



February 2012

e-LEAN update

Assets or Liabilities

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recently released the results of an employee satisfaction survey that was unique in its approach, and revealing in its findings.

Initiated by Paul Aasen, Commissioner of the agency, and supported by MPCA's Continuous Improvement section, employees were asked to finish each of the three statements listed below with as many responses as they cared to provide. The statements were:

- 1) I hate it when I have to...
- 2) I wish I could...
- 3) Someday, I hope to...

Over 1500 responses from 560 employees were collected. With the assistance of four graduate students from Gustavus Adolphus College, the responses were sorted and analyzed.

"The survey pointed out areas where a few process changes could help improve the work environment for a large number of staff, said Cathy Moeger, Director of MPCA's Continuous Improvement Section.

"Although we've had a formal engagement survey for the past few years, the agency had been through a lot with the recent shutdown and budget reductions and we wanted to prompt suggestions as we began to get back to our normal business routine. A key aspect to improving work at MPCA is asking the people who do that work what can be done differently" added Moeger.

The president of a mid-sized Minnesota company once told me that the greatest asset his company had were engaged employees; employees who were valued, who were listened to for their ideas on how to make things better, who were trained and understood how they fit into the bigger picture, and who were consistently provided meaningful, challenging work.

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Responses from the MPCA employee satisfaction survey are reviewed and analyzed.

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Are you Lean?

More than 4,000 people have participated in Lean activities — how about you? Visit the [Lean website](http://www.lean.state.mn.us), www.lean.state.mn.us, for opportunities to get involved in Lean efforts in your agency!

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He went on to say that if employees aren't engaged, aren't valued, aren't given meaningful, challenging work they will quickly become your organization's biggest liability.

Talk about extremes.

So as the MPCA pours through the comments, and assesses the opportunities to reap the rewards of this employee engagement effort, if comes down to a pretty straightforward organizational decision; employees as assets, or liabilities. You decide.

Minnesota Department of Health Receives Better Government for a Better Minnesota Team Award

On November 17, 2011, Governor Mark Dayton recognized the Department of Health's Newborn Screening Long Term Follow-up Unit for their role in building a culture of continuous improvement in state government.

The team, consisting of Laurel Briske, Nicole Brown, Nicole Brys, Kirsten Coverstone, Barb Dalbec, Majken Hall, Jamie Joyce, Yaoli Li, Mary Navara and Abbie Rotari, developed standard operating procedures, clarified roles and responsibilities, reduced duplication of efforts, and increased accuracy and completeness of data.

These improvements to current processes will save \$4,620 annually and serve citizens who need hearing services 57% faster than before. Staffing efficiencies allow the agency to continue to meet the increase in the number of children to the follow-up system and to add steps for children beyond age 4, ensuring that families receive information and have access to medical care and intervention services.

Congratulations to the Department of Health's Newborn Screening Long Term Follow-up Unit as well as the other winners, who will be featured in future issues.

Upcoming Events

See [LEAN Online](#), www.lean.state.mn.us, for training descriptions, current training opportunities, and Lean events:

Feb. 6-9, DNR Kaizen Event

Feb. 15, DNR Lean 101

Feb. 22-23, Dept. of Education Kaizen Facilitator Training

Feb. 24, State Hearing Judges Lean Presentation

Feb. 28, Lean 101 Training, **Registration Closed**

Feb. 29-Mar. 1, Kaizen Facilitator Training, **Registration Closed**

Mar. 19-22, MDE Kaizen Event

Mar. 27, Martin & Faribault Counties Lean 101

Register for trainings at www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar