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Bend the Curve CIP-News - July, 2009

Bend the Curve Continuous Improvement Practitioners

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The 5th Myth: Improvement is not real work

— Walter E. Lowell



Last month I expanded on Ken Miller's 3 myths that keep government from radically improving by adding Myth # 4: **We don't have time!** and, in passing, acknowledged there was at least one more myth, namely:

Myth #5:

Improvement is not real work.

These two myths are intimately connected, and rarely do we hear one without reference to the other. Evidence for Myth # 5 is just as abundant as Myth # 4. How so you might ask? Well, think about all the processes that exist in your work place.

How frequently does anyone stop to examine them and improve them?

Answer: Not that often.

Why?

Well, we know the answer before even asking the question: Who has the time? (Myth #4)

We put to rest Myth # 4 last month. To wit: The ratio of work time (the actual hands-on work time) and elapsed time (the overall time it takes to complete a task) is close to 1 in 10. Which is to say there is a huge opportunity for a return on investment (ROI) with respect to saving time. Spend one day on improvement and you get 10 back - more or less. So much for Myth # 4.

But what keeps people from improving the work is not only a time

issue, but also a failure to see that improving work is actually part of work.

But many people may be thinking, "Stopping to improve work today means the pile on my desk just gets bigger." The question of 'why the pile?' is never asked.

Somehow in our frenetic work culture we have loaded our schedules up to a point where stopping to look at what we are doing is not an option.

We have all been taught about *muda*-the Japanese word for 'waste'. It does sound awful doesn't it? But the Japanese talk about another type of waste called *muri*, defined as 'overburden'. Overburden means we take on more than we can actually do, or more likely, we do more than we actually *need* to do.

Why is this the case? Because stopping 'to see' the work is not seen as part 'of the work', but something extra -- a cultural legacy we have inherited from some other time. Hence, the opportunity to save time and improve productivity is lost.

CI-PS will remember our reading of Henry Ford when he wrote at length about coming to work everyday and looking for ways to improve his factories. I ask you now, How many of us come to work everyday and look for way to improve it? To what extent does our culture support this activity? Where would General Motors be today if they had embraced his dictum?

— continued on p. 3

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Special points of interest:

- Study Missions
 - › August 21 - Durham, NH city gov't. here in Lean Lab.
- Next Clinical
 - › September 18



Printed & Other Matters

*I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.*
* * * * *

*Tell me, and I will forget.
Show me, and I may remember.
Involve me, and I will understand.*

- Chinese proverb, generally attributed to Confucius, 450 B.C. Also to Xun Zi, a Confucian philosopher.

Applying lean production to the public sector

Governments at all levels must deliver more for less. The principles of lean manufacturing offer surprisingly apt solutions.

Nina Bhatia and John Drew. The McKinsey Quarterly. June 2006.

". . . Many organizations keep their "water levels" high and deal with problems only if they break the surface. Such a system masks underlying problems. Rather than removing them, managers in the public sector are often tempted to add something to the system. Government departments around the world have, for example, tried to improve their processes by installing expensive IT systems. Many have delivered benefits; some, such as the case management system of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, have been expensive failures. Huge benefits probably would have been more likely even without the new IT systems if government managers had tackled the underlying process problems. McKinsey analysis has repeatedly shown that most benefits from IT investments go to organizations that use IT to improve already well-managed processes.

http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/article_print.aspx?L2=19&L3=69&ar=1806

**It is better to be roughly right
than precisely wrong.**

John Maynard Keynes. As quoted in The Life of John Maynard Keynes, R.F. Harrod, London:MacMillan. 1951.

The 5th Myth: Improvement is not real work (cont'd from p.1)

Ford was relentless. You remember his story about walking outside one of his foundries and looking underfoot and picking up a piece of coke and exclaiming that there was "iron in the coke". Then having his crew gather up all the coke and reprocess it until every bit of iron was extracted. No doubt those around him were stunned that he would make so much of so little. But he knew how the little numbers added up very quickly to big ones.

How come he saw it and not his employees who walked over it every day? It would take Toyota so many years later to discover the answer: Teach all your employees to see!

The point is, regardless whether it is iron or gold or time, if we can see it wasted we need to act. There are, however, two critical elements here; the first is 'to see', the second, is 'to act'. The seeing is the reflection on work — "to see" the opportunity; the act is to "figure out" a way to do it better.

