

Volume 14, Issue 41  October 08, 2007

Important 2007 Dates to add to your calendar...

- Oct 10th, 9-12pm. HPM GMT Meeting.** Host: Rockwell Automation, Cambridge
- Oct 22nd 9-12 pm, 5S SIG.** Host: Gerrie Electric
- Oct 24, 8-4:30, HPM/AfEE ~ Canada/Australia Exchange meeting.** Hammond Power Solutions
- Oct 29-Nov 2nd, AME International Lean Conference** Chicago Contact: www.ame.org
- Nov 1st, HPM Mgr Training Initiative** begins
- Nov 1st, 9-12pm. HPM Lean Practitioners' Exchange.** Host: COMDEV Space, Cambridge
- Nov 12th, 12:30-4:30. HPM SIG: Health & Safety.** Host: Velcro Canada, Brampton
- Nov 21st, 10:30-4:30 HPM Board Meeting.** Host: GE Multilin
- Dec 5th, 9-5:00 HPM Share Showcase.** Location: TBA
- Dec 10th, 9-12:00 HPM Supervisors' SIG.** Host: Hammond Manufacturing, Guelph
- Dec 17th, 9-12:00. Lean IT Roundtable.** Host: Gerrie

Coping with Today's Realities

Two issues ago we talked about some of the additional weight added to our burdens:

1. **Parity:** How do we cope with it AND the 24% Excellence gap between Canada & the US
2. **Competition in 2007:** With competition being 'infrastructure vs. infrastructure' how do we leverage our resources to win?
3. **We are on our own.** In a world where competitors are supported – how do we earn some?
4. **Culture Change is Our Biggest Challenge.** How do we transform exiting cultures into sustainable cultures that fit our firms?
5. **Sustainability:** What leadership approaches are needed to involve employees every day to earn the ownership needed to ensure sustainment?

Let's start with what can be done immediately. Where better to start than with a simple rubber-hits-the-road example that might re-ignite the initiation of things that folks know how to do – but are not doing.

There is certainly no one answer to the issues – and with the diversity of companies in a consortium the answers are often principles and best practice from which the value for a given company is extracted.

**"Pain is temporary...
Success can last forever"**

*...whether winning at hockey ~ or changing
your culture to prepare for the future.*

Vince Lombardy's quote - "Inches Create a Champion" certainly resonates in hockey, football - and especially on the shop floors and offices of our enterprises where we are faced with challenge and competition.

We now are at parity with the US dollar - so what are we going to do about it? We are facing increased international competition - so what are we going to do about it? And, we have slipped to second spot as a supplier to our neighbor to the south – so what are we going to do about it?

There may be some clues in the following experience. ***Here is an article one can relate to. It's all about leadership, vision, standard work, continuous improvement, visual management, vision, clearing bottlenecks and more... it shows the impact a single person can have when they choose to make a difference that matters.***

You may even pick up some of Jim Collins' philosophy – as you see what Disciplined People who apply Disciplined Thinking do to deliver Disciplined Action that can produce winning results.



Applying Lean – Up front and personal

Here is an example of what just one person's thinking and commitment is doing. Have a close look and see if there are lessons we can learn from **Steelcase Canada's Wayne Verge** who is already having an effect on his community this fall - and especially on the 13 year-old young men he coaches.

Wayne is the new coach of the Toros - a Minor Bantam AA Hockey Team of 17 young men who are about to play their 5th game in this year's 40-game schedule. What may be unusual is Wayne's use of Lean Thinking to eliminate waste while setting out a clear vision to succeed, using the team's experience to achieve a vision of developing life skills and character.

"Leveraging learning for customer success"

Making World Class Make Sense

Wayne is a hockey fan. And more than that, he is a hockey fan with many years of experience playing Junior A hockey with the Generals and a career that included tryouts with the Los Angeles Kings farm team where he suffered an injury that dampened his dream of playing in the NHL. The sequence that followed saw Wayne starting a family in Ontario and joining Steelcase where he learned Lean with zest and now practices Lean Thinking daily at Steelcase Canada in Markham – and at the arena with the hockey team he coaches.

His love of the game caused him to volunteer as an assistant coach to get initial experience. While he watched and learned, he felt the approach taken lacked leadership and experience, which was born out with the team winning only 4 games out of the 40 games played in the regular season.

But that was last year. As of this week, the team has won all four of their first four games this season.

You can imagine the excitement this is generating now that they have equaled their entire previous year's output – and they still have 36 more games to go this year.

