In the May, 2012 issue of Mission Dantotsu, we discussed THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR. To recall, let me quote from there:

“Here are our conclusions about the hierarchy of factors that drive excellence in an organization:

1. The single most important factor – the Conductors of the Orchestra – Leadership Factor
2. The second most important factor – People Factor
3. The third most important factor – Innovation Factor!”

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Mission Dantotsu

A journey towards excellence

Kaizen Quote

“Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so”

- Douglas Adams

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The People Factor

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2. The second most important factor – People Factor
3. The third most important factor – Innovation Factor!”
I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the ‘People factor’ to any organization that aspires to be ‘excellent’.

A few years back Toyota made ‘respect for people’ one of the pillars of ‘The Toyota Way’. Some companies thought they already practice this concept, and many others just incorporated these words into their ‘models’. Unfortunately, the reality on the gemba is stark!! A vast majority of the organizations that we observe as part of our profession, very nearly disregard the people element. Most confine their ‘HR (read ‘people’) policies’ to supervisors, executives & managers! The rest are handled through IR!!!

There are many reasons for this. Lower costs & relative abundance of unskilled labor; labor laws governing ‘permanent employees’ & ‘contract labor’; the approach of some of the trade unions & vastly varying interpretation of the phrase ‘respect for people’ - drive anti people policies.

The paradox is that these very same organizations want to implement Lean, they want to implement Kaizen® & they want to be operationally excellent! Somehow, we – the Kaizen®/Lean promotion community, has not been effective in bringing home the unambiguous message that ‘respect for people’ is an essential pre-requisite for Operational Excellence. Without that, it may be possible to get some performance improvement, but it would be impossible to sustain those improvements & to build a Kaizen® culture suitable for long term success in this rapidly changing world.

What is the meaning of the phrase ‘respect for people’? How does it manifest itself from being a fuzzy/ hazy concept to actual practice? For an answer, I would like to share two quotes.

The first one is from Mr. Akio Toyoda, President Toyota Motor Corporation:

‘At Toyota, we have always invested heavily in developing leaders who understand and live the principles & values of the company. We want our DNA to be encoded in every team member at every level of the company. We expect greatness from all our people. We expect them to accept and conquer challenges that may seem overwhelming at first glance.

A real irony is that ‘respect for people’ requires that people feel the pain of critical feedback. If we do not give people accurate feedback based on real behavior they are not growing and we are not respecting them. The job of a leader is not to put them in positions to fail, but to put them in challenging positions where they must work hard to succeed and still see how they could have been even better. Our goal is for every Toyota team member from the worker on the production floor to our most senior executives to be working to continuously improve themselves.’

The second is attributed to Mr. Konosuke Matsushita, the founder of Matsushita Electric, which gave birth to iconic brands like Panasonic:

‘We build people, our people build products’.

Could leaders in our part of the world also build examples of excellent organizations supported by a strong PEOPLE FACTOR? We would certainly hope so.

- Vinod Grover
Mission Dantotsu April 2013

Kaizen Happenings
- CQI+Kaizen training @Government of Gujarat
- SS training @Vodafone
- QCI Conclave
- Lean & CE seminar, Nigeria
- AGI breakfast, Ghana
- CTI, Tanzania
- ILO SCORE, Ghana
- APAC Regional Meet
- Lean seminar @Automotive intelligence center

New Clients on Board

Team KI AIM

Upcoming Events

Kaizen Story
Training @ Government of Gujarat Hospitals
Kaizen Institute

Kaizen happenings

CDC Training
- Gov of Gujarat Hospitals
- With Quality Council of India
- Multiple locations

5S training and implementation
- Multiple locations - across India

9th National Quality Conclave
- New Delhi
- March 6th and 7th
- Kaizen Institute - Bronze Sponsor
- 03 session on Operation Excellence
- By Khidir Tayy

Lean & DE seminar, Nigeria
- Lagos, Nigeria
- India House Hall, High Commission of India
- March 5th
- Session on Operational Excellence
- By Jayapath Murthy and Vinoth Gounder