Who best to do the "seeing" and the "figuring out" than the people doing the work. They are limited only by what they are taught and what they are allowed to do. Enable them and now you have 13,000 eyes — at least in

Maine State Government - looking for improvements! Imagine what can be accomplished.

This is why the Toyota Way says Lean is about two things: respect for people and continuous improvement. Respecting people's intelligence and giving them the training to see and the time to 'figure it out' is what creates great organizations. Is there another way? To be sure there are others, but none quite as successful at being better, faster and cheaper.

Henry Ford used the analogy that improving work is like "sharpening a chisel". If you have ever used a sharp chisel versus a dull one you know the difference in effort Ford was talking about. A dull chisel makes the work harder to do, more prone to mistakes and accidents, while a sharp one makes the work easier and faster in every way.

It is the same for processes that we work in. Left unexamined they get harder to use, more error prone and, in some instances, less safe. We have seen the difference in the outcomes of our Lean interventions and proven this is so. Improving work is as inseparable to everyday work as day is to night. There is no one without the other.

— *Walter*

BTC Lean Events

Date	Time	Topic	Location	Contact
Aug 21	8:15-4:30	Study Mission-Durham NH	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Sept 18	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Sept 21-23	TBA	Ken Miller Workshops	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Oct 16	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Nov	TBA	DOP 1-5 (TBA)	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Nov 20	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Nov-Dec	TBA	Ken Miller Workshops	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Dec 18	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Jan TBA	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL
Feb 19	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	ASD / WEL

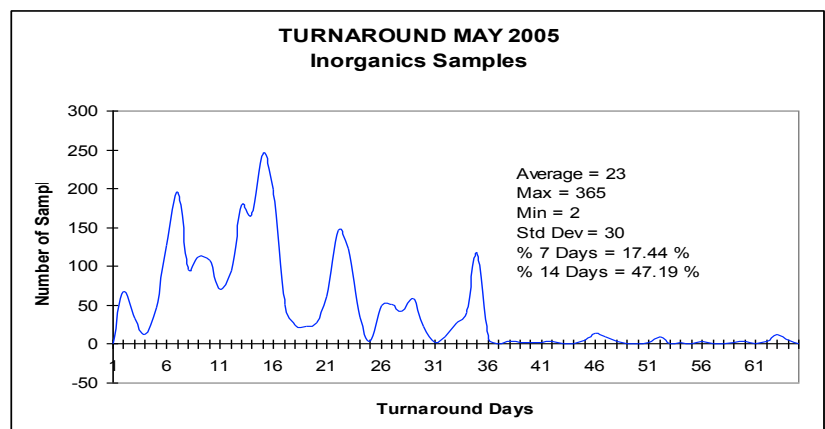
* To add or see more events or detail, go to the Bend the Curve Calendar in Outlook's Public Folders.

Lonza Lean Management Team Visit State of Maine's CDC HETL

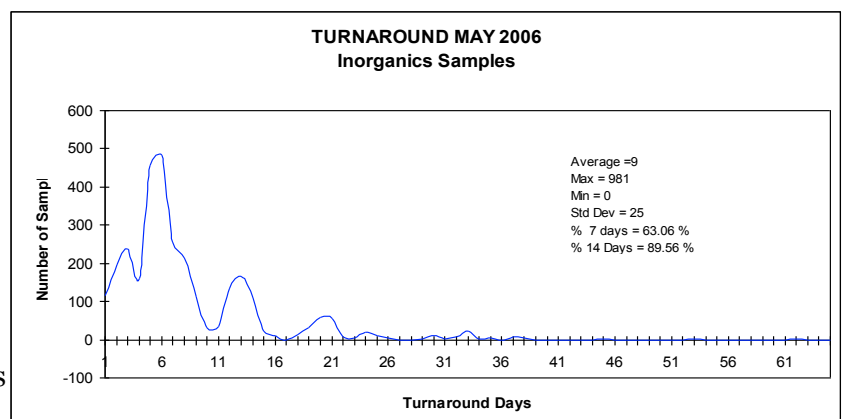
by Thomas Crosby & Jon Kirsch

On June 16, 2009 a team of lean management professionals from Lonza of Rockland paid a visit to the Maine Office of Lean Management and the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL). This was in reciprocity to a visit by Maine Lean Continuous Improvement Practitioners to Lonza earlier in the month. On hand to greet Lonza were Walter Lowell from the Office of Lean Management and Tom Crosby from HETL. Lonza representatives were Jon Kirsch - Lean Management Director, Randy Watts - QC Manager, Karen Sanborn - QA Manager, and Cheryl Horovitz - Technical Support Lab Scientist.

