



Add some **green** to your lean by looking over the next horizon and thinking about what else you might achieve in your **lean efforts**.

that over the seven-year period, energy reductions resulted in savings of nearly \$15 million.

- Baxter International Healthcare Corporation used value stream mapping. In one plant, 96 opportunities for environmental impact improvement were identified, prioritized and implemented, with an estimated energy reduction value of 170,000 gallons of water per day.

Other lean concepts, such as operator care, kanban and SMED, can potentially improve the environmental performance of your organization as well.

**Operator care programs** focus on developing standard work within the operating units to decrease variation, which reduces the amount of product and raw materials waste. For example, a global leader in alumina refining and manufacturing of aluminum products successfully reduced energy consumption as a result of training operators in better standards of loading, starting and operating manufacturing equipment.

**Kanban** is designed to provide the right materials at the right time to support manufacturing needs. Kanban

reduces excessive inventories of raw or work-in-process materials. Cell-based manufacturing processes that signal a pull for materials based on the demand for product can significantly reduce raw material consumption, decreasing the amount of waste material delivered to landfills, as well as reducing the demand on raw material resources.

**SMED, or single minute exchange of dies**, has the potential to reduce the amount of waste generated from raw and unprocessed materials left over in manufacturing processes. For example, an aluminum door and window manufacturing facility found that they could reduce the amount of paint wasted per changeover from 50 gallons per day to less than 10 gallons. Paint disposal costs dropped by as much as \$280,000 annually, and paint and solvent disposal were reduced by more than 40 per cent.

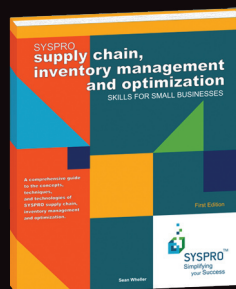
So add some green to your lean by looking over the next horizon and thinking about what else you might achieve in your lean efforts. It might be reducing your landfill contributions by composting, using less cardboard packaging by using totes that are standardized, or by reducing the work-in-process that leads to waste.

## Question from the floor

**QUESTION:** We're starting our lean initiative with a kaizen approach. We're getting people to come up with small improvement suggestions and then letting them take care of these issues. We started off good, but our progress has really slowed. Can you help?

**ANSWER:** Henry Ford once said, "Whether you think you can or that you can't, you are usually right." I'm guessing that you started off picking the low-hanging fruit and moved quickly on to more complex issues. You have to shift your collective mindset from talking about why this won't work to reframing the discussion around making it work. I would also suggest getting everyone together and asking them to list the things that they welcome from this new kaizen initiative, as well as the things that they're afraid of. I've done this in diverse areas — from manufacturing to health care — and the answers may surprise you. Mostly people are afraid of changes to their routine. Take care to point out the items that you want to reduce or eliminate. Make sure that they've got some vested interest in this list. It's not all about maximizing profit. Include items such as unsafe work, high-risk items, high boredom items and the like. Show them that they will be improving their working lives. Lastly, try to move forward at a reasonable pace. I've seen too many senior leaders push their employees too quickly. 🍁

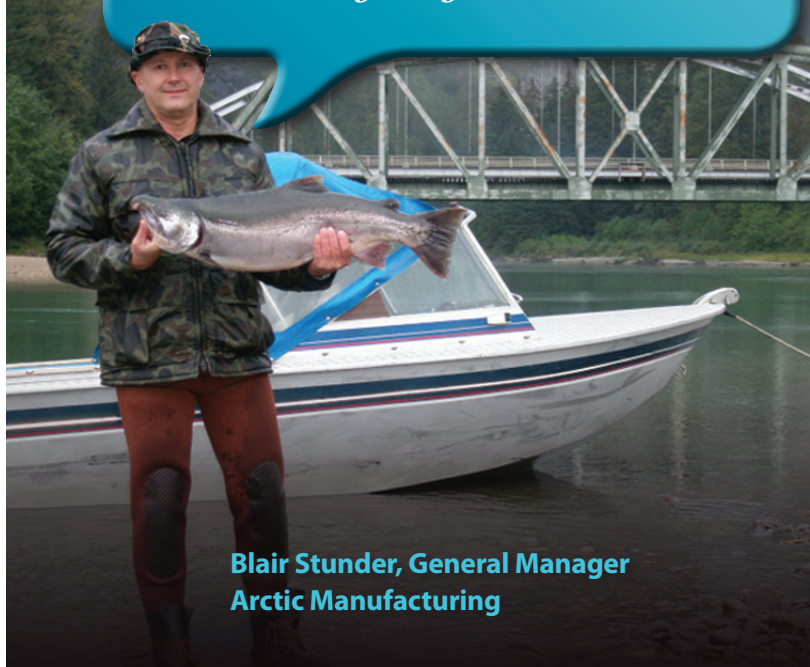
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