The Approach

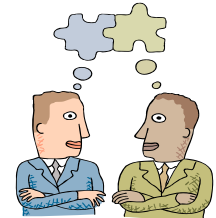
To get to this early stage, Wayne applied not only Lean Thinking - but also the sage thinking of author and researcher Jim Collins who expressed in his book "Good to Great" some of the simple philosophies that excited Wayne. One message learned was to **work hard to get the right people on the bus... and then, work even harder to get them into the right seats.** Aspiring hockey players who want to play at the AA Bantam level must try out to earn a berth on a team, from them, the Coach gets to select his talent. In Wayne's case, he selected his team of 17 bright eyed aspirants during the late summer. But as the team started to come together he found he had to replace 9 of them to get **'the right folks on the bus.'** The criteria he applied were not based on skill but rather on attitude. "Many of those who replaced the original 9 were not as good as my first choices - but their attitudes gave us a much better chance to come together as a team."



Now that the season has begun - he has his 17 for the year.

Getting the Right Thinking Started

Wayne began with open discussions on what Lean is all about, and about the logic of finding and eliminating all wastes associated with a hockey team if they had a hope of being a winning team. He tapped their interest. He talked to them about vision, about bottlenecks, about wasted motion, and wasted human potential if individuals were not aligned. Sound familiar?



To get the right thinking in place Wayne began with a different approach. He got them actively involved in extensive classroom (locker room) discussions. "The din was pretty exhilarating," Wayne chuckles.

Wayne makes no apologies for the homework he assigns to his 13 year olds - which has to be done if they wish to continue to play. Some of the homework required them to research the definition of such concepts as 'discipline', 'sacrifice' and 'character' - and come prepared to stand up and explain just what they mean. The discussions during practice nights lasts about an hour without a minute's letup. All this is a significant part of getting young minds to think and to align with each other in order to be able to play together. Wayne has been excited by the 'dressing room buzz' these simple approaches generate.

Once the thinking begins to take root, the discussions quickly turn to finding root causes and using Kaizens to eliminate wastes. As more solutions come from the team members themselves so does the energy to solve more problems begin to flow. This has already started to show in feelings of "Ownership" about their destiny and indications that they are beginning to believe in themselves and feel good about themselves and each other.

But developing a winning team is just like developing a winning shop floor or office team - and that sure does not happen by accident. It takes vision to provide the direction, planning to map the strategy, and discipline to make it happen. It is the Coaching that brings it all together and provides the necessary spirit upon which to build.

HPM and AfEE members will remember the quote that "Change does not take place by edicts on the wall but through conversations among people every

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day." Wayne keeps the conversations filled with references to the Vision which includes 'what appropriate professional behavior looks like'.

Specific Applications

There is a designated dress code and it is non-negotiable. It consists of black dress pants, a blue shirt with the Toros logo, and a necktie. It is the beginning of 5-S thinking and Standard Work of which many examples exist.

Everyone knows that any violation of any of them has immediate consequences -

such as not being allowed to play. One of the team sponsors was so impressed 'with the class the team showed' that they purchased identical hockey bags for every team member. Now, when the Toros's enter any arena in Ontario with their air of 'respect for others', there are nods of interest and respect from the bystanders who have yet to meet the players. It is all about self-confidence and taking pride in yourself.



Wayne talks about the time he had the opportunity to take his young men to the practice site for the Toronto Maple Leafs. It would give them a glimpse of what it means to be a professional... and what the 'future desired state' might be for them as professional hockey players. They were indelibly influenced by what a professional workplace (the Leaf dressing room) looked like with not a piece of equipment out of place. The impact was lasting and made real when who should walk in but the Maple Leaf coach Pat Quinn to talk with them. That visual image was the beginning of their drive to replicate the professionalism of the 'NHL workplace' they saw. Visual management is a big part of their life now.

Is our pursuit of 5S much different? Should it be? At any rate, it went a long way to getting these young individuals to begin to think of themselves as young professionals. Wayne reiterates this as he says **"It's all about learning life skills, it's about helping young men to appreciate what's involved in adopting sustainable attitudes that will serve them well in the future - whether in the workplace or on the ice."**

As team builders are well aware, the environment in which a team functions must be an extension of the team. For the Toros this meant putting a large bold logo on the door of the dressing room with the Toros name boldly displayed with the quotation below it reading:

"If you are willing to sacrifice to win -- come in. If not go home." A bit of tough love, perhaps but it sure gets the point across.

