FUTURE PROOF
YOUR ORGANIZATION
WITH LEAN

FOREWARD

Welcome to our new e-book series **Future Proof your Organization with Lean**.

This initial series consists of interviews with a number of international Lean practitioners who will share some of their unique insights into change best practices and how organizations can sustain the benefits of Lean over the long term. We discuss how they have managed the transition and the challenges, concerns and pitfalls they have faced along the Lean journey.

Lean has been adopted and applied to most sectors, but our interviews will specifically showcase the opportunity to adopt Lean in the **municipality, healthcare and film making sectors** where continuous improvement is still in its infancy.

There is no better time to transform and future proof your organization, especially given the impact of COVID-19, economic uncertainties and rapid technological advancements. Please visit **leadingedgegroup.com/podcasts** for updates on our podcast series - a series not to be missed for CEOs and change practitioners globally.

JOE AHERNE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LEADING EDGE GROUP
CHARTER HOUSE, COBH, CO. CORK, IRELAND

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EMBARKING ON A SUCCESSFUL LEAN TRANSFORMATION

Lean can provide a sustainable competitive advantage by streamlining the core process and value streams within an organization, resulting in a positive change in mindset and an empowered workforce. We spoke to **PAT CULLINANE, SENIOR TRANSFORMATION MANAGER WITH LEADING EDGE GROUP** *to identify the challenges that are faced by companies embarking on a Lean program and discuss the key attributes of a successful transformation.*
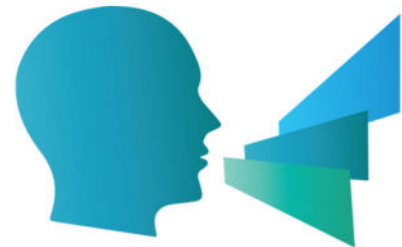
Thank you for joining us Pat and agreeing to share your expertise with our readers. Could you tell us about your background and why you joined the Lean movement?

I'm Galway based now and working all over Ireland but I'm from Cork originally. I have a degree in Mechanical Manufacturing, Engineering, and trained with Toyota and the University of Kentucky. I studied Program and Project Management with Stanford and I also have a Master Blackbelt in Six Sigma. For 22 years I've practiced Lean and spent many years working internationally in a wide variety of companies, from Service through to Financial Aid, Logistics to Medical Devices, Pharma, Biotech and more.

I started my career in quality and what drew me to the Lean movement was an interest in solving the problems I was seeing as opposed to just reporting on them.

Pat, why do you think people become so passionate about Lean?

I think it is because you can see people engaging, you can see the power of a lot of small improvements adding up to a big improvement. And Lean is quite different from the traditional project-based approach to process improvement. It has a culture piece as well as the tools piece as well as a change management piece to it, and people like that. The traditional project-based approach has its place, but it tends to lose traction over time, whereas **Lean is a very good way of engaging every person, every day, in improving the way the work gets done.**

I think that's why people get so passionate about it, because people enjoy getting the chance to make their job easier to do and to affect how the company is doing.

Why do companies typically embark on a program of this size and complexity?

Usually, companies find that the project-based approach to change doesn't deliver the results, and it doesn't deliver the change of culture they're looking for. **The challenge is that the problems we face come at us faster and faster, and the problems are more and more complex, especially as we move up the value chain.**

What we're doing is more and more complex. So, we **need everybody in the company involved in managing the business and business results don't always materialize from a project based approach.** All that complexity tends to drive a negative headwind on the company and soak up any gains that you get from individual projects, so company leaders become disillusioned with the project-based approach. They look to deploy Lean to engage the staff to drive improvements, change the company culture and retain that competitive advantage.

> " The challenge is that the problems come at us faster and faster, and the problems are more and more complex

What type of commitment and support is required by your clients to deliver a successful and sustainable Lean transformation?

It's key that the company appoint an in-house Transformation leader; this person doesn't have to be a Lean expert, but they must be credible in the organization. They need to have a track record of delivering on commitments and they need to be well respected in the network.

You need **someone that knows the ins and outs of the business, knows the challenges in the business, and can help you connect with the right person at the right time in the program.** I think that's a big mistake that people make normally, they don't allocate someone responsible for it and just hope that the external consultants will run it all for them. That level of engagement doesn't tend to work very well.

What would you feel are the crucial first steps in any transformation?

