

# “5 Whys” Survey on Lean Obstacles



What follows are the full free-form “5 Whys” responses to this survey question:

## **Why are you having difficulty implementing Lean in your organization?**

More information on the survey can be found here:

<http://www.leanblog.org/search/label/5%20Whys%20Survey>

For each response, the “top” choice is in **bold** with the “whys” following, in sequence, as typed by the responder.

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### **Lack of crisis**

- Employees at all levels do not have a sense of urgency
- They do not understand the real drivers of the business
- We do not do a good job of educating them
- We don't understand what metrics would have the biggest impact on their perception of the business
- We are don't know how to communicate them correctly

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Unable to clearly paint a picture of the future state
- No previous experience or example to follow
- Ad-hoc implementation across the organization
- Depends on senior managers willingness / ability to learn about lean
- No other portion of the managers role has changed

### **Top management understanding**

- Top management supports and wants lean implementation, but hinder more than help.
- Top management wants the benefits of lean, but aren't willing to contribute, or to remove obstacles.
- Unwilling to give up some control and let those who know the process, fix the process.
- Don't believe they have experienced lean in a real life environment, so therefore only have a single dimension understanding, as opposed to a dynamic understanding of what lean can do.
- Have not taken the time, or do not believe it is worth their time to become directly involved.

### **Lack of top management support**

- top management does not invest time in Lean (gemba walks or whatever)
- 1. top management does not know exactly what is Lean and what it can bring as improvements and 2. top management does not know how to do
- 1. nobody told top management what is from a management point of view 2. nobody told top management how to do lean management
- (here I guess 1 and 2 merges again) Nobody took the time to talk to top management, probably on a face to face meeting
- Nobody knows how to get that Lean thing into the head of top management (well, I don't know or I know that what others did wasn't effective)

### **Budget constraints**

- Many projects with excellent ROIs
- Company under invested in the past
- Profits appeared to be very good
- Industry supports higher costs resulting less focus on continuous improvement
- Not a lot of competition - yet!

### **Supervisor resistance**

- Front line supervision reverts to former methods when faced with a crisis.
- Supervisors lack faith that cycle times are short enough to meet crisis goals and sales organization insists on managing shop work flow
- Supervisors have no lean experience and Sales team promotes the "circus atmosphere" status quo.
- The company in general has no lean experience and the supervisors fear change.
- Not enough training time has been devoted to the supervisors and no training time has been devoted to the sales team.

### **Employee resistance**

- Lean can result in people doing less work.
- When people have less work to do they fear they will either have to do another job or they could lose their job.

### **Middle management resistance**

- Middle managers are resistant to lean
- They think it is just one of a number of competing techniques
- They don't understand what differentiates it from other techniques/methodologies
- They don't understand any of the techniques/methodologies in depth
- They don't have the time or inclination to study them

### **Middle management resistance**

- Middle managers being wedded to "their" system even if it is waste it has "value" to them. They see its removal as personal criticism which can become wider sabotage
- They have designed a system so see its removal as a threat to their authority
- If they don't know how to do the work ie their way, then staff would not respect them / their role would be unnecessary
- fear for their job / being undermined

### **Backsliding**

- Implementation is viewed as additional work by already over burdened people
- We over committed in the action plan.
- The work needs to be done. Sponsor resisted applying 80/20
- Pressure (real or imagined) from the top to hurry up and save money.
- There is no standardization, no single process being followed, no alignment between business functions, no training, no accountability to follow processes that have been developed.
- Everybody is too busy fighting fires.

### **Backsliding**

- gains from kaizen events are not realized in off-shore operations
- managers in off-shore operations have only a cursory knowledge of lean
- Lean training hasn't been inculcated throughout the business and in all operations
- top mgmt concerns about Lean have stifled investment in Lean training and support for Lean throughout the organization, especially off-shore
- top mgmt has heard feedback from shop floor associates that Lean will cost them their jobs.