Walter Lowell began with an overview of Lean goals and successes within State government, focusing on the lean training and implementation at HETL. The three major sections within HETL -- Forensics, Clinical, and Environmental -- were each discussed with regard to the goals, challenges, and successes while incorporating lean methods and Culture into their daily activities. It was noted that even physical changes in personnel location were implemented that resulted in significant efficiency gains.



Tom Crosby then began a description of the major challenges within the Environmental Section that were targeted including erratic and excessive turn-around times, uneven workloads, scheduling problems due to different priorities and sample expiration times, and excessive customer phone calls for results and report deliveries. While all of these problems are related, the major underlying issue which resulted in significant customer dissatisfaction was the excessive turn-around time. It was determined that if that issue were solved, the others would be also be minimized. Intensive value stream mapping sessions were held that involved all section staff and both current and future state maps were produced.



The changes identified in the sessions were begun immediately where appropriate and continued over a period of several months. Kaizen brainstorming sessions and implementation continue to the present. (A chart showing turn-around improvement is included in this report).

— continued on next page

Lonza is employing lean methodology in its manufacturing operation and has achieved impressive efficiencies. They are very interested in looking at lean implementation in other facilities to further improve these processes and resolve some of their outstanding issues. The fact that State of Maine and Lonza are sharing lean management information is significant in that the approach is shown to be non-specific and applicable to all forms of management.

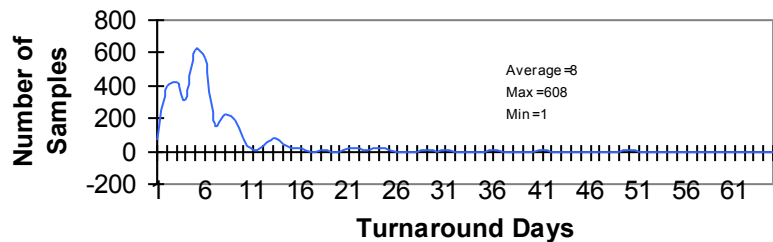
Lonza's largest issue that they were looking to solve is the scheduling of QC samples prior to product release. They asked how the HETL Environmental section prioritizes its samples. The answer was that we usually no longer need to prioritize -- because this was achieved by reducing the cycle time for each step in the process, resulting in a routine turn-around time which is acceptable to practically all HETL clients, with very occasional exceptions.

We were able to show graphically the large turn-around improvement along with less stress, reduced cost, and reduced staffing through attrition. These graphics included a '7-day Report,' which is posted weekly, and charts showing turn-around time vs. number of samples (see on these pages). All of these are visuals which aid staff in determining how well we are doing in achieving our objectives.

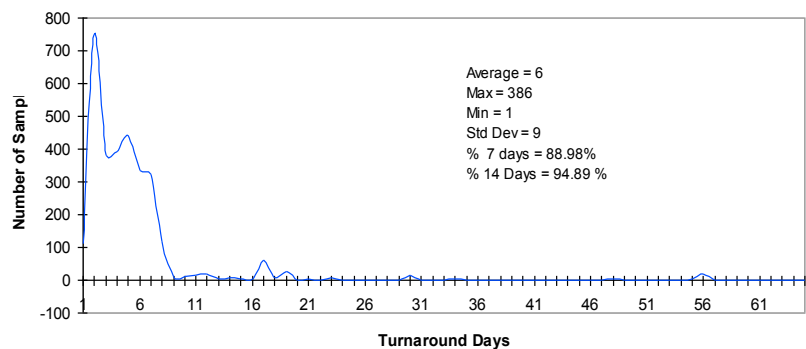
The session wrapped up with a tour of the laboratory. Tom Crosby led the Lonza staff through the Inorganics area. Rick Danforth and Jim Curlett graciously conducted tours of the Clinical and Organics sections respectively and expertly answered many questions about the HETL mission.