I think step one is asking, what are the business priorities for the coming 12 to 18 months? **It's imperative that you align the Lean Transformation to support those business priorities because the** goal is to deliver business results. We're not doing it for the fun of it! And step two, take stock of the current status of the company to know what to build on and what is missing. What is going well? Does everyone in the company know if they're winning or losing?

Do they have good communications or poor communications? What is the knowledge base of the talent? Completing a short review in audit format can be very informative. If you bring that together with the goal or strategy for the next 12 to 18 months to create the alignment of the Lean Transformation, you're off to a good start.

Where does culture fit in?

I think the easiest definition of culture is it's just the way we do things. People get very convoluted about culture and make it very complicated and there's a lot of material out there about culture that's not actionable, whereas Lean is a very actionable approach to transforming the culture. **Culture is how we behave and what we do**; if people turn up on time, if they're prepared for meetings, if they follow through on their commitments. **The culture part of Lean is defining the behaviors we want and then asking how do we recognize those behaviors and reinforce them when we see people doing the right thing?**

People talk a lot about culture Pat, but do you think they're mainly interested in financial savings and using the toolset, as distinct from a change in behavior?

People don't realize that the **employees are as interested in the financial results of the business as the business leaders are,** because they are dependent on the company for their income to pay the mortgage or the car loan.

So the culture piece is enabling those employees to help the business survive and thrive so that they have a job next year. If we can put a system in place that allows them to see how they're doing and to make the course correction at their level, they're much more engaged at work and you start to see it in the business results.

How does one sustain a Lean journey from the client perspective?

My definition of success when working with a client is that they don't need me anymore. The trick to sustaining a Lean journey is connecting the business results to the measures and then using the appropriate Lean tools to drive improvement. You need to build Lean into the regular cadence of business reviews and meetings. Peter Drucker was often quoted as saying, "You can't manage what you can't measure". What he meant was you don't know whether or not you're successful unless success is defined in fact. We pay attention to what our bosses pay attention to, that's how it works. Build the tracking of the performance of each group into the regular management system, that's how you sustain the Lean journey over time.

If you combined all your experience working in Transformations here or overseas, what are the main reasons for Lean Transformations to fail?

Sometimes the Transformation is seen as something one department is responsible for, or it's not aligned with the business needs. A lot of companies take a project based approach; that's a good way to introduce the concept and a good way to get some quick wins but it won't change the way your business is performing overall. You need everyone to understand what the business goals are, what success looks like for their team or their department, and then enable them to make the process changes needed to deliver those results. People are very capable if you engage them in the game, they will contribute and they'll be making the work easier to do, which makes them more efficient so you can do more business. That ultimately hits the bottom line, the company is more sustainable, more successful, bonuses are paid and there's a job next year.

Finally, Pat, why have you and your Transformation team been so successful in delivering both financial and non-financial benefits to clients, resulting from this type of Transformation program?

Some companies just sell training or pre-packaged solutions, and they don't consider the specific problems faced by the client. You need to diagnose before you prescribe, you can't copy someone else's solution to their problem and expect it to solve your problems. You need to take the principles of Lean and customize them to fit the context of what's going on within your company at that point in time. That way, you can ensure you deliver on the business results. We see our success in the client achieving their goal, and I think that's a key differentiator.

LEAN HEALTHCARE AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Healthcare providers internationally have acknowledged the benefits Lean can offer their organizations. Patient-centric care eliminates waste and provides higher quality healthcare. How can organizations maximize the benefits of a Lean program in a healthcare setting? **JUSTIN SWAIN** *- a Lean Black Belt practitioner working with* **EASTERN HEALTH, CANADA** *– shares his experience of applying Lean in Healthcare and managing the greatest crisis to face the sector in living memory – COVID-19.*
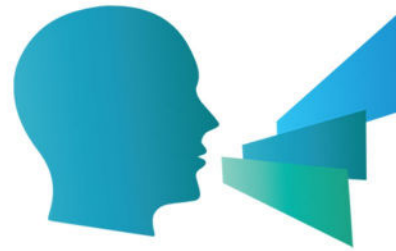
Could you please tell us about your background; your current role at Eastern Health and the organization itself?

