



E-LEAN update

December 2008

Taking it to the next level

Among the pantheon of well-worn clichés that regularly flow from the mouths of athletes and coaches, one of the most common is, “to be successful this year, we need to take it to the next level.”

Although somewhat arcane and akin to ‘giving 110 percent’ or ‘going above and beyond,’ it conveys the imperative that to reach full potential, the team must do whatever it takes to move the needle from ‘good enough’ to ‘great.’

As the Enterprise Lean effort has unfolded in Minnesota state government over the last 10 months, some things are becoming clearer.

First, for those agencies and individuals who have invested time and effort toward learning about and applying Lean principles, it is indisputable that major improvements in the efficiency and performance of key processes can be achieved. The results are there for all to see.

And as more work units, divisions and agencies apply Lean principles to their processes, the benefits continue to accrue. But while good things are happening and useful changes are being made and sustained, a bigger goal teases us with larger rewards.

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MCF—Faribault controlled movement Kaizen event

Inspired by the success of the controlled movement Kaizen event at the Rush City Correctional Facility, a team at the Faribault Correctional Facility created a more efficient and secure offender



movement schedule while ensuring the accomplishment of its core functions, of counting and feeding offenders and distributing their medications. Some of the team’s improvements include: housing inmates by job assignment for safer work day movement, creating a two-path movement system to eliminate unnecessary movement, and more efficiently utilizing staff for increased inmate observation.

Controlled Movement Kaizen Team Members

Back row from left to right: Bob Mallory, Jim Lyons, Jon Dickey, Rick Klatt, Jeff Titus; front row: Michelle Lehman, Nola Karow, Kathy Halvorson.

Taking it to the next level *(continued from the front page)*

Can we engage and inspire our entire workforce in a systematic effort to continuously improve the thousands of processes within government so that they are as efficient, productive and value-driven as possible? Can we build the organizational commitment and culture that allows each employee in every agency to take their process improvement efforts to the next level?

The short, accurate answer is 'yes.' But—and this is a huge 'but'—taking it to the next level starts with leadership.

Leaders define the direction and destination, and together with their staff establish the best path to get there. In agencies that

have realized the consistent benefits of continuous improvements, it is because some leader stuck out their chin, and said, 'We can be better than we are right now.'

As we look to 2009 and ask ourselves what we need to do to be successful this year, let's look to the leaders. And remember that effective leaders can come from anywhere in an organization. Given the training, license and imperative to support and grow their burgeoning improvement efforts, every state agency can reach the next level.

- Tom Baumann,
Continuous Improvement Leader

Customer voices appreciation for process improvement

The Materials Management Division (MMD) of Admin recently used Lean tools to streamline the professional/technical contracting process. Among the improvements is the addition of an email notification that is sent to state agencies immediately after the contract has been signed. The email informs them of the contract status and allows work to begin right away. This method cuts down

considerably on the wait time associated with interoffice mail. A new email address has also been established so all interested parties can receive the information at the same time. The response received from the Perpich Center for Arts Education (PCAЕ) is very encouraging: "Hope whoever thought this up got much praise for it. I will appreciate the emails, as will others at PCAЕ," Jennifer Manning.

Launch of ARCC's Center for Lean

Anoka Ramsey Community College (ARCC) will launch a "Center for Lean" on Jan. 22. The kick-off will include a presentation by Lean practitioners from several industries, including state government. The center will offer a variety of lean training and certification courses. For more information, contact sherry.butcher@anokaramsey.edu.

The 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, please contact Tom Baumann at Tom.Baumann@state.mn.us.

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