### **Managers do not apply lean to the way they lead; i.e., they create waste**

- Managers don't realize how much waste they create even as they try to motivate others to implement lean in their organizations.
- Managers don't reflect on their leadership skills enough to see the waste they create and their leaders don't hold them accountable for applying lean to themselves
- Neither managers nor their leaders understand the waste they generate by poor leadership methods such as not following through, not using 5 Whys, not finding root causes, disrespecting staff, etc.
- Neither managers nor their leaders are held accountable for applying lean to leadership
- Managers/leaders believe the problems of implementing lean are external to themselves, not internal

### **Lack of crisis**

- WASTE is hidden
- The order books are full and you are making money,
- They are stuck in the all success scenario.
- Evaluation is relative and there is no visibility of absolute metrics.
- Lack of awareness of the profundity of the principles, practices which go by the simple looking terminology "reducing waste"

### **Lack of top management support**

- too busy don't see
- bad info

### **Middle management resistance**

- Change of management staff
- Lean is seen by many as an add-on rather than an integrated means of removing waste in the business.
- Focus has been on top-down rolling out of Lean foundations to a schedule without actively targeting waste removal in specific areas.
- Lean focus is well supported from the top but the targets set have been generically rolled out across more than one business and not tailored to specific businesses.
- Blinkered adherence to corporate targets has led to poor project identification. Projects have not been well defined with value quantified. Time has not been taken to eliminate waste in the process of rolling out new tools over the top of existing business processes, systems & frameworks.
- Lack of project definition gateways / project screening. Lack of waste elimination process.

### **Middle management resistance**

- Middle Management feels they are too busy to give up employees for Kaizen Events
- Company is changing and rapidly growing
- New retail accounts and further brand awareness programs

### **Employee resistance**

- For lean to work the people at operator level need to be involved and see that it can work for them. They are not (and don't) currently
- They have not recognised the What's in it for Me
- There is no gain for them yet.

- Gains take a long time or middle management have "high jacked" efforts towards higher level things or the small gains that do come are not recognised as improvements
- Not recognised because they are not expressed in that manner

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- The mind-set of the people is "just do it"
- Because of the speed of growth within the organization
- Because they needed processes in place and just created something that placed a band-aid on the problem
- perceived falling behind the curve

### **Failure of past lean projects**

- When management wants more from the system they change the rules and invalidate the previous work.
- They feel they can get more money out by moving orders out of sequence, kitting parts, and violating their own procedures.
- They have been able to do that and it makes them feel "In Control."
- They have not participated in the Lean implementations.
- They don't understand their part in making it work or they have no confidence in it working. They can make the hockey stick and come in ahead of the number.

### **Viewed as the "flavor of the month"**

- Because nobody wants to commit to something that will go away next week, possibly after only changes that affect "us" and not "them" who cause the problems are implemented
- Because we've seen it happen before
- Because upper management dropped the program after a few eyewash programs were pushed through
- Because upper management doesn't want to tackle really tough problems that have been at the root of almost every kaizen event
- Because it would require them to take on entrenched interests

### **Lack of crisis**

- The lifers think everything is running fine.
- They have been allowed to live in their piles of waste without rebuke.
- The company makes money.
- We are in a high-margin business.
- We pay out people the same as Braum's (fast food restaurant).

### **Supervisor resistance**

- cause it prevents us from reaching our goal

- because most people don't understand
- I've failed to educate/make the case
- I don't have a good comms channel
- I am not involved enough in the organization, b/c I am not valued for my skills

### **Failure to overcome opposition**

- Opposition (shop employees, front line supervisors, middle managers) quickly suppress and prevent any changes proposed/developed by Kaizen teams or focused improvement groups.
- There isn't as much risk in opposing change as there is in supporting change
- Change is feared, failure is feared. If a change fails, then we may appear to be incompetent.
- We don't trust in our ability to learn and adapt as a whole. The openness, trust, and "time" to learn is not present.
- Because learning is viewed as something individuals do, in a classroom. It's not believed that an organization learns as a whole.

### **Lack of top management support**

- lack of know how
- not enough training to top management
- too many priorities other than implementation planning

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Because the company leaders don't hire enough know how
- because while committed to the IDEA of lean, the execution of this is hampered by them not really knowing what it looks like.
- They are still stuck in the mindset that we can do lean only if it does not effect current production
- lack of Courage and forward looking vision on long term improvement Vs short term hits to the P&L
- Lack of courage is tied to lack of implementation knowledge and as it sits now it goes back to the first question. (Circular problem)

### **Failure to overcome opposition**

- Organizations outside ours who directly impact our ability to improve our processes refuse to recognize the "We" in our processes. They don't want to change so won't, and therefore continue to impact our processes.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- We are confused
- We implemented KAIZEN

- We became a Japanese company 5 years ago and the "trend" was to KAIZEN and KAIZEN Institute gave the direction of "KAIZEN Management" with his TQM, TPM, TFM & TSM pillars

### **Lack of top management support**

- Without buy in from the top management there is no organizational imperative to implement lean.
- I think this is due to lack of understanding of lean concepts and principals in this leadership group which leads to lack of a vision of what lean could accomplish.
- There has probably been no formal training on lean that they have sought out or has been made available them and they probably don't read the literature on their own.
- Firefighting and politics are more near term urgencies in their lives.
- A lack of lean and a systems-based view of their environment?