I started my Lean improvement journey back in 2000 for an automotive supplier, supplying Ford and GM. We had just started our Lean improvement initiatives and I was the second wave being trained as a Lean Black Belt. Since then, I have worked in a variety of different industries ranging from food to high tech logistics companies. After doing some consulting work, I moved to Eastern Health, Newfoundland, Canada in 2012 to be an improvement specialist responsible for the organization's Lean program.

Eastern Health has about 13,000 employees and is the biggest healthcare provider in Newfoundland and Labrador, located on the easternmost point in Canada. My main focus at Eastern Health is as a coach and facilitator. We have a small improvement team made up of six employees with responsibility for providing coaching and facilitation to frontline teams throughout the organization. Those teams are chosen with support from the executive, in line with our strategic priorities.

I also work with frontline employees to develop problem solving capabilities throughout the organization. In the past, Lean has been looked at more as a tools-based approach to improvement. However, what we're trying to do within Eastern Health is to grow capability and competencies throughout the organization.

In the past we may have advertised for an improvement position external to the organization. Our direction over the past six or seven years is to hire internally and train people in the methodology.

We think building relationships is the most important part of Lean quality improvement. On my team right now, I have a frontline nurse, social workers and a mental health nurse. We pull them from the organization, hire them into my department and train those people into improvement specialists throughout the organization. So, while we're solving problems, we're also thinking about how we use these problems as opportunities to develop people.

Could you provide examples of the common challenges, particularly in healthcare, that Lean can actually help address?

I think some big challenges are processes that have been designed 10 to 15 years ago and haven't really changed that much. Lean enables us to look at processes from the patient's perspective. For example, when reviewing the length of time that a patient would stay in hospital, we might ask if the patient actually needs to have this care in this hospital. Are there opportunities for that patient to get care elsewhere? Healthcare has been a little late picking up the improvement initiatives around Lean and Six Sigma. It started in Canada around 2008, so it is still relatively new.

Looking at it from the staff perspective, it's something that they haven't typically learned from their studies. Our staff are trained to provide care for patients, but not necessarily design processes. Over time, things have crept to a provider-centric approach so, when we're working on organizational problems, we're trying to develop the frontline to solve those problems because that's typically where the work happens.

We need to move away from that traditional model that leadership solves these problems. The greatest opportunity to solve problems and improve patient care is to have the people that do the work involved in designing the work.

How important is sector-specific knowledge in healthcare when rolling out these continuous improvement programs?

It does help the transfer of knowledge and transition to a new way of thinking a little smoother. However, at the same time, I don't necessarily think that lacking that sector specific knowledge has to slow you down. If you don't have it, I wouldn't look at it as a reason not to start. I think sometimes organizations, particularly in healthcare, can get bogged down by that.

Quite often with Lean thinking, the goal is to actually get out and experience the work first hand, and that way you would learn. So, I think, yes, it's important, but not necessarily something that should be an impediment to moving forward.

There is a lot of knowledge out there and a lot of resources, including podcasts, webinars, white papers, etc. **I think the most important thing is to align yourself with a good coach to set up a roadmap and help the organization understand that the roadmap is going to change and be open to working through the process and learn by doing.**

How do you sustain the positive change that Lean brings about within the organization?

At Eastern Health we are not much different from many other organizations that struggle with sustainability. We have certainly realized that and are working closely with the executive and our senior leadership team to try and close that gap. Support from leadership right down to the frontline is crucial.

We've developed a Lean management system where we teach managers, directors and leadership what their role is in a Lean organization. Through visual management and standard work, we've implemented team huddles around improvements and performance metrics. There are things that we're doing right now. Like most organizations, we can always do a little more. We share success stories. We do Kaizen rapid improvement events. We report out results to our frontline staff. I think we communicate on a fairly regular basis but, even when we do that, we often hear that it's not enough. Therefore, I think there's always that opportunity to improve.

Could you tell us some of the main challenges COVID-19 created for your organization and how Lean has helped to address and manage those challenges?

