Getting Back to Basics: Observations and the Scientific Method

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Focus of Today’s Dialogue

• Identify strategies for:
  – “Planning” before “doing”
  – Engaging people in observations
  – Making the scientific method accessible to all
Essential Elements of Lean

Today’s focus

- Relentless curiosity
- Driven by the need to understand, explore, and improve
- Freedom to experiment, practice, fail
- “Can do” mentality
- Customer focused

Individual mindset

Organizational culture
The Scientific Method as Roadmap

Plan

- Observation
- Baseline data
- Strong hypothesis
- Audit plan

Yes!

Check

- Preparation for change
  (alignment, support, participation)

Do

Adjust
The Challenge

Shortchange this step ...

Why?

- Is it the tools?
- The mindset?
- The way we manage?
Simple = Accessible

Are lean tools too complex?

“Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.”

– Antoine de Saint-Exupery
Improvement Kata (Routine): The Value of Experimenting

Do we embrace failure as a learning opportunity ...

... or are we in a hurry to see “good” results?

Grasp the Current Condition

Conduct Experiments to Get There

Next Target Condition

Direction or Challenge

Improvement Kata Framework
Source: Kata in the Classroom
Today’s Topics

- Introduce the challenge
- Stop counterproductive activities & behaviors
- Get a consult on your challenge
- Q&A and wrap-up
Individual Reflection, Then Dialogue

1. 5 min
   By yourself

2. 3 min
   In pairs

3. 3 min
   Join another pair

4. 5 min
   Share themes with whole group
Stop Counterproductive Activities & Behaviors

In your next process improvement, how can you ensure that you achieve the worst “scientific experiment” imaginable?

– Superficial understanding of the problem
– Skip observation
– Jump right to solutions
1. Make a list of everything you can do to achieve the worst “scientific experiment” imaginable.

2. Go through this list item by item and ask yourself, “Is there anything I’m currently doing that in any way, shape, or form resembles this?” Be brutally honest.

3. Decide which ONE activity you will stop doing.
Individual Reflection, Then Dialogue

1. 5 min  
   By yourself

2. 3 min  
   In pairs

3. 3 min  
   Join another pair

4. 5 min  
   Share themes with whole group
From Creative Destruction to Innovation ...
Get a Consult on Your Challenge

• Think of a time when you felt pressured to implement a “solution” quickly, but your problem analysis was incomplete.

• What happened? What did you say/do? What did other people say/do?

• Get ready to tell the story of what happened.

2 minutes
Get a Consult from Two Peers

1. One “client” presents challenge, answers clarifying questions.

2. Client turns his/her back.  
   *Consultants*: What could your colleague do that would better serve them or the situation?

3. Client re-joins the conversation.  
   *Client*: Name 1 or 2 ideas that helped you see the challenge in a new way.
Reflection on Consultation Experience

• What was it like, having two peers discuss your challenge?
• What was it like, problem-solving someone else’s situation?
• Themes, insights, breakthrough ideas
Wrap Up

- We introduced the challenge
- We identified one counterproductive activity or behavior we’ll stop doing
- We consulted with each other

→ What questions do you have?
→ What are your take-aways?
Thank You

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