### **Performance metrics not aligned with Lean implementation**

- Performance metrics not aligned to lean implementation.
- Management focus on short term profit instead of long term growth.
- Focus on share price and the interests of shareholders.
- Management has significant interest in share price due to a significant portion of their pay being based in company shares and options.
- Paying in shares and share options is perceived as making sure management decisions are made with the benefit to the company as the primary focus.

### **Lack of top management support**

- They like to talk about it, but they can't or won't devote any time to demonstrating a real understanding of how and why it's important
- They feel it's their lower level managers responsibility to incorporate lean into their daily work, the top level guys are busy "working" with the customers
- They don't understand the importance of leaders being teachers and how critical it is that everybody from the corner office to the janitor closet knows that it's vital for our long term success
- We have not mentored them appropriately to make that critical connection
- we have allowed ourselves to start with a focus on the shop floor and training and mentoring those people and we should have had an equal focus on training and mentoring those in the executive suite too

### **Lack of top management support**

- Top management does not actively promote Lean principles, and so few people feel Lean is important, or feel any pressure to adopt Lean.
- Lean principles would require a change in the culture and day-to-day operations. Top management does not push (very hard) for such changes.

- Top management puts day-to-day pressure on delivering product rather than developing and improving processes.
- Top management is focused on building sales and market share in the near term.
- The owners expect a return on their investment as soon as possible.

### **Backsliding**

- lack of experience
- due to having to learn lean and implement in a turnaround situation
- company was already sliding when lean was discovered
- fast growth

### **Lack of top management support**

- Corporate focus is on Kaizen Events, not lean
- Daily decisions are made by top management that counteract lean progress to date
- Metrics are shallow and easy to game, top management have little investment in change.
- They are rewarded for maintaining the status quo and are happy to wait for retirement.
- There is no reward for them to make a real effort
- Lack of comparative metrics and willpower to drive threat of being fired.

### **Failure to overcome opposition**

- Why don't top management deal with supervisors who do not wish to change?
- Why do all managers retreat from conflict?
- Why are managers so afraid with deal with problem individuals?
- If the goal is important, why allow long-term employees block the road to success?
- Because they don't truly BELIEVE in Lean...they believe there has got to be an easier way.

### **Lack of crisis**

- Training
- Often, people will rather continue doing what they know rather than invest time and effort in learning something new, even if it is much better.
- 1. Inertia. 2. Risk - We've all been burned by things touted as newer and better that were not.

### **Backsliding**

- Top management support & involvement to drive on continuous basis
- Top management does not believe in Lean in totality and hence not ready for the sacrifices lean demands that leads to inconsistency in Lean implementation

### **Lack of top management support**

- Many associates are not on board with lean
- Lean tools are being deployed by fiat and threat of disciplinary action.
- Top management has not placed an emphasis on consensus building, respect for people, or lean education.

### **Middle management resistance**

- Middle Manager Resistance
- Fear of losing power and control
- False sense of being in control
- Past leadership practices created this culture.
- Company was very successful in the past by working in a command and control style.

### **Middle management resistance**

- middle manager (& supervisors) are just that...."in the middle between leadership and value adders. If this group is negative, implementation is very, very difficult, if not impossible
- I believe middle managers and supervisors are often not treated appropriately in the beginning of the process. Kaizen is "done to them" not "with them". Not enough training, poor communications from leadership etc.....
- Tough why.....I believe leaders become often enthusiastic early in the process and forget the importance of "the middle". Statements like "they will either get on board, or be replaced" are not uncommon. Then later in the process leaders interest often fades
- Leadership communication and focus problems and lack of training for middle management
- Failure to align efforts as outlined in Pascal Dennis' "Getting the Right Things Done". In this system, individual efforts and achievements are directly related and aligned to the company's plan or "true north"

### **Lack of top management support**

- Change has to be supported from the top management or it will die the death of 10,000 cuts from lower level resistance.
- They don't see the need for change, given our current market position.
- They only want change when in a crisis situation.

### **Lack of crisis**

- because we continue to make an okay profit doing things the way we always have, so we see no reason to change.

