

“Speaking Out”

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Robert is a trainer, consultant, and coach who specializes in Lean/Six Sigma training and deployment. Since 1997, he has been certifying students as Lean/Six Sigma Black Belts and Master Black Belts,

Robert earned his Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in metallurgical engineering from EIP and is Certified as a Lean/Six Sigma Master Black Belt, Lean Sensei, Quality Auditor and Quality Engineer. Bob also serves as adjunct faculty at Kent State University.

Robert has worked in positions ranging from engineering to executive corporate management. His experience has brought him to the point where he now helps companies apply the methods proven to achieve true wealth, prosperity, impeccable quality and competitive positioning in world markets.



Lean Six Sigma

Lean Six Sigma During Downturns in the Business

(second in a series)

By Robert D. Skillman

I received lots of feedback and appreciation for my thoughts, regarding my advice to companies and Black Belts last week. As a continuation of my article, “Lean Six Sigma During Downturns in the Business”, I will share more detail of what I was talking about.

There are more ways to reduce production costs than reducing workers.

Everybody must learn to “Muda Walk”. Muda is the Japanese word for waste and was organized into the well known “eight categories”. The Muda Walk is the practice of zero tolerance for waste. As one walks the process, the senses are more heightened to wasteful activities and the tolerance level has been recalibrated to prosecute waste where it lives. Waste that was overlooked during good times should now be targets for elimination.

During these difficult economic times DMAIC Projects should be temporarily set aside in favor of:

FAST:

- **F**ast
- **A**ction
- **S**olution
- **T**eams

FAST Teams use Kaizen principles to rapidly eliminate wasteful actions. Some of these are corrective actions; others are flow related and bottleneck elimination. This is not the time for shotgun blasts, but rather carefully aimed rifle shots at high value targets. FAST Projects must be aimed at cost reductions.

DMAIC, TQM, and PDCA Project Methods that we have been teaching are just too slow right now. Although ultimately effective, they require long range thinking and actions. This is still important, but right now we must focus on the life threatening hemorrhage.

Practice “Quick & Easy Kaizen”. This is practiced at the shop level by the worker bees making improvements in their workplace and work elements.

Just about every worker bee has good ideas on how to make their job easier, safer, more productive, and defect free. Now is the time to harvest and implement. “Quick & Easy Kaizen” must be implemented with “Clever” not “Capital”. I have always admired the amount of “Clever” existing in our worker bees.



Taichi Ohno

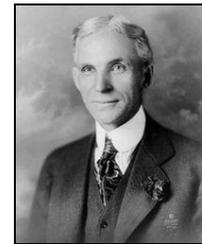
We must marshal everybody in the organization and hold them accountable to reduce waste and generate improved methods that eliminate defects and advance productivity.

We all have been taught that Lean Production is a result of Taichi Ohno and his creation of the Toyota Production System. All Ohno did was copy what Henry Ford (an American) was doing in 1910, improve on it and call it his own. We call that benchmarking.

In 1910 Henry Ford’s Model was:

1. Zero stock
2. 50 inventory turns per year
3. Error-proofing
4. Time-and-motion studies
5. Standardized work methods

Descendents of Henry slowly moved away from these principles in favor of cost accounting techniques. Toyota continued with these original principles and, as they say, “the rest is history”.



Henry Ford

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Works Cited

Houry, M. N. (2009, January). Adapting to Troubled Times. *Quality Progress Magazine* , pp. 8-9.