



July 2013

An Introduction from the New Lean Leader

Hello Lean colleagues. My name is Mary Jo Caldwell, but you can call me Jo (what can I say, I go “lean” even in this simple day-to-day matter).



While I’ve had the pleasure of working with many of you, for those that I haven’t met, let me just say how excited I am to have the opportunity to work with you as new director of the Office of Continuous Improvement (CI) for the State of Minnesota.

Over the past year, I was helping launch CI in Phoenix as part of the Arizona Department of Administration’s Government Transformation Office. We had a central team of two, which is about double the staff of the Minnesota CI office. It was an incredible learning experience and it inspired many ideas on how to leverage new advanced tools and training and maximize outcomes from agencies’ process improvement efforts.

Prior to my time in Arizona, I worked for the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC). I started there in 2000, and in 2008 I took over the agency’s CI initiative. In just a few years, we successfully completed over 50 kaizen events, numerous World Café events, and many 5S projects.

I returned to Minnesota in early June, and was very fortunate to spend a few weeks working with Tom Baumann before his retirement. With over 38 years in state government experience, and six of those as director of Enterprise Lean, Tom has left big shoes to fill. It will be no small feat filling those shoes, not to mention a number of sport coats left behind on his last day! As I moved into his office, I pondered if Tom did this with purpose, having no intention of ever wearing another jacket and tie again (Or better yet, if perhaps he has plans to come back occasionally in the future to lend us his expertise – we can only hope.).

We owe much thanks to Tom for making Minnesota’s Lean program what it is today. Our state is truly recognized as a national leader in Lean and CI. This really hit home when I ventured forth to work in Arizona and heard at the national level just how much Minnesota is looked to as a leader to follow! I will

Inside this issue

[An Introduction](#)

[Master Planning](#)

[Upcoming Lean Events](#)

Looking for more Lean?

Check out [the Lean Post blog](#). It’s a great source for articles and other “food for thought” on Lean and CI.

proudly carry that torch, and look forward to the next leg of our shared CI journey.

It's going to be a very exciting time. I am eagerly exploring how we can expand and improve our trainings and curriculums, our data-tracking efforts, and our other strategic planning and support services for agencies. To support all of this, we are currently working to bring on two additional positions in the very near future. They will help me drive these new ideas forward, while continuing to set our high standards for training and event facilitation. I want to thank the fantastic team at the Department of Administration, the Governor's Office and the Legislature for giving CI their continuing support and making this possible.

I am very excited to work with all of you in the days ahead. Please do not hesitate to reach out via [email](#) or at 651-201-2560 if you'd like to chat about your CI efforts, and what role I can play in supporting them.

Master Planning: Going From "Random Acts of Tool Usage" to True Culture Change

In many respects, people tend to think about Lean and Continuous Improvement (CI) in terms of tools. We know them, we love them. The Seven Wastes. 5S. Kaizen. Swim Lane and Value Stream Mapping. The list goes on.

But it's important to remember that more than anything else, Lean and CI are about culture change. The tools are simply there as methods to help make organizational transformation possible.

In recent months, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has taken this message to heart and has been engaging in a number of "master planning" efforts with our partners from General Mills. As the name implies, the goal of this effort is to ensure that DNR has a master plan, a roadmap that directs the agency's CI work in a strategic, thoughtful way.

Here in Minnesota, our agencies do a great job of training staff in Lean and CI principles. They do a great job of identifying opportunities for process improvement and completing kaizen events.

But are these trainings and these events in service of a cohesive, organizational vision? Is everyone from top-level leadership to line-level staff on board and on the same page? Are we going beyond what some Lean experts call "random acts of tool usage?" Master planning is one way to make sure the answer to these questions is "yes."

So far, DNR has held a number of concentrated CI sessions with the agency's senior leadership. Creating alignment with leaders on CI is an important first step, and DNR and General Mills continue working to

Upcoming Events

July 15-18, Board of Nursing
Kaizen Event

Aug. 13, Lean 101, **Open**

Aug. 14-15, Facilitator Training,
Open

Aug. 27, Lean 101, **Open**

Sept. 16, Lean 101, **Open**

Sept. 17-18, Facilitator Training,
Open

Oct. 8, Lean 101, **Open**

Oct. 15-16, Facilitator Training,
Open

Nov. 12, Lean 101, **Open**

Nov. 13-14, Facilitator Training,
Open

Dec. 3, Lean 101, **Open**

Dec. 4-5, Facilitator Training,
Open

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

Register for trainings on our
mnlean.eventbrite.com.

develop the next steps that will follow from there. For the State of Minnesota, DNR is the first agency to pilot this master planning process, and the goal is for these methods to be used as a template for other agencies and the enterprise as a whole to follow in the near future.