- we make an okay profit because of lack of competition
- hard market to enter
- very skilled work required

### **Lack of top management support**

- Top management eliminates people once an improvement is made which then leads to employees not participating.
- They view people as a cost, not an asset.
- The majority of plants they have gotten their experience in are a traditional union facilities where there are many job classifications which don't allow flow to the work or flexible manufacturing. This leads to extra costs if you don't eliminate people when processes are improved.
- Negotiations have been unsuccessful because there is a dysfunctional relationship due to past issues where trust has been destroyed.
- No discipline to commit to long term plan or direction. We make short term decisions due trying to impress the shareholders at the end of the month/qtr/year.

### **Viewed as the "flavor of the month"**

- Because of past initiatives that faded over time
- Senior management did not remain engaged in the process
- Pursuit of additional revenue opportunities took precedent
- Growth is the number one board level priority
- The focus of the Private equity firm that bought the company

### **Lack of top management support**

- Top management will not free up any resources to implement lean production methods.
- Lean is a low priority.
- Monthly financial performance is the number one priority.
- Group management will always complain about missing monthly financial targets, but will almost never complain about too much inventory, etc.
- Too much focus on short term results.

### **Middle management resistance**

- Managers consider lean additional work, not a benefit
- They are lacking training and resources. Training to understand the benefits and resources to implement.
- Senior management has provided training and resources, but reassigns the resources to urgent issues rather than implementing lean.
- The key resources provided to the managers are the best in the plant and are key to implementing urgent issues.

- Did not train enough resources or look for alternatives to urgent issues. Short term goals out-weigh long term vision.

### **Financial value not recognized**

- Financial
- Removal of non-value add activity is not supported by those who can not link their activity directly to something the customer would be willing to pay for.
- They do not know how to see waste.
- They have not been trained to see waste.
- Their MBA education gets in the way of them learning new ways.

### **Backsliding**

- Without a true change to the culture, sustaining a change without backsliding is impossible.
- Because without the consistency of doing something 30 days, it will not become a habit and move towards standard behavior.
- Possibly the backsliding is due to true standards not being established and trained.
- Potential lack of good metrics to reinforce the standards being pursued.
- Possibly the wrong items were chosen for improvement; implementation lacked "know how," which may have resulted in too few wins to depict the potential of the changes.

### **Supervisor resistance**

- viewed as flavor of the month because several lean implementation failures
- previous failures were a mandated "top down" approaches were poorly directed without reasoning given.
- Owners management style was dictator styled without reason

### **utilizing only workshops, not creating a culture**

- Because it only works in the effected areas and only for a short time.
- The effected employees return to old ways as soon as workshop is done.
- The front-line employees are not shown the value of what they are doing.
- Lean tools are being forced on employees without a culture to support continuous improvement.
- Only upper management is being "certified".

### **Time to implement known improvements**

- We don't have enough people or time to implement improvements
- We don't have enough time to implement known improvements because we tend to see improvements as large projects that need skilled engineers to implement.

- We tend to see improvements as large projects needing skilled engineers because our parent company thought that way and we have incorporated that perspective without thinking too deeply about it.
- We have not thought deeply about the nature of improvement because no one has forced us to, nor given us an example of what small changes really look like.

### **Middle management resistance**

- Because if it's important to them, it will be important to the tech's.
- It's the normal sequence of the leadership chain.
- Upper management sets it up that way.
- Not sure? Maybe because they have to much to do.

### **Lack of top management support**

- Top Management does not really understand Lean.
- Because they think that Lean is supposed to take place everywhere - below them.
- Because they understand leadership as being superior.
- Because that's a management illness: Belonging to "the club" means: You are it!

### **Lack of top management support**

- Lack of top Management support
- Failure of past lean projects
- Backsliding
- Budget constraints

### **Middle management resistance**

- Middle Management resistance
- because if they don't support the programme then the changes required do not happen
- Because in our company they are the operational gatekeepers to supporting and changing front line behaviour

### **Viewed as the "flavor of the month"**

- It is seen as the flavor of the month because we have implemented past "programs" that have come and gone
- Why have they come and gone? Because we used a program to solve problems
- Why did we think the program would solve the problems Because we did not want to take the time to really get to the root cause of the issues causing the problems
- Why did we not want to take the time Because we felt we were too busy doing all the other "important" tasks to effectively deal with the problems

- Because that is how we were judged, by the timely completion of our tasks

### **Financial value not recognized**

- Finance & Accounting do not want to change the way we currently account for the money
- Metrics and accounting are too ingrained into the business.
- We have not progressed beyond conventional means to understand the numbers.