Operationally, a major challenge was the need to ensure that our staff had the proper equipment to safely provide patient care. One of the other big things was the push for beds. Not knowing what was coming from one minute to the next, if we had a big influx of COVID-19 patients, we needed to be able to re-adjust. To address this, we reorganized a unit to make sure that we had enough space just in case. Fortunately for us in Newfoundland, we didn't have a lot of cases. **We had some clusters that put a lot of pressure on us at the beginning but, as we started to understand a little more about COVID-19 and our demand, our testing got up and running and things started to smoothen out a little.**

I think the reason why things got a little smoother was our approach to problem solving methodologies and how we've used visual management systems to really dig in and understand what we need to do in order to make space for our patients. We know the 65 years and older population were more vulnerable than a lot of the population. We had a plan for every patient and regularly asked if those patients in our hospitals needed to be here? Could they get this care in the community with different supports? I think our main focus as a small improvement group (small, but mighty, I would add!) was the patient flow experience throughout our hospitals. We have two huge hospitals in the city where bed capacity was an issue.

Visual management was a big help in developing a plan for every patient. That may seem simple but there was this urgency and uncertainty around that made it a bit more difficult. However, we went from an occupancy rate of 89-90% to approximately 55-60%.

How do you see Lean operating in the healthcare sector moving forward post COVID-19?

There's going to be changes and challenges, but it will continue to operate. Some things that jump out at us operationally are how to effectively provide training for our staff. Typically, we do that in a classroom setting so we have to get creative and do things virtually. I think that will help our organization in any case because we can cover more geographical areas than we could through the traditional model. Gemba walks are a bit of a challenge at the moment, given the social distancing requirements. However, I think the Lean mindset adds a layer of creativity that allows us to experiment around doing things differently. **There weren't many positives from COVID-19 but it did help expedite some of the decision making; it was a catalyst to help us enact some changes that we've been talking about for a while and it empowered a lot of our frontline staff to offer more suggestions. I would suspect that most organizations found that as well.**

LEAN APPLICATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Many organizations have embarked on change and Lean transformation programs with significant success, but can the same success be replicated in Local Government? **WES ANDERSON, MANAGER OF FINANCIAL AND TREASURY SERVICES AT THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA,** *is here to share with us his experience of creating and sustaining a culture of continuous improvement in a municipality.*
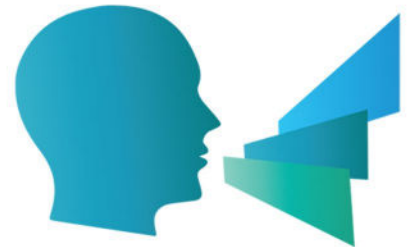
Wes, could you tell us a little bit about your background and your current role at the City of Mississauga?

I started working at the City of Mississauga back in 2005, teaching basketball to little kids while I was finishing high school. After graduating with a degree in Economics, I worked in Community Development, as a Business Analyst and as a Manager in our Parks and Forestry Division but a big turning point for me was in 2014. I was asked by my Director to be part of a pilot project for this new thing the city was piloting called Lean. I really had no idea what I was getting myself into, let alone that it would completely change my life. I obtained my Lean Green Belt certification, working on improving waste collection in parks. We reduced complaints by 25%.saved 140,000 in hard dollars annually and I fell in love with Lean as a way of work. The city really saw value in this pilot project so in 2016 we established a permanent Lean transformation program. I was lucky enough to be chosen to lead that transformation, responsible for establishing it in the organization and we've been really fortunate with the success we've had so far.

As part of my own learning and development I've been Acting Manager of Financial and Treasury Services at the city since mid 2019. I'm overseeing all transactional finance activities, treasury, accounting, payroll and payables. I'm a Lean Blackbelt, I've got designations in project and program management and I'm working towards my CPA accounting designation right now.

Would you be able to give us an overview of the municipal sector in Canada and specifically in Ontario?

The municipal sector is so diverse. The city alone has about 360 distinct services that we offer. And when you think about the responsibilities that a municipality has, we are so different from your traditional private sector organization in terms of the breadth of what we provide; public transit, fire protection, libraries, parks, recreation facilities, planning, road maintenance.

These services aren't necessarily very correlated so one of the challenges the industry really grapples with is how to efficiently deliver those services and do it in a way that's cohesive, that recognizes that we're servicing one citizen at the end of the day. You're not treating your individual resident as someone that's only looking to get on a bus, people are also interested in how we're city building, how they can access recreational amenities, how we're complying with the bylaws.

It creates an opportunity for Lean practitioners to be able to make life altering improvements, to be able to challenge the status quo and avoid the words, "that's the way we've always done it", for our customers. There's such value in what we do because our services link closest to people's daily lives.

How do you view Lean's role in the sector and how have you applied it in Mississauga specifically?

