



## ***Lean—Not Just a Manufacturing Tool***

### **Lean Facilitation**

Keywords: **Lean, Waste, Leadership**

Lean thinking is based upon the Toyota Production System and has been used successfully in manufacturing environments for many years. Lean is now moving into other areas: healthcare, administrative areas, customer service, and more. The potential for making a difference by improving non-manufacturing processes is huge.

Lean is about reducing waste in organizations—reducing the non-value-added activities that your customers are unwilling to pay you for. It is easy to see waste on the production floor, but not as easy to see in administrative functions.

#### **The Challenge:**

How can you identify waste in an administrative area? For example, what types of waste might you find? Here are some examples that occur in administrative functional areas:

1. **Over-production** — starting a task without having a complete set of requirements
2. **Inventory** — unnecessary emails and paperwork
3. **Waiting** — people, paperwork, processing
4. **Non-value-added processing** — re-entering data between incompatible systems
5. **Defects/rework/iterations of work** — multiple drafts, missing data on documents
6. **Excess motion** — walking to and from the copier, buildings, etc.
7. **Transportation** — sending mail between departments and other activities
8. **Under-utilized people** — no method to encourage or capture improvement ideas

Leadership is key to successful Lean implementations. Here are some ideas for you:

- Commit to a long-term improvement process, providing vision through difficult times, resources, and no “flavor-of-the-month” thinking
- Before trying to change others, change yourself!
- Remember, you get what you structure for and what you tolerate—evaluate your organization’s needs and commit to a “journey” not a one-time activity
- Align your strategy, marketing, organizational structure, decision making and metrics
- Make it safe for others to learn and try
- There is no single prescription for success—challenge your paradigms and find what works best in your organization

*Deborah Miller, a Project and Process Specialist, has more than 25 years consulting and coaching experience. Deb believes in sharing her expertise with her clients so your staff learns how to manage and coach others—becoming self-sufficient and proficient. Deb is a Six Sigma Black Belt and Lean in Healthcare certified.*

- *Process & Value Stream Mapping*
- *Technical Documentation*
- *Project Management*
- *Process Reengineering*
- *Change Management*
- *Lean Facilitation*