



Lean Management for Supervisors And Team Leaders

Originally, service sector organisations implementing Lean thinking adopted a framework developed by manufacturing organisations. Over time, service sector organisations have enhanced their lean approach to better meet the needs of their environment with many administration processes and close interactions with customers. The lesson learned from the services sector show that when Lean principles are applied to management processes, the outcome is increased engagement of front line teams with self-management and performance improvement.

The gains are significant because engagement is a powerful motivator and as those who are familiar with the research by FW Taylor know, a motivated person is around a third more productive so the potential gains are very significant. In addition, research shows that the root causes of 9 out of 10 day to day problems are easily resolved by those who carry out the work. This means that implementing Lean Management produces a win/win outcome because engaging front line teams with solving their own problems improves their skills, self-confidence and opens up opportunities for advancement.

This enhancement to the Lean Thinking toolbox is now also being adopted by manufacturing organisations in the form of Lean Management.

The watchword for Lean Management is “management standard work”. That is the process of formalising and simplifying the routine management interventions.

As a good deal of management interventions involves conversations with direct reports, the power of Lean Management comes from meeting the 4 foundations for engagement as set out in [Figure 1](#).

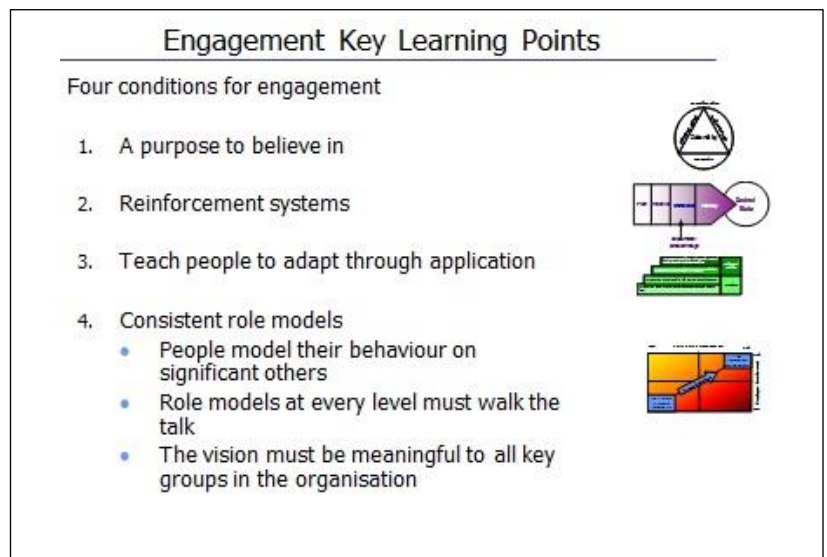


Figure 1: Prerequisites for Engagement

This is achieved by the combination of management standard work and conversations which raise understanding of how and where direct reports fit in the delivery of overall business performance and how they can contribute. As one of the principles of Lean is striving for perfection, this is a conversation with a never ending supply of topics.

The value of engagement has always been a part of the Lean Manufacturing success story. Tools such as 5S and visual management have the potential to guide front line teams to become engaged with improvement and systematically become self-managed teams.

Unfortunately until recently traditional 5S training concentrated on how to implement tools and techniques alone. This is one of the reasons why many Lean initiatives run out of steam and so few organisations realise the full potential of 5S. Lean Management incorporates the management processes needed to systematically raise front line team capabilities. (See Figure 2) and to release that latent potential.

The resulting conversations are a lever to shape culture and reinforce proactive behaviours. Unfortunately this is a “simple not easy task” because it requires a change in the traditional working relationships and behaviours of both managers and their direct reports.

Implementing Lean Management

The starting point is to define what is required from managers. Figure 3 sets out a composite view from a number of exemplar organisations.

