

## Lean Philosophy

After the Second World War, the Japanese economy was in ruins. The American economy on the other hand was booming. As a result, a number of leading quality management gurus like Deming and Juran travelled to Japan to share their teachings. The Japanese took these principles to heart and applied them rigorously. By the 1970s and 1980s, the quality of automobiles coming out of Japan was far superior to American vehicles. Toyota in particular led the way, gaining an outstanding reputation. In an attempt to close the gap to the Japanese automakers, there was a global resurgence of interest in Lean methods and techniques. This growth spread outside the automotive industry into other manufacturing sectors as well as into transactional environments and even healthcare.

The lean philosophy seeks to eliminate wasteful practices and increase value-producing practices in the manufacturing industry. Essentially, lean is a business process improvement strategy centered on making obvious what adds value by reducing everything else. One philosophical approach to lean focuses upon improving the "flow" or smoothness of production work, thereby steadily eliminating 'mura' ('unevenness'). This approach naturally takes a system-wide perspective of flexibility and change. The concepts of flexibility and change are principally required to allow production leveling (Heijunka) using various tools, but there are analogues in other processes such as research and development (R&D).

In the same way the lean philosophy seeks to eliminate wasteful practices and increase value-producing practices, the Positive Presence philosophy seeks to eliminate negative behavior habits and patterns and by doing so increase value-producing thoughts, feelings and, most importantly, behavior. Positive Presence is a business process improvement strategy centered on making obvious what behavior adds value thus reducing toxic, disruptive and non-productive behavior in the workplace. Positive Presence focuses upon improving the "energy flow" or smoothness of the work environment by eliminating behavior that is resulting from uneven or incoherent brain wave activity. Like the lean approach, the Positive Presence approach naturally takes a system-wide perspective of flexibility and change principally required to allow for an increase in coherent or positive energy flow to drive synergy throughout the organization.

In lean strategy, the flexibility and ability to change are within bounds and not open-ended, and therefore often not expensive capability requirements. More importantly, all of these concepts have to be understood, appreciated, and embraced by the actual employees who build the products and therefore own the processes that deliver the value. Lean aims to make the work simple enough to understand, do and manage, through a mentoring process. The mentoring process concept of "Lean Sensei" encourages companies, organizations, and teams to seek outside, third-party experts, who can provide unbiased advice and coaching.

As with lean strategy, the flexibility and ability to change in the Positive Presence strategy are within bounds of an individual's current abilities and not open-ended, and therefore often not expensive capability requirements. And more importantly, like lean, all of the Positive Presence concepts have to be understood, appreciated, and embraced by the actual employees who make up the work environment and therefore own the mind processes that deliver the value in today's knowledge economy. As well, Positive Presence aims to make the work simple enough to understand, do and

manage, through a mentoring process – whether through a self-coaching process or through an outside, third-party expert, who can provide unbiased advice and coaching.

The cultural and managerial aspects of lean are possibly more important than the actual tools or methodologies of production itself. The role of organizational leaders is the fundamental element of sustaining the progress of lean thinking. In 2001 Toyota formalized the basis of its lean management: the key managerial values and attitudes needed to sustain continuous improvement in the long run. These core management principles are articulated around the twin pillars of Continuous Improvement (relentless elimination of waste) and Respect for People (engagement in long term relationships based on continuous improvement and mutual trust).

So too, the cultural and managerial aspects of Positive Presence are critical to the Positive Presence strategy. The role of organizational leaders is the fundamental element of sustaining the progress of Positive Presence as a business process improvement strategy. The same basis required for lean management is true for Positive Presence as well: key managerial values and attitudes are needed to sustain continuous improvement in the long run. These core management principles can be articulated around the twin pillars of Continuous Improvement (relentless improvement of the thought processes needed for Positive Presence) and Respect for People (engagement in long term relationships based on continuous improvement and mutual trust).

Lean thinking has had enormous influence on business thinking and played an important role in fundamental transformation of businesses. Positive Presence will, without a doubt, form the next big influence on business thinking to create fundamental transformation of organizational work environments.

As we close the Positive Presence Program with this final discussion, know that I support you in your quest for never-ending success, I congratulate you for reaching your loftiest personal goals, and I salute you in implementing the skill of Positive Presence into your life.

I would encourage you to continue with the habits, both cognitive and behavioral, that you have formed over these past few weeks and months, and I would invite you to read my book, "*CORPORATE HARMONY – The Performance Link for Today's Modern Organization*" to learn more about Positive Presence – as a skill set, as a business improvement strategy, and as an overall cultural philosophy.

Acquiring the skill of Positive Presence is a slow and gentle process that begins with awareness ... but it's also a process that must be doused liberally with forgiveness -- especially self-forgiveness -- as well as a good solid pinch of humor.

So my friends, let the skill of Positive Presence work for you.