Any municipality is really expected to provide value for your tax dollar and ensure that the tax dollars are spent wisely and that goes for any local government in the world. This was true prior to the pandemic, but it becomes even more important when municipalities are facing unprecedented fiscal shortfalls. Lean as a methodology has the capability to drive cost savings and do more with less theoretically but it's equally important to think about it as doing more with the same and improving service quality, improving response times, reducing defects.

The definition of Lean at the city of Mississauga is that it's a way of work. It's designed to give customers exactly what they want, when they need it, without any waste in our processes. The idea that cost reduction alone is what our customers want all the time is false.

Residents want timely response by emergency responders. They want potholes filled quickly. They want safe, aesthetically pleasing public spaces. Lean gave staff a common language and approach on identifying waste, articulating pain points, and a framework to be able to brainstorm solutions and come together. We train all staff in Lean principles so there is that common understanding. Improvements are celebrated and showcased. Support is given from the CEO all the way down to front line staff.

A thousand small improvements that save one dollar is better than one improvement that saves a thousand dollars and it's likely more sustainable so each year over a thousand improvements are made. They're reported and shared for all staff to see. We train about 50 staff on more advanced Lean concepts, we run training and workshops and we provide leadership coaching on Lean principles. If you want to truly build a sustainable Lean culture in your organization, you have to influence it from every angle and the city does this exceptionally well.

" LEAN GAVE STAFF A COMMON LANGUAGE AND APPROACH, AND A FRAMEWORK TO BE ABLE TO COME TOGETHER TO BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS.

What challenges are your organization and the wider sector facing related to Covid-19? And does Lean offer any opportunities in terms of identifying and resolving these challenges?

I think there's two challenges that municipalities are facing over the course of the pandemic, there's the obvious fiscal challenges that are impacting municipalities' bottom line. The second challenge is the immediate and lasting impact to our services. Services previously only delivered in person shifted overnight; getting a marriage license, conducting a site plan, an application review, checking out library books, they can't happen because of social distancing guidelines or the controls in place to mitigate the spread of the pandemic. When you're faced with a challenge, you've got to begin to think laterally to find non-traditional ways of continuing to deliver services. And my working definition of innovation is to be able to apply cross disciplinary thinking and take two seemingly unrelated ideas and bring them together to either improve or build a new product or service. When you have those trained minds in the organization you build that culture of constantly thinking about process improvement.

Then when the world changes suddenly, like it did, you have that intellectual capital to find ways to keep delivering services. We had thousands of staff move to remote working, libraries beginning curbside pickup services, virtual fitness classes, electronic payments for building permits.

These were ideas that may have been percolating in people's heads, but we had the ability to action and transition those ideas and bring them to life. The challenges we faced when confronted with COVID-19 allowed us to step up and the results show for themselves in the sense that our core services have not been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

How do you sustain Lean improvements, particularly during a crisis, and does the current climate offer any unforeseen benefits?

There are a few ways you can look at sustaining a Lean transformation, at the individual engagement level or the process level. How do we communicate improvements to our elected officials and to our councils? Is there a commitment to continuous improvement at the political level? There's always a commitment to being able to reduce tax rates but is there a commitment to be able to take the long view and approach continuous improvement as a way of work within the organization? How do you convince staff from a broad range of industries? The municipal sector has a couple of approaches to this. Are there controls in place to ensure that improvements last, whether it's standard work instructions, performance measures, error proofing, there's a ton of tools out there to apply so that your results stick. Culturally, though, there's a heavy emphasis on leaders and their responsibilities in an organization to make Lean transformation stick. Once a program is sustainable you have to keep the momentum and the passion going.

We've completed 190 larger projects, almost 5000 smaller just do it improvements. We've saved $4,000,000 and avoided $17,000,000 in incremental costs, we've trained over 3,000 staff and most importantly, we've built that culture of learning and development. Those results don't happen overnight, but it's allowed the city of Mississauga to maintain its reputation of providing service excellence to its residents.

How do you view the future of Lean in the municipal sector?