What do we want from Managers

- **Know the territory you manage**
 - Understand the numbers
 - Be a coach, help the front line to do their best
 - Give recognition
- **Touch the process**
 - Strategic vs tactical
 - Block out time to visit the shop floor, set the cadence for conversations
 - Incorporate shop floor visits into management standard work
- **Establish visual management standards**
 - Visual controls to identify “normal” conditions at a glance
 - Metric boards to know the game plan, understand the status, confirm the tempo from 50 feet and in 15 seconds
- **Use the daily management system**
 - to trap problems early
 - To reinforce standards
 - to follow up to prevent reoccurrence
- **Develop management standard work**
 - Add the value that only you can add
 - Increase the effectiveness of value adding time




Figure 3 – Management Capabilities

Developing Team 5 S Capabilities

- As team capability develops the topics of conversation change
- Level 1 maturity
 - What do we need in the workplace, what should the rules be, how can we deal with non conformance?
- Level 2 maturity
 - How do we modify the workplace to find things easily, reduce waiting time and improve flow?
- Level 3 maturity
 - How can we reduce the time it takes to keep the workplace in order and prevent problems?
- Use audits to engage in conversations about the next level of maturity.
 - On a scale of 1 to 5; 3 = in place and working, 4 = improved, 5 = significant history of improvement.




Figure 2 Setting the cadence for conversations

From this the Lean Management programme can systematically deal with the knowledge and skill gaps of each management level.

The programme typically starts with front line supervisors and team leaders. Their behaviours are a litmus test of how lean the management processes are.

Starting at this management level highlights gaps in management processes barriers to communication between management levels. Begin with an initial pilot to flush out and deal with these barriers to progress.

Follow the pilot stage with a Lean Management roll out cascade to develop supervisors into lean team leaders, systematically raise awareness of business goals and engage all levels of the organisation with delivering them.

Defining the Lean Management Programme

Each Lean Management programme should be structured to meet the specific needs of each organisation but in general it will include awareness training and coaching so that first line managers:

- a. Understand the business drivers and are able to align front line priorities with them;
- b. Have sufficient technical knowledge to be able to manage operational processes;
- d. Use daily management routines to set the cadence of conversations to reinforce behaviours, establish a creative tension for improvement and coach their team to deliver their full potential;
- e. Apply Visual management to systemise work scheduling decisions;
- f. Develop Management standard work that systematically simplifies and delegates routine tasks to the team.

Creating the Lean Management Environment

As part of the programme also supports the development of senior managers so that they are able to become effective coaches and mentors as first line managers apply practical team development tactics such as in [Figure 4](#).

This provides the opportunities for senior managers to develop management standard work relating to:

- Coaching first line managers;
- Exploring the shop floor reality to reveal blocks to progress (Gemba walks);
- Establish a proactive working relationship between management levels and the front line team.
- Use day to day activities to systematically empower and engage the team

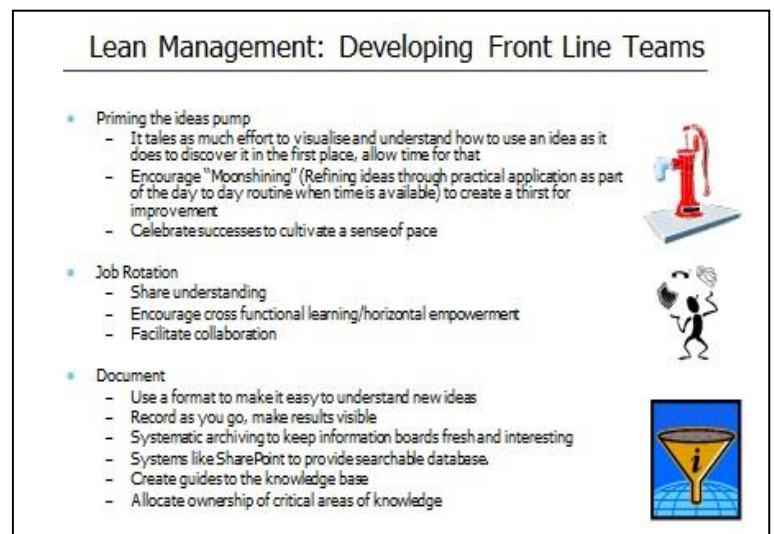


Figure 4 Practical Front Line Team Development Tactics

To learn more about Lean Management for Supervisors and Team Leaders or Creating The Lean Environment contact Dennis McCarthy at DAK Consulting info@dakconsulting.co.uk 01491 845504

The Lean Team Leader & Creating the Lean Environment workshops training workshops can be booked via www.dakacademy.com