download free forms, and post questions or comments.

Greening in Australia



ILS Australia has begun several green-focused programs for clients. They are rolling out diploma units in sustainability that include Green Value Stream Mapping and Carbon Accounting! For more information, contact Rina Sinha at rina.sinha@theleanway.com

Leadership Coaching



Despite the overwhelming numbers of books written about leadership, we're still finding way too many organizations who either have no leadership development process or have not adapted one to work specifically for them.

The centerpiece of any leadership development process is a short set of critical values for the organization. These values tell everyone what behavior is acceptable and rewarded and what behavior is not. These are not difficult to define, but certainly require some thought. When laying these out, don't stop with just a label; add to it what ACTIONS are associated with each.

The next step is to give them some teeth. How are you going to assess whether your leaders are behaving according to your values? Time and distance often prevent leaders from interacting on a daily basis, so we can't really rely on evaluations from above. To drive behavior changes, we need evaluations from those we deal with all the time: our co-workers (peers) and our team.

There are lots of these types of 360 degree evaluations available but many are costly and time consuming. We're developing one for a forthcoming book that will be easy enough to use every day, and will be free.

It will be branded under Leadersights, which will also include separate leadership workshops and seminars we are offering now as well as personal leadership coaching. For more information, contact David at 502-517-1845 or email him at david.veech@leadersights.com.

Things We're Cooking Up



We've got a few things on the schedule or in the mix:

Applying Lean Principles Throughout the Supply Chain, a 4.5 day workshop we do with Penn State, is set for February 27 - March 3 in State College, PA. [Details...](#)

We're offering a 2-day Executive Workshop through Lean Frontiers on March 13-14 in the Indianapolis area. [Details...](#)

News!



We are very excited to be asked to teach in two programs at the Ohio State University. We're using our StrikeFighter System simulation in the Masters in Business Operational Excellence, and teaching a lean systems overview in the MBA program using our Card Simulation.

A new Graduate Certificate in Competitive Enterprise series gets fired up in Melbourne, Australia on Feb 6. Week two is set for March 26, and week three is set for May 14. Contact [Daniel Anderson](#) for details and registration (no, it's not too late!).

ILS Australia is working on a USA Study Mission for later this spring, to promote trade between Australia and the US, and to showcase some of the world's best lean operations. They've partnered with the International Fibre Centre and TexSkill Ltd to provide some additional funding to increase opportunities for Australian firms. Contact [Ray Littlefield](#) for more information.

We're continuing to expand our services and are now conducting very detailed shop-floor interventions, training-within-industry based skills development for operators and supervisors, detailed assessments for private equity firms to help them in their due diligence, broad-scope value stream analysis to help set new courses for companies, and full life-cycle process analysis focusing on the details of product development engineering and new product launches through manufacturing.

There's a lot going on here. If you need some help, send us a note! We're still offering our Cost-Neutral financing so even if you don't have coaching or consulting in your budget, we can work with you to realize a tremendous amount of savings and you can pay us after you've saved. Don't let a tight budget stop you from getting the help you need to stay competitive.

Thank you for letting us share this with you. If you liked it, please share it with some of your contacts. If you didn't, please let me know how we can improve it to serve you better.

Sincerely,

David Veech
Institute for Lean Systems

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