

PROCESS REFLECTIONS

Timing is Everything

Everything has its proper timing. Projects take time and processes take time, but each possesses a different timing. Project timing requires reflective perspective, process timing requires immediate observation. Each has its own way of coping with reality. The project timing requires collection of performance data and observing patterns in trends to develop general solutions to pattern-based indications of change. Process timing observes individual instances of work and catches the lack of discipline in performing individual tasks. By definition, non-repetitive, individual tasks will uniquely perform as instances of “noise” in the long-term perspective and escape detection. Also, definition establishes a limitation of in-situ detection of long-term patterns which are not observable while an operator is observing the process in real-time.

Thus, to achieve effective problem-solving in the Bayesian moment, both long-term and short-term perspectives are necessary to properly understand the situation leading to abnormal results.

Reflective Questions:

1. If the statistical methods of Lean Six Sigma require data; how probable is it that they will be best employed for catching the “instantaneous” issues that arise from individual lack of discipline if a worker intermittently fails to follow standard work?
2. Are the “tools of the gemba” (especially, Fishbone Diagram and “5 Why” questioning) targeted to finding and resolving system-based problems (e.g., LSS project work) or are they focused upon tracking individual problems that occur from a lack of discipline?
3. Which of these approaches builds the DNA or culture of improvement more assuredly? LSS which operates as a project with a leader or team-based control of daily work activities?

Lesson to be Learned:

Both types of inquiries are important to perform – the answer for Continual Improvement is not the selection of one over the other as a superior methodology. Both are essential ingredients of a program for improvement, the distinction is in the identification of a proper project for which each methodology should apply!

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