### **Supervisor resistance**

- Supervisor isn't interested
- Supervisor doesn't get it
- No support from middle-management
- Lack of knowledge / understanding
- Lack of urgency, no need

### **Lack of crisis**

- Current corporate management doesn't see the benefit of implementing lean to solve current problems.
- They haven't been told much about lean and how to implement it.
- Nobody has taken a serious effort to talk to them about it.
- Many if not all of the employees have their own things to worry about and don't want to get handed another responsibility.
- The company has developed a culture that either gives the innovator all the workload from his suggestion and/or set him up to fail and to not bring up further suggestions.

### **Backsliding**

- Improvements made are not sustained or expanded after first push.
- The solutions are either complicated or not integrated into "standard work." As they fail or require operators to diverge from their comfort zone, they are abandoned.
- Supervisors and Department managers are not following through with supporting the efforts. They are delegating to the point of abdicating their responsibilities on standard work in favor of dealing with daily issues.
- First-line supervisors are not given all the information on new standards after an improvement is made. This leads to inconsistent application and support. Training and updates on the changes we make is missing.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Lack of implementation know-how
- Lack of company-wide know-how and commitment to lean
- Lack of a company-wide lean training plan

- Lack of an integrated lean total system approach

### **Middle management resistance**

- Supervisors do not see MUDA
- Comfort level
- Lack of crisis

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- People in my organization see lean only as a manufacturing tool.
- No experience with lean as a philosophy
- the past experience with other improvement programs
- past experiences were not sustainable
- management support got lost and people with the experience left the company. Interesting, I got back to the another obstacle I have. You can say then that turnover and other aspects of a dynamic organization could be the true cause of the Lean obstacles in my organization.

### **Lack of top management support**

- Managers don't think we can handle implementing lean because we're a new company that is still trying to figure out how to "walk" before we "run"
- Because we already feel overwhelmed
- Because we're all learning a new industry, new jobs, don't have processes in place yet, etc

### **Not an organized effort-fixing this now**

- Because leadership is still figuring out what direction to take Lean.
- Because we started Lean before we started Hoshin Kanri to tie Kaizen to the goals and strategies of the organization.
- Because Lean was an easier "sell" initially and the goals and strategies was a "sacred cow."

### **Lack of top management support**

- Lack of top management support
- "We don't do this here"
- Because we're not a manufacturing company
- Every project is different and we already have a project methodology to follow.
- We've invested a lot of effort in adopting RUP so we don't want to try something not mentioned in RUP

### **Failure of past lean projects**

- The previous "failure" of lean projects

- I believe that these did not achieve the necessary buy in from the owners of the areas to make the improvement sustainable.
- Maybe the hit it quick / "Event" mentality? Maybe the pressures of a rapidly expanding business that really needed to "get bits out" possibly at the detriment of any lean work.
- This maybe a lack of understanding within the business, or the change agents / lean folk involved before, or a deeper problem such as not necessarily making the changes to the KPIs that would drive the right responses to sustain the usually pretty good lean improvements.
- this lack of understanding is probably down to not the use of the tools, but the support around the people trying to use them. The people bit. ie I have learnt lean is not tools, its people. I am not sure if this lesson was learned or carried over as well.

### **Failure to overcome opposition**

- Middle management and operators not committed to the changes required in Lean Implementation
- Middle management and operators have not internalized the value in making changes and is therefore low priority
- Top management has not found ways to provide sufficient training, recognition and accountability for changes required to become Lean.
- Training, recognition, accountability systems are very weak and not continuously used to guide actions
- Top management does not fully recognize the value and need for these systems to be effective, timely and well-funded.
- Lean is like any other change effort that needs three things to survive: 1) Top Management support 2) A deployed system for change (training and accountability) 3) Company-wide buy in through reward, recognition (or sometimes crisis) Most lean efforts actually have #1 (maybe not as deep as we would like but there is a sincere desire and belief that the change is beneficial). Most unfortunately do not have the system structure to support the changes and do not use tangible reward / recognition to get good buy in.. I am a system guy and the TPS is a system.. not just a collection of tools. The system helps foster, deploy and empower the use of the tools but is not dependent on the tools. Where most companies fail in my opinion, is the belief that tools, not systems, will implement Lean. Without a good management support system, especially in a large company, the change effort will have problems.

