



e-LEAN update

'A Change is Gonna Come'

In December 1963, singer Sam Cooke released "A Change is Gonna Come."

Despite the palliative lyrics and haunting melody, the song was only a modest hit from a sales perspective. But its reach would grow as it became the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement throughout the 1960s.

While the general tone of Cooke's song was one of hopeful anticipation of positive change, a feeling of resignation can also be applied to that title; change is eternal and unavoidable, and like it or not, a change is going to come.

For those of us in the public sector, we have learned to expect that change often comes as a direct consequence of an election. A new mayor, legislature, governor or president often brings a new direction, approach or philosophy. In fact, leadership change often results as a direct promise of change: Think about all the campaign slogans over the decades that mention change, new direction, etc.

So how can an effort like Lean, or other continuous process improvement program, survive – and in fact thrive – in a world that can change with each election, and where change is often a goal, rather than a strategy?

For one, we can do so by successfully engaging and energizing our workforce.

With Lean, more than 1,200 State of Minnesota employees so far have witnessed firsthand the value of making thoughtful, focused change in how they do their everyday work. By having those who do the work identify and make improvements, an organization builds support and commitment to positive change. Another 1,000 workers have invested time, through Lean 101 training, to learn more about how this approach can be beneficial and helpful to how they get their work done.

Further, we can thrive by demonstrating real improvement and reporting measurable results. Lean uses clear and understandable metrics to communicate improvement opportunities and success. It does not rely on smoke and mirrors; it's about real process improvement that people can touch and appreciate.

It's also about understanding that Lean is a journey, not a destination.

In 1993, the Governor's Commission on Reform and Efficiency (CORE) offered 118 recommendations on how Minnesota could improve the operations of state government. Among the report's closing statements: "(B)uilding continuous improvement practices into . . . a long-term systematic improvement strategy could mitigate the need for future reform efforts."

That's good advice when change is gonna come, because it always will.



Colorful sticky notes help illustrate a swim lane map, which is used during Kaizen events to show "who does what" in a process.

The map is a useful tool for showing interruptions due to handoffs, transporting, queues and rework, as well as for designing the future, lean state of the process.

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Are you LEAN?

More than 2,000 public employees have participated in Lean activities — how about you? Visit the calendar on the Lean website to find opportunities to get involved in Lean efforts at your agency!

www.lean.state.mn.us/training_and_events_calendar.htm



DEED REA & RES Customer Integration Kaizen Concludes

A Department of Employment and Economic Development Kaizen on March 2-4 will lead to a standard referral process that reduces applicant confusion, ensures service priority for Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) clients and accurately records Reemployment and Eligibility Services (RES) services received by REA clients.

The Kaizen team's observations of the current process revealed a lack of communication between REA and RES staff, REA applicant confusion and inconsistent system access. The agency sought to create and implement a standard process by April 1.

To address the issues, the Kaizen team recommended full staff have access to the necessary computer systems and receive standard training on the systems.

Furthermore, REA and RES leadership will develop team-building events statewide to increase communication between personnel within the two divisions.

REA staff will also establish best practices for marketing local Work Force Center services and provide a daily list of clients to the Resource Area.

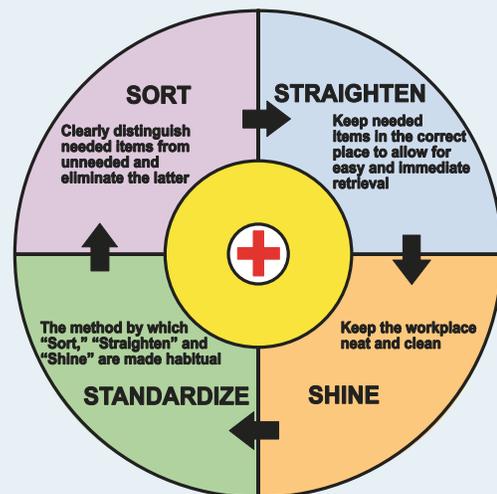
Spring Cleaning the LEAN 5S Way

Warming weather and a greening landscape can only mean two things: A change of season and spring cleaning. This year, consider a Lean 5S for your spring cleaning efforts.

5S — Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain — creates a clean, safe and orderly environment that encourages high performance and sustainable results for the long-term.

Learn more about Lean 5S by visiting the Lean website:

www.lean.state.mn.us/resources.htm



E-LEAN Update

Thank you for your interest and participation in improving the efficiency of Minnesota state government operations. If you have further questions, comments or would like to set up a Lean improvement event, contact Tom Baumann at Tom.Baumann@state.mn.us.

This material can be given to you in a different format such as large print, Braille, or audio tape or disk by calling 651-201-2555. Customers with a hearing or speech disability may call us through the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 800-627-3529, or via email at admin.info@state.mn.us.

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