If you have been to One Steelcase Drive, you will see that the Steelcase philosophy of visual management appears to have rubbed off. Every member has their name on their own magnetic strip. And prior to every game or practice the magnetic strips are attached to the steel door of the dressing room by the designated parent. When the players arrive they pick up their magnetic strip, bring it into the dressing room, and put it above their seating location. At a quick glance the Coach or Trainer can instantly see who is there and who is yet to come. It does not matter where they may be playing or practicing, the seating is always identical.

Each seating location in the dressing room is fitted with three hooks. The dress clothes are always on the left hook. On the centre hook is the player's sweater on a standard hanger with the number facing out and the open side of the hanger hook always facing to the left. In this way, the sweater wardrobe parent can quickly pick all the sweaters one after the other without breaking stride or ever having to shuffle them. The right hook contains their towel.

The arrangement of all other pieces of equipment and sticks is organized accordingly and never left to chance or disarray. The team follows an approach very similar to a Steelcase approach. Everyone knows they are accountable for following the "20-Point Inspection" which defines your work area (dressing room) roles and responsibilities. It is broken into 4 major components that deal with 1) Ergonomics 2) Promptness 3) Proper Dress, and 4) Dressing Room Housekeeping. The latter deals with maintaining in the dressing room, an impeccable decorum one can be proud of. Some have said the Toros are every bit as professional as the Leafs...

Applying Lean Tools

The application of Kaizen tools has contributed to an impressive process flow and little waste. Players now understand process thinking, and how Value Stream thinking leads to the elimination of waste.

A simple example is the arrangement of the sticks. Because seating in the dressing room is fixed, it did not take them long to see how placing the sticks right at the door with each stick perfectly in sequence, according to the seating order, could streamline their flow from the room. Now the players grab their sticks as they flow out of the room in sequence - at a brisk

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walk with never any fumbling for sticks. This precision flow does not end until they stride onto the ice.

Bottleneck Elimination

Another novel flow solution came from the team's use of Kaizen thinking to crack a plaguing bottleneck problem. The issue was time lost in line changes. You want them as fast as a NASCAR tire change and not lose a second if players bunch up. One root cause of long line changes was due simply to the different heights of the players. Some could easily hop over the boards and get into the action - others had difficulty. Those lost split-seconds were resulting in giving their rivals breakaways. By applying some good old 'Steelcase root cause analysis,' they solved the bottleneck with a couple of precisely sized crates and a plank! Lean thinking at its best! The crates and the plank are now part of the 'Team furniture' they take wherever they go. Now, when a line change occurs - all players wash over the boards and exit through the doors instantly like a single wave. This simple process improvement has opened up opportunities for the Toros to add to a lead. It's also confounded competitors who have no idea how Lean thinking has put them at a disadvantage due to the speed with which Toros can get to the action.

Many things such as the above, make the saying "**Inches make a Champion**" come alive. "And believe me we use this all the time - the players jab each other with it which is neat - it has positive skill building impact," chuckled Wayne.

Wayne's constant attention to Disciplined Thinking utilizes the use of the "**Inches make a Champion**" phrase (and others) as a way to help build character. Such a focus gets his charges to focus on the small points - and then to celebrate them to inspire everyone to look for more. The thinking certainly supports the Lean concept that "It is better to make 1000 things better -- than to make 1 thing a thousand times better. "They not only recognize details they would have missed - they ensure they attempt to employ them as well - and that's great for the team," was Wayne's observation. One begins to sense a connection between the application of processes such as these, and the fact that the Toros are unbeaten so far in 2007.

Management Insights

You will see many examples of Disciplined Action as you watch this team. They arrive exactly one hour before practice with all the right equipment. Those that do not - know they may miss a shift or not play

for a period. When asked about the reactions of parents to his style - Wayne chuckled and commented that expectations are everything. He explained that parents are very much a part of his team which is why he took the time to explain how he intended to manage the team before he even started. He had unanimous parent support. Illustrating the point, he recalled a recent situation where all members of the team were required to bring their practice sweaters. In this case his best player came without his sweater and was told he would not be practicing that night. His father approached Wayne about the situation and when Wayne explained the parent said, "Wayne, I fully understand." He then turned to his son and said - "Let's go home." He was back for the next night and there has never been a situation since then. As in all fine companies - there are consequences to inappropriate behavior and everyone knows what they are.

Getting the Right Folks on the Bus

Wayne's selection of the right players for the bus was the beginning of putting Jim Collins' thinking to work. The belief that Disciplined People with Disciplined Thinking deliver Disciplined Action is a given here. At the Minor Bantam AA level of play - players know they must work hard to make the team. But bringing 17 young men into alignment is no small achievement. One of Wayne's 'Standard Work' elements is striving for perfect unison in the pre-game and pre-practice stretching exercises. The team forms into a 4 by 4 box with the team captain leading the exercise. If you have seen army drills at boot camps in the movies, you can get a sense of the synchronicity of the stretch exercise. The young men love it and really get into it. They get pumped as they drive each step to perfection. And anyone who might be just a tad out of time will quickly and good-naturedly be reminded by his peers. They snap through the sequence getting more excited as they go through each step in near-perfect unison that would make a synchronized swimming team proud.



Disciplined Lean thinking has produced a structure that is explicit and well communicated. Everyone knows that for 30 minutes before game time, all players have 20 minutes to themselves where they may listen to music, talk, think -- and get mentally prepared. At precisely 10 minutes before game time, the trainer switches off the Ghetto Blasters and the coach addresses the team and covers the key issues in preparation. As the starting lineup is read - each

person's name is cheered as it is announced. And each knows their opportunity is coming because the starting lineups are rotated so everyone can feel the exhilaration.

It's onto the ice!

As they flow out to the ice for the 5 minute warm-up they are thinking, pumped, disciplined players.

Continuous Improvement

Here is where the Coach really goes to work. His role is to provide the kind of feedback that can make every player better. The philosophy that it is **'feedback that makes perfect – and practice that makes permanent'** is alive and well.

Wayne video tapes every game (the ultimate process for the team) and reviews it immediately after the game. He prepares a detailed summary report for each game which he shares and thoroughly reviews with the team. It includes the top 3 issues to be considered before the next game plus the strategies, diagrams, and adjustments needed to improve.

Adding to Disciplined Thinking

Discipline is part of their life at all times. And at all times, every player is required to show respect for opponents, for parents, for referees, and each other. They are held accountable for it by the Coach.

When the game begins, the teams line up longitudinally down the ice and then turn to face each other to shake hands before play begins.

Wayne, and the Toros, want no part of flippant hand taps and off-handed 'good game' expressions that are not sincere. Because character building is part of the Vision for these young men – each Toro faces his opponent with his hand firmly extended for a firm handshake while making direct and sustained eye contact with a pleasant wish for success. The team is no doubt beginning to believe, as Wayne does, that life skills are learned from small things.

When the final buzzer brings the game to a close, they move immediately to their end of the arena and proceed to acknowledge their goalie and the contributions made throughout the night.

Making it Sustainable

In order for his team to continuously improve, continuous improvement is part of every minute of the experience. Feedback is given clearly, positively, and

always concludes with a positive comment - especially at the end of the game when they go over the good, the bad, and the things that need work.

To continue sustainable results means involving people in their own success because only through such involvement is the true feeling of ownership imparted. And as the process, led by the Coach initially, begins to take hold, the culture change begins to contribute more and more to the desired behaviors. A simple way to look at it is as a maturing process, for people acquire more maturity the more they initiate Disciplined Thinking and Disciplined Action. So, too, is it with teams.

The Weekly Update wishes the Toros success this year and look forward to updates, Wayne, as the season unfolds. Thanks for sharing.

Any lessons here to be taken with pride and applied in your corner of the universe?

"20 Point Inspection"

Date: _____ Overall Score: _____ Auditor: _____
Yes = 1pt. No = 0 pts NA = Yes

		Yes	No	Problem Statement
Ergonomics				
1	Is everyone in proper stretching gear? (shirt, shorts, running shoes, bar, skipping rope)			
2	Is everyone on time for stretching? (trainer to run)			
3	Are all eyes and ears on stretching leader? (Focus)			
4	Are all stretching tools/gear placed back in hockey bags after stretching?			
Promptness				
5	Have all players arrived 1 hour before game/practice?			
6	Is everybody ready 10 minutes before game/practice for coaches talk?			
Proper Dress				
7	Have all players dressed in proper game dress clothes? (Black pants, Blue Toro shirt, black tie, and black dress shoes)			
8	Are dress/street clothes, hung on first hook?			
9	Are jersey's hung on middle hook?			
10	Are towels hung on 3rd hook?			
Dressing Room Housekeeping				
11	Have name bars been placed on Dressing Room door by Trainer?			
12	Has dressing room door sign been placed on door by Coach?			
13	Are magnetic name bars placed and aligned above middle hook of 3 hooks?			
14	Are game sticks placed on wall closest to rink?			
15	Are back-up sticks placed on stick rack?			
16	Are all hockey bags placed under bench?			
17	Is trash can placed over floor drain in middle of room?			
18	Has used hockey tape been placed in trash can?			
19	Have game jersey's been hung properly with number out, hanger swooping left and hung on middle hook?			
20	Has anything been left behind after game/practice?			