### **Just starting, not enough time to train for knowledge - to change the thinking**

- We are a tiny company, it is necessary for us to continue production and train at the same time.
- Because we have to stay competitive to keep our employees, and we have to allot our resources
- We have to allot our resources because our workforce is changing to reflect our culture. Some new hires, most people being promoted from within, so a lot of new

people in positions with limited background knowledge. Also having trouble because of limited computer or business knowledge, so trying to educate on more than just Lean.

- Because we respect our people, they need to have the opportunity to learn and grow.

### **Viewed as the "flavor of the month"**

- Because employees do not put effort into Lean
- They have been subjected to a new "buzz word" improvement program every couple years.
- The plant is trying to improve, but hasn't been fully successful

### **Employee resistance**

- The Lean process relies on direct employee involvement at all levels...Employee resistance (even by one person) can completely shut down the process.
- Why are employees resistant?...Because change and empowerment is scary...they are being asked to do things they have never participated in before (i.e. making their own decisions, identifying problem areas, etc.). Or in a poor lean kickoff, they were asked participate and then not supported. A lot of times in the past, individuals doing this were treated negatively by co-workers and supervisors/management. They received no support...were told not to "rock the boat".
- Why is it difficult to empower people and implement change...overcoming the culture. The culture of the organization will dictate the ease or difficulty of implementing any change. If the culture built up over years is "shut up and do what your told", you can't expect to walk in and tell these same folks..."OK...now we want you to decide who works where and what job runs when.." and think that it will run smoothly. If the employees are not supported through the process, then they will revert back to the "path most comfortable".
- Why no support for overcoming culture? Usually because the management team trying to implement Lean doesn't make an HONEST analysis of what the true culture is. A lot of times, especially executive management, doesn't want to step up and take responsibility for their past actions that has created the culture they are now trying to change. It's easy to hold the mirror up to others, it's very difficult to look into it yourself.
- Why is there not a good, honest assessment of the organizational culture? Because, a lot of times, in that same, existing culture, there has not been a strong basis for responsibility or accountability at any level. To really assess the culture and develop an effective implementation plan for Lean, the team must not only be open and blatantly honest with themselves, but also with every other employee in the organization. The team must be able to wipe away the past "hierarchy" and allow all employees to participate on an even playing field. If this can't be done, then trust can never be established. You must have TRUST as one of your first foundational layers. If you don't, then you have NO foundation.

### **Financial value not recognized**

- Costs are assigned only to material and direct labor operations. "Overhead allocation" hides specific high cost parts and processes in the mix, making it hard to know where to direct lean efforts.

### **Middle management resistance**

- We can implement changes during Kaizen Events, but middle management will not direct their workforce to sustain going forward
- More interested in meeting demand of our customers. Illusion of "no time available" to stop and follow standard work, 5-S, replenish supermarkets, etc.
- They see lean as something that is ultimately more work with no return. It will be in the way of them meeting demand
- Have not seen the successes of Lean in the past. It is too new and abstract for them
- Lack of training, benchmarking trips, and Kaizens in areas other than theirs for them to see benefit without it affecting THEIR business

### **Traditional metrics to measure Lean progress**

- Levels of management are concerned about performance, where they are judged by traditional metrics.
- Each manager wants to succeed in the eyes of his or her boss, to achieve better performance reviews and/or promotion potential.
- Traditional evaluations (and even those of J.W.'s infamous GE system) are what keep people employed, not supporting teamwork or cooperation. Each person is judged on how they performed, not on how they helped someone else perform.

### **Lack of crisis**

- Leadership believes that when times are good the effort required to implement Lean doesn't make financial sense
- Leadership is focused on short-term financial savings. Leadership doesn't realize that in the long-term Lean will outperform and accumulation of quick-fixes.
- Their bonuses are dependent on stock market returns. Leadership needs to be better educated about the long-term benefits of Lean.
- Economics says that people respond to incentives. The Lean culture is a bit too insular and doesn't always do a good job selling its benefits.
- It's true in many cases, but it is wrong to think that is the only motivation people have. Lean-heads fall in love with their tools and philosophy and neglect the fact that they must continually sell their ideas to get in the door in the first place. Even when they're in, they must market Lean to prevent backsliding like Wiremold.

## **Failure to overcome opposition**

- Failure to overcome opposition is an obstacle to Lean because employees raising the opposition do not see value in Lean unless their concerns are satisfied.
- The employees raising these concerns often do not have even a basic understanding of Lean principles, which creates confusion and their opposition to new work methods.
- The lack of understanding has occurred because management has not prioritized Lean education for the entire workforce, only a small "Lean Implementation Team" of which I am a member.
- I think this is because our site's leadership team is more concerned with achieving their individual objectives annually than they are the continuous improvement of site processes or respect for employees.
- I would say the leadership team has an even lower amount of Lean knowledge than the general workforce, which is perhaps the root of this entire issue.