AGI CEO 6th team meet, Ghana
- Accra, Ghana
- Coconut Grove Hotel
- March 6th
- Organised by Association of Ghanaian Industry
- Session on Operational Excellence
- By Vinoth Gounder and Jayapath Murthy
- Attended by industry leaders in Ghana

Kaizen training and implementation programme
- Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Hosted by Confederation of Tanzania Industries
- March 30th
- Session on Operational Excellence
- By Jayapath Murthy
- Attended by industry leaders in Tanzania

ILD SCORE, Ghana
- Kaiman training and implementation programme
- Designed by ILD for SMEs
- Trained 22 SMEs in Ghana
- Trained 9 Ghanaian export trainers

Asia-Pacific meet
- Shanghai, China
- 14th to 18th March
- To build on CII regional strength
- Attended by Jayapath Murthy

APAC regional meet

Lean seminar @ Automotive Intelligence Center
- Bilbao, Spain
- 22nd Feb
- Seminar on Operational Excellence
- By Jayapath Murthy
An interesting parody of Deming Cycle! Although strictly tongue-in-cheek, it’s sure to resonate with many of us as we evaluate our problem-solving approaches.

Mr Kuldeep Tyagi receiving memento on behalf of Kaizen Institute at QCI’s 8th National Quality Conclave in New Delhi.
Upcoming Events

Annual KAM/KIA Event

Nairobi, Kenya
Intercontinental Hotel
18th and 19th July
Genba Tours and Tutorials
International Guest Speaker - Jon Miller
Interested? Contact Kamei Pattini
(kpetri@kaizen.com)
I’ve been asked countless times by Lean change leaders, “How can we change a system that’s so rigid and entrenched?” Here’s an allegorical and hopefully not too arcane answer that occurred to me recently:

An early wintery storm caught us by surprise this year. I had just mowed the lawn days earlier, and most trees had not even shed their fall colors. October snows usually melt on contact with still-warm surfaces, we thought, and by sundown on Saturday, flurries left only a light coating on leaves and lawn. There were warnings on the evening news, but no sense of impending doom at our house. The maple, oak and pine trees that ringed our yard were decades old, and had withstood pounding winter nor’easter winds many times before. And there was not even much wind with this October storm, just snowflakes. So we retired for the evening.

Several hours passed. We slept as snowflakes quietly accumulated, and deepened on the leaves and branches of our sturdy trees. At 3:00 a.m., we were awakened by a low cracking noise. In an instant, whoosh, a large oak limb fell from a height of 30 feet to our backyard deck. We heard the thud as it struck the deck but could hardly see where it landed. By this time the silent snowfall had gathered momentum. More snowflakes, more often. Each flake dropped straight down on this windless night, and lighted on another, the snow relentlessly weighing down the sturdy trees.

Soon after the first downed limb, another thud followed, this time in the front yard. The top of an oak tree had split and tumbled onto some white pines, which softened the blow, but also altered our view to the street as branches were lopped off. The intensity of the snowfall was increasing, and it was hard to see the yard even with a spotlight shining on the front driveway. What we could see, however, was a large Norway maple tree teetering precariously over our driveway. The top of the tree was tilted like the Tower of Pisa by the time we saw it, and seconds later its trunk snapped at a height of about six feet, dropping it across our driveway. I thought to myself, “I’d been planning to remove that tree anyway.”

Now there were limbs cracking and trees tumbling together in several different places, as if a tipping point had been exceeded. One by one the snowflakes had landed, none by themselves having a perceptible impact. But together, they were changing the landscape.

How do you change a system that’s so rigid and entrenched? We may think it will take an avalanche, but really what’s needed is a gradual accumulation of snowflakes.

Acknowledgement: Courtesy of “Old Lean Dude” www.oldleandude.com

Please share your feedback / suggestions for improvements to vallaham@kaizen.com