



January 2014

From the Director's Desk: The Year Ahead

When the calendar reads January 1 each year, the common practice is to look forward and devise our resolutions, identifying all of the things to be accomplished in the year ahead. This most commonly happens at a personal, individual level, but there's certainly great value in doing this at an organizational level too. Just look at the recently delivered State of the Union address, or the Governor's upcoming State of the State address. This is indeed a good time of year to take stock and walk through the vision for the future.

As I look forward to how 2014 is taking shape for Lean and continuous improvement (CI) in the State of Minnesota, there is a lot I am excited about. Here are just a few things:

Project Tracking and Reporting – My biggest goal for this office in 2014 is to introduce a CI Project Portfolio for the state, a tool that will enable our state agencies to track and report their various CI efforts. To make it happen, our office is in the midst of hiring a Data Analysis Specialist to lead the effort. This will be an important step forward in Minnesota's CI journey, and we're ready to take it.

Expanded Training Offerings – 2014 will also see some meaningful evolutions to our training programs. As state agencies make further progress with CI, their training needs have expanded beyond the scope of our existing courses. In response, we've begun offering more "on-demand" trainings, built to specifically address the needs of our agency partners. We'll do even more of that this year, and we'll keep exploring new ways to train – not just on-site but via webinars and online materials too.

CI User Group – In the closing months of 2013, we kicked off our new User Group and brought together CI practitioners from across Minnesota. The collaboration, learning and networking on display in the first sessions was great. We'll continue holding these sessions throughout 2014 (see our upcoming events sidebar below), working alongside our colleagues from Minnesota's County government offices and their existing CI Community of Practice. Hopefully you can join us!

Master Planning – Another effort that began to take shape in 2013 was the pilot of the Master Planning process, which aids agency leadership teams in outlining the road map for a true, top-to-bottom CI transformation in their organization. The Departments of Natural Resources and Administration are the first agencies taking part in Master Planning sessions, with help from our partners at General Mills. Following their lead, we hope these sessions can be leveraged across the state soon.

Inside this issue

[From the Director's Desk](#)

[Statewide Hiring Kaizen](#)

[Upcoming Lean Events](#)

Project Snapshot

In FY13, MN state agencies and other government offices reported **255 CI projects** to our office!

These are just a few of the items that are sure to make 2014 a busy one here in my office. What is your agency or organization looking forward to in 2014? I'd love to hear what you're working on, and discuss how we can help you in your continuing CI journey in 2014.

Best regards,

Mary Jo Caldwell

Going Beyond Agency Lines, Statewide Kaizen Team Designs Improved Hiring Processes

Human Resources (HR) processes are a common target of continuous improvement projects. This very newsletter has spotlighted about a half dozen hiring process Kaizen events undertaken by individual agencies. And since 2010, state agencies have reported at least five process improvement events on the topic of hiring – taking place at the Departments of Employment and Economic Development, Human Services, Public Safety, and at the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

While teams have tended to focus on these projects at strictly an agency level in the past, a recent benchmarking study of Minnesota state government's administrative functions encouraged agencies to start thinking about their shared processes on an enterprise level.

In December 2013, another Kaizen event on hiring was getting underway. But this time, the team members came from numerous state agencies – 13 of them, plus MnSCU, to be exact. For this event, they were ready to look beyond agency lines to assess the shared hiring process.

Across the many agencies, the issues were similar. Hiring processes were overly complex and took too long. The State was struggling to recruit a workforce that reflected Minnesota's racial and disability diversity. And the team recognized the need to streamline and standardize processes prior to the introduction of new IT systems and software.

Accordingly, the team went to work designing a hiring process that could be implemented statewide, meeting the current and future needs of state agencies, and ready to take advantage of new software features.

As part of the event, the team identified each of the stakeholders in the hiring process and listed out their various requirements and expectations. Then they mapped and evaluated the current process, and talked through what they desired in a future process.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 11, Lean 101, Full ([Waitlist](#))

Feb. 12-13, Facilitator Training, [Register](#) *Two seats remaining*

Feb. 27, MN Counties CI Community of Practice, [Details](#)

March 3-7, MN Historical Society Hiring Kaizen Event, [Details](#)

March 13, MN CI User Group Session, [RSVP](#)

March 18, Lean 101, Full ([Waitlist](#))

March 19-20, Facilitator Training, [Register](#)

April 8, Lean 101, [Register](#)

April 9-10, Facilitator Training, [Register](#)

April 17, MN CI User Group Session, [RSVP](#)

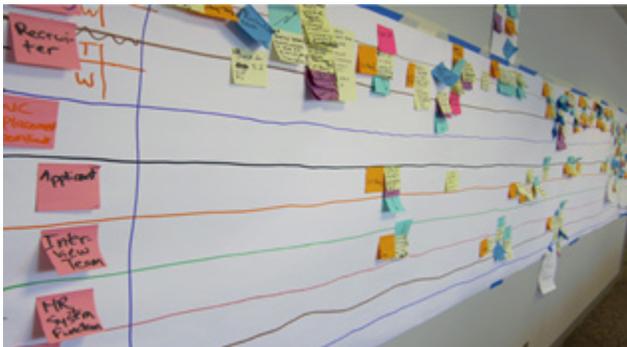
View all Lean events at www.lean.state.mn.us/calendar

Register for trainings on our mnlean.eventbrite.com.



The agencies represented on the hiring kaizen team included the Departments of Administration, Corrections, Employment and Economic Development, Labor and Industry, Human Services, Natural Resources, Public Safety, Revenue, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, as well as Minnesota Management and Budget, Pollution Control Agency, MN.IT and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Ultimately, the team's efforts resulted in a list of over 20 recommendations. The team recommended creating a toolbox for hiring managers, building a central repository for HR information and resources, and establishing shared applicant pools for the State's common, frequently-filled job classes. In addition, they recommended creating a steering team to set further direction and track progress, amending certain policies and rules, and scheduling future kaizen events to tackle other components of the State's hiring and HR processes.



A quick look at the kaizen team's current state process map.

The work to implement and support these recommendations has just begun, and will continue in 2014, but this team's efforts represent an important step forward, and will hopefully signal the advent of more multi-agency Kaizen teams and enterprise-wide CI projects to come.