## **Backsliding**

- Tools are implemented, but are not maintained and gradually become either window dressing or are trashed all together.
- Supervisors/Floor leadership fails to see the value of the tools.
- Tools are implemented without regard to an actual problem.
- Management forces the use of tools because they are used in other "lean" facilities.
- Management fails to understand the underlying principles of "Lean" and sees it as a toolbox.

## **Lack of crisis**

- Without a crisis to focus attention on "the way it's always been done", traditional to lean is "too radical"!
- If you have had success in the past doing what you do, the current "problems" should only require people to work smarter not harder and things will return to "normal".
- Unless someone has the vision to see the changing field, humans are no different than the proverbial frog in the soon to be boiling pot of water....relaxing with a beer until he is a goner!
- Microeconomics law #1...in the long run we are all dead for sure, in the short run maybe I can survive if I don't make waves!
- Not too many employees get pats on the back for making their boss's job harder and unless there is an acknowledged crisis any attempt to "change course" will be taken that way.

## **Viewed as the "flavor of the month"**

- Company has attempted other initiatives in the past without much success.
- Different leaders at the top.

- The leaders are not given enough time to see results and change culture.
- Not enough experts (leaders) in the company to follow through with improvement.
- The company is full of people that think they know the best way but have never seen it work in the other industries. Example: If your not from this business how would you know what's best.

### **Financial value not recognized**

- Lack of clear financial gain runs counter to business practice.
- Financial gain is why the business exists as a for-profit entity versus a charity.
- The company is in business to make money.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Lean is less than a year old at the company, therefore there are less than 10 people in this large company that have previous solid lean experience.
- There has been no burning platform for many years so the company is used to being an industry leader.
- The employees enjoy working for the company and give a lot of effort because they enjoying working for the company.
- The company takes very good care of its employees and most employees stay with the company until retirement.

### **Lack of top management support**

- Top managers are not educated in lean and do not understand why it is important.
- Because they come from a foreign company that has never placed any emphasis on learning anything other than the "company way."
- Not Invented Here Syndrome has been institutionalized as part of the company culture.
- A deep-seated insecurity that manifests itself as arrogance and reactionary impulses to control rather than improve or innovate.
- Because most of them are not very good at what they do.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Failure to plan
- corporate edict
- desire to be a marker leader and "save money"

### **Supervisor resistance**

- Supervisors are reluctant to take ownership of the transformed work areas
- Supervisors not committed to the Lean
- Supervisors believe that real problem is outside of their area in supply chain

- Supervisors unable to see problems in own area such as batch buildup of inventory, over-processing.
- The supervisors lack the knowledge required to see waste in their own area and need more education and experience (time). More training and walk throughs required before they will assume leadership role.

### **Supervisor resistance**

- Not everyone is involved enough
- We are kind out of contact
- bad communication
- rivalry
- geography

### **Too much other work to do**

- Insufficient time available to experiment with implementing lean
- Too much adhoc work to do in addition to planned work
- Plans not fit for purpose leading to fire-fighting
- Inadequate planning process using out-of-date information
- Lack of understanding of markets, customers and their impact on daily work activities

### **Middle management resistance**

- Why does middle management resist implementing lean?
- They have always done it different and are not changing their actions readily.
- He may not see enough value to him changing his way of treating others (dealing with issues).
- There might be a self image problem that makes him in essence "compete" to win, not create win/win. Also a victim mentality.
- Needs supported and developed to where he can "trust" others and himself to "fall complete in himself. Doesn't help himself to let his ego get in the way.

### **Lack of top management support**

- Top management support waivers from one priority to another.
- Top management has habits of addressing what is urgent.
- They earned their positions from being great problem-solvers.
- We have a perspective that problems solved are both the responsibility of managers and the way to advance.
- It goes back the idea of what is management? What is the role of management?

### **Time to break away from firefighting**

- Getting employees to take the time to focus on lean while in the midst of firefighting.

- Non-lean practices create an excessive amount of work for the amount of output being created.
- Band-aid solutions from past problems have accumulated into an absurd level of unnecessary complexity.
- The time wasn't taken to identify and fully kill the true root cause of past problems.
- Lack of resources and time during rapid growth phase of the company.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- We need more expertise in pursuing Lean Management Systems.
- We believe that this should be a new management style and with such, requires an experienced management base.

