

# Getting Lean into Office and Business Systems: Integrating Lean, Green and Safety...

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## Background and Challenge

- Lean manufacturing concepts are employed by numerous businesses and industry sectors with a goal of becoming more productive.
- “Green” describes initiatives designed to reduce environmental impacts.
- Safety is promoting the health and well-being of all employees on and off-the-job.
- Often, these activities function in organization “silos” resulting in waste and inefficiency.

## Lean and Green are Aligning

- Recognizing the synergy of lean manufacturing and green, EPA is promoting efforts among state and federal agencies.
- A 2003 report (68 pages) details numerous benefits of lean initiatives – see [www.epa.gov/lean/leanreport.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/lean/leanreport.pdf)
- A quick internet search will show numerous hits for lean and green – with safety rarely mentioned.

## Waste is the key for integration

- Identification and elimination of the seven forms of lean wastes is the enabler for green and safety. These can be married with:
  - Safety waste – injury and illness
  - Environmental waste – air, water and solid

## Lean is the enabler for Green and Safety

- Many people hear the term “Lean” but have little understanding of its true meaning.
  - 1) “Lean” has two fundamentals identify waste
  - 2) eliminate waste
- Properly done, the integration of lean, green and safety will lead to an improved organizational culture for several reasons:
  - All require the demonstrated leadership of top executives.
  - Lean initiatives should begin in the office since it is the home turf for leaders and staffs who make decisions impacting safety and environment.
  - Lean business systems and processes make the workplace safer and more productive, and emotional stress and strain are greatly alleviated.
- ***Teamwork and standardizing non-standard work result in work that is faster and easier to perform with less training; lean should begin in the office.***

## Lean in the Office

Examples of lean waste in the office include:

1. **Correction:** transaction errors
2. **Over-production:** printing too many copies
3. **Motion:** excess motion of personnel to complete a task
4. **Material movement:** movement of material or information that adds no value
5. **Waiting:** meetings start late and/or run over allotted time
6. **Inventory:** Ordering more supplies than necessary
7. **Process:** Often cumbersome or non-existent (i.e. unnecessary reviews / approvals)

## Culture Change

- Top management must lead and infuse vision, values and new skills into the management workforce.
- Lean tools, processes and skills that must be learned as part of the culture change include:
  - 5S
  - Value stream mapping (a process that unlocks the hidden waste of office and business systems)
  - Standardized work
  - One-page reports
  - Knowledge folders
  - Lean thinking
  - Lean metrics
  - Lean communications
  - Problem solving (5-Why analysis, fishbone, etc)
  - Safety (on and off-the-job for all staff personnel in addition to those in manufacturing, sales, service, etc...)
  - Risk management
- Repetition builds skills and changes thinking by personnel challenged to “act their way to a new way of thinking.”

## Conclusion

- The current state is that “lean” is most often thought of for discrete manufacturing with little focus on office and business systems
- The integration of lean, green and safety is a leadership issue; practicing lean in the office allows executives to demonstrate visible leadership
  - Management and staff undergo a culture change, enabling the reduction of all forms of waste and a sustainable future
- Opportunity exists to make a business case for leaders offering culture change via leading lean in the office. Benefits include:
  - Lean becomes the enabler for green and safety
  - Immediate operational improvements do not require capital or costly information technology systems