



e-LEAN update

Another fish story?

We heard it again during President Obama’s State of the Union speech. Utilizing a humorous anecdote about multiple federal agencies regulating salmon, the President stated his intent to reorganize the federal government.

“In the coming months, my administration will develop a proposal to merge, consolidate and reorganize the federal government in a way that best serves the goal of a more competitive America”

Makes sense, right?

Not according to David Osborne, who co-authored the book *Reinventing Government*.

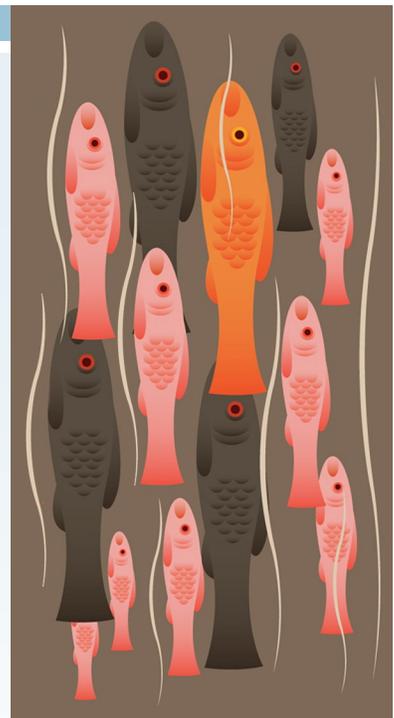
"My heart sank when he started talking about reorganization," Osborne says, "because it's every politician's knee-jerk reaction to making government work better."

According to Osborne, trying to make government more efficient by reshuffling the organizational structure usually leads to turf battles, confusion and, many times, declining performance. And beyond that, if the goal is to reduce the cost of government, reorganizations rarely produce that result, either.

"It's not so much that getting the organization right doesn't help, but it's hugely costly," says John Donahue, a lecturer at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. "It's more expensive than most people anticipate."

Political leaders get lots of publicity by creating new departments, or by promising to reduce government waste by eliminating duplicative agencies. But management experts say real savings are more likely to be found in the mundane but critically important work of public sector employees.

(continued on page 2)



Improve the value streams, including clarifying roles and responsibilities, and you improve performance. Identify and remove waste from the value streams and you save money.

Inside this issue

SSB trims waste	2
Lean Training dates	3
New website	3

Are you LEAN?

Nearly 3,000 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/LEAN_pages/calendar.html

Another fish story? *(continued from page 1)*

In the terminology of Lean, it is about value streams; that is, the systems and work processes that create the products and services that public agencies provide. Improve the value streams, including clarifying roles and responsibilities, and you improve performance. Identify and remove waste from the value streams and you save money. Furthermore, improving value streams does not require major restructuring.

Unfortunately, these value streams are often invisible to policymakers.

"Executives say we're going to be more efficient and save money if we combine departments," says Mitchell Bean, a budget analyst with the Michigan Legislature, "and then others say we'll be more efficient and save money if we split up departments."

Until leaders realize that performance and efficiency are the result of "how the work gets done" through systems and processes, reform will just be another fish story.



"If the goal is to reduce the cost of government, reorganizations rarely produce that result."

State Services for the Blind trims waste by nearly half

State Services for the Blind (SSB) has trimmed waste by nearly half in a primary business process.

A unit within the Department of Employment and Economic Development, SSB believes that Minnesotans who are blind or visually impaired should never be prevented from obtaining a job or participating in personal and community activities.

According to Director Richard Strong, people use SSB services to get assistance in looking for employment, preparing for a career, adjusting to blindness, learning how to travel without sight, learning to have positive personal expectations and learning how to deal with the public about their blindness.

A Lean Kaizen team recently focused on one of the program's services: Providing an assessment to clients regarding assistive and adaptive technology (AT) that may help them overcome obstacles.

The goals of the event included reducing the amount of time for performing an assessment, reducing the "hassle" for clients and reducing the amount of paperwork required for referrals.



(continued on page 3)

	CURRENT		FUTURE	
	Quantity	Time	Quantity	Time
Tasks	18	13.7 hours	9	7.2 hours
Waits	11	68.5 days	7	19 days
Handoffs	11		6	
File/Store	4		2	
Decisions	3		1	
Totals	47	70.0 days	25	20.0 days

State Services for the Blind Swim Lane Metrics

SSB trims waste by nearly half *(continued from page 2)*

“We worked together well, which makes us very hopeful about the success of the project and our organization,” a member of the Kaizen team said after the event. “Taking on a task with a group of people talking about what is going on is really helpful – communication is the key!” The results of their work are dramatic.

Through the Kaizen process, the team eliminated 22 wastes – from unnecessary handoffs to redundant tasks – that will deliver a 71 percent reduction in the average number of days for providing necessary technology to a client. About 70 days was the average time for the process; now it will take about 20 days. Additionally, the team reduced task time by nearly 50 percent, while simplifying and reducing the number of forms

A leaner, cleaner website

The screenshot shows the LEAN Online website interface. It features a navigation menu on the left with tabs for Tools/Resources, Results, Calendar, Links, Training, and Contact Us. The main content area includes a header for 'explore Enterprise LEAN' with the tagline 'Improving organizational performance in Minnesota state government'. Below this, there are sections for 'Welcome to Minnesota's Enterprise Lean!' and 'January e-LEAN Update', both featuring images of people and text describing the program. A 'What's New' section at the bottom highlights upcoming training events.

Check out the new LEAN Online website at www.lean.state.mn.us.

Of particular interest is an updated calendar format that provides detailed information about Lean training and events.

Enterprise Lean has a goal of helping Minnesota state government work better for everyone. Learn about it here!

LEAN Training and Event Dates

Metropolitan State University Kaizen Event is scheduled for February 21—24, 2011.

Minnesota Department of Revenue Kaizen Event is scheduled for March 1—3, 2011.

Registration is open for Lean 101 at the Minnesota State Retirement System Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

Registration is open for Kaizen Facilitator Training March 9 and 10, 2011.

There will be a Kaizen Event March 14—17, 2011 at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

A Kaizen Event is scheduled for March 21—24, 2011 at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

See LEAN Online for current LEAN Training and Events information and registration.

www.lean.state.mn.us/LEAN_pages/calendar.html