### **Too many parallel initiatives**

- Top not convinced that only Lean will take them to becoming world class manufacturer.
- There is no report in media about companies besides Toyota succeeding with Lean practice.
- Lean has not been really practiced and publicised by other companies.
- There are too many initiatives running parallelly.

### **Lack of top management support**

- Management uses non-Lean performance measurements
- Management has chosen not to embrace Lean Accounting methods
- Management has chosen to keep using the existing software for making (traditional) business decisions
- Management refuses to accept the fact that our current performance measurements go against Lean principles
- Management believes the current methods are needed in order to generate the correct information that is a required to be reported

### **No real resistance**

- I need to ask..."Why didn't the plant manager get the message across to them?" Is it because he/she doesn't know enough to talk knowledgeably about 5S? Or doesn't understand how it can impact the bottom line?

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- We don't know what we don't know, especially with regard how this should be implemented

- We have not sufficiently understood how Lean can be used to address our business drivers and how important the implementation process is to achieving this
- Leadership have been distracted with a major merger and many new faces, each bringing different perspectives on how change should be done
- Insufficient understanding the formative stages of merger around the value of lean in addressing manufacturing efficiencies and building a sustainable operating model
- Business was led by long term industry "technical" experts, who tended towards industry-centric solutions rather than broader strategic manufacturing excellence initiatives e.g. TPS, Lean

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Too many people have no real concept of lean
- They have never been trained
- they don't see it as a benefit
- they have been in the same position in the company for too long and things have always 'just been'
- Previous management had the same attitude and regional isolation to world manufacturing. (Australia)

### **Lack of top management support**

- Although top management is committed to implement lean, they do not actively support it and live it. This demonstrated inconsistency in management demotivates other staff members in their implementation efforts.
- One reason could be a lack of a deep knowledge of the lean principles and also a detailed tacit knowledge about the lean tools.
- The first introductions into lean haven't been deep enough. There hasn't been training by a real sensei over several months or years.
- top management does not have the time to deal with the principles of lean more deeply. Bigger investments that a sensei can stay in a company are not made.
- From beginning on, there is more an attitude of "yes lean sounds great! Let's see if this work for us. Let's try..." There's no real commitment to a real fundamental change and there is no awareness that the lean journey will be challenging, the efforts are underestimated from beginning on.

### **Lack of engagement of entire organization towards vision**

- Lack of engagement of entire organization towards vision is my top obstacle to lean because too many people are working in different directions.
- People are working in different directions because they believe lean is just a manufacturing thing or a project and they have other priorities.
- People believe lean is a manufacturing thing or a project so they work on their old priorities because Top Management has not convinced them otherwise and aligned their work towards the lean approach.

- Top Management has not convinced them otherwise and aligned their work towards the lean approach because Top management sends mixed signals by hanging on to old metrics and management styles.
- Top management sends mixed signals with old metrics and management styles because they lack the understanding of how to lead a lean organization. As a result, management may talk lean but still action by tradition methods.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- No one has the full knowledge of lean to implement it.
- We are just learning about lean now
- No one knew about it fully enough to learn about it in the past

### **Middle management resistance**

- Bosses in the middle management see just their own department or group where they can see improvements ("Never do work for somebody else who is not of the same family;-(")
- As a boss you are promoted due to your work done in your own department (not the company, not other departments;-()).
- To get the promotion you have to show results: FAST.
- The promotion procedure is on a personal result, not an inter-department improvement or financial result, as every is split in cost or profit centers.
- Accounting sets the overall frame due to the mostly money driven business decisions.

### **Lack of implementation know-how**

- Lack of management knowing how the daily jobs are performed and unrealistic expectations.
- Because they think that they know everything.
- Because in practicing they're lean methods they seem to forget the most basic or core values like respect and tell how things should be done instead of asking how they could be done better.
- They are so eager for success that they try to accomplish too many things at once and stress employee relations.(poor planning of new projects)
- Because they want all of the credit to be theirs and are singularly motivated, not as a team they way that they should be. They see themselves as self important and sometimes they won't take responsibility for their actions and like to make others feel that it is theirs because they say so.

### **Lack of crisis**

- People will not change unless they must
- Because not changing is easier than changing
- Behaviors are hard to change
- Neural pathways, once set up, can be changed but cause discomfort during change

- Something to do with neurotransmitters