((If you would like to read more about these HETL improvements, refer back to this June's **CI-P News**, Walter Lowell's "The 4th Myth".)

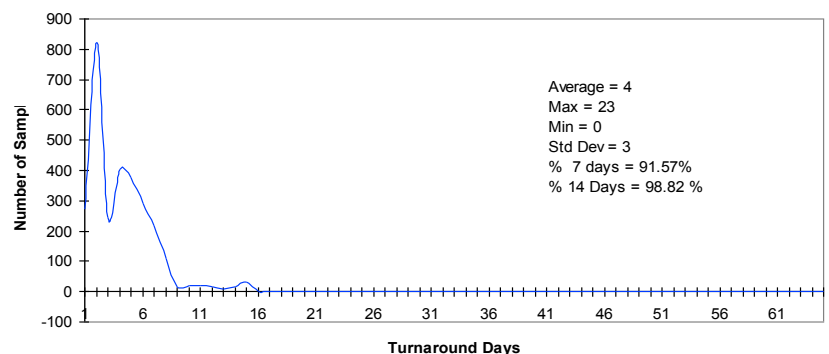
TURNAROUND MAY 2007
Inorganics Samples



TURNAROUND MAY 2008
Inorganics Samples



TURNAROUND MAY 2009





Department of Health and Human Services

Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

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The primary purpose of the **Bend the Curve Team** is to provide support, consultation, assistance, and leadership in process and other improvement approaches and activities for State staff and work teams as they seek to continually improve their work culture, procedures, processes, and environments – in order to meet the mission of the department and the expectations of Maine citizens.

We're on the net!

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/btc>

<http://www.maine.gov/labor/bendthecurve/>

**Bend
the Curve**

Continuous Improvement Practitioners: BTC Intervention Facilitation Status

More Miller workshops & DOP 1-5 being planned !

*Additional workshops
with Ken Miller are be-
ing planned. We'll keep
you posted.*

*The intensive introduc-
tory CI-P Bronze first
level training (DOP 1-5)
is being rescheduled to
late 2009.*

*You can also check the
BTC Calendar in Out-
look's Public Folders &
come to the planning
meetings for both.*

DHHS		DOL		DAFS	
Kate D. Carnes	IA-L	Jorge A. Acero	O	Rae-Ann Brann	L
Nancy Cronin	O	Michael T. Brooker	IA-O	Wendy Christian	IA-O
Nancy Desisto*	IA-L	Deidre A. Coleman	IA-O	Rebecca S. Greene	IA-L
Jane French*	IA-L	Joan A. Cook	CL	Lyndon R. Hamm	IA-CL
James Fussell*	L	Stephen C. Crate	O	Alicia Kellogg	C-O
Marcel Gagne	CL	Arthur S. Davis	L	Billy J. Ladd	CL
Julita Klavins	L	Merle A. Davis	L	Michaela T. Loisel	IA-L
Don Lemieux	C-O	Eric Dibner	O		
Muriel Littlefield	C-L	Peter D. Diplock	O	DOT	
Walter E. Lowell	L	Brenda G. Drummond	IA-O	Michael Burns	C-O
Jack Nicholas*	IA-O	Anita C. Dunham	IA-CL	Jessica Glidden	IA-O
Ann O'Brien	L	Karen D. Fraser	IA-L	Rick Jeselskis	IA-O
Cheryl Ring	C-CL	Timothy J. Griffin	L	Robert McFerren	IA-O
Terry Sandusky	L	Gaetane S. Johnson	IA-O	Sam McKeeman	C-O
Clough Toppan*	CL	James J. McManus	IA-CL	Jeffrey Naum	IA-O
Helen Wieczorek*	IA-O	Scott R. Neumeyer	IA-O		
		Bruce H. Prindall	IA-L	DEP	
OPEGA, Legislature		John L. Rioux	L	Carmel A. Rubin	IA-O
Matthew K. Kruk	IA-O	Sheryl J. Smith	L		
* Community CI-P		IA - Inactive		C - "Champion for Lean" - not facilitating	
L - Lead		CL - Learning Co-Lead		O - Learning Observer	