It's a tough question to predict the future but I don't see how municipal governments can continue to thrive without applying Lean transformation principles and techniques. If you're not identifying and implementing ways of doing better work, I don't understand how you'll be able to continue to succeed in an environment where there's very limited appetite for tax increases and constant demand for improved services. At the same time there's not a one size fits all approach. Cities as big as Mississauga, we're the sixth largest city in Canada, the third largest in Ontario, we have different resources and capabilities than smaller towns. Some municipalities may not be able to dedicate full time positions, but even a small investment in staff to do better work really reaps dividends in the long run. We believe in a culture of experimentation where if it doesn't cost a lot of money, if there's no significant risks to it, try it. And if it works, fantastic, make that part of your standard work. But if it doesn't work, you go back to the drawing board and you identify another potential solution to your problem statement.

It doesn't take a dedicated office to be able to grease the wheels or push improvements ahead with the right leadership support, the right capabilities and motivation from staff to be able to succeed. As municipal governments continue to implement these transformation efforts, make improvements within their spaces, you're going to see a propagation amongst municipalities around the globe that may not have been early adopters. Enough organizations have taken this leap, we've identified so many use cases at this point, it's pretty much impossible to say that Lean thinking can't work for local government.

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A LEAN TAKE ON THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Lean has been adopted and applied to most sectors, but here we will showcase the opportunity to adopt Lean and Agile

in the **FILM-MAKING AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

where continuous improvement is still in its infancy.

We are now working with a number

of clients in the sector and

spoke with **MEDIA PROFESSIONAL -**

CLODAGH McCARTHY *- to discuss*

the emerging opportunities that Lean offers.
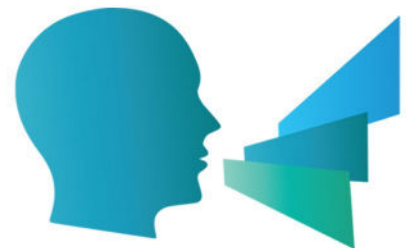
Clodagh, thanks for sharing your knowledge with our readers. Please provide an overview of your background and experience in the filmmaking industry?

I bounced around a lot before landing in film and TV. I studied Egyptian Archaeology when I was at university. I thought I wanted to be Indiana Jones, but eventually I realized I wanted to make Indiana Jones! While trying to break into the industry in the UK, I worked in property management, real estate and ran my own dog training business. In 2009 I emigrated to Vancouver, Canada determined to get my big break. I started working for free in live news, reality TV and TV drama. Luckily, I was sponsored for a work permit by a high-end retirement community as a sales and marketing executive.

Once I became a permanent resident I could work freely in the industry, at which point I focused primarily on post production. It's an area I had a natural affinity for. It's technical and creative, combining lots of skills and disciplines, and it constantly throws up new challenges. Every day is different. When I returned to Ireland in 2016, I started working with Windmill Lane Studios in Dublin and, of late, I've been exploring different management systems - programs like Agile and Lean and how they could potentially be applied to the industry. As technology develops, we have the opportunity to be more efficient, more productive, and, hence, more creative. Lean seems to be the perfect methodology to enact that change.

What has led you to explore Lean management systems?

I organically found Lean because I have a natural tendency towards being efficient. I'm always looking for a better or more productive way. It satisfies me to identify problems and come up with solutions. I find that, as an industry, we have a tendency to just get the job done because we're constantly constrained by budgets and schedules. Our jobs fill every hour of the day without dealing with any contingencies. I started thinking there must be a way to eliminate certain steps from the process that will allow the creative part of the job fill more of the time and the logistical part of the job fill less of the time. That is what led me to Lean. Its the perfect solution for an industry that is a production line - just not a production line in the traditional sense. We have a product; we have inputs and outputs; we have people that do jobs that affect the final outcome and there is waste in those processes.

The challenge is that we are a contract-based industry and, until you get to production budgets in the hundreds of millions, you never have enough time and you never have enough money. So how do you convince people that it's worth investing time and money into developing continuous improvement processes? Once you see the benefit of those small incremental changes, that allows you to really invest in the vision of continuous improvement. It's also something that we need as an industry; we are constantly working more hours than we should and lots of people struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance. If we can do as much work as we are currently doing in less time, why would we not welcome that?

Do you believe that there are opportunities to streamline some of the core processes within the sector and in what areas?

Absolutely! The reality is that we are a creative industry built on processes and logistics. Lean is tailor made for VFX, animation, post production and for the development end of the process where you have a core group of people repeating the same function on different projects.

Editorial workflow is a good one to look at as it is so often decided by people on either end of the project who don't have to work with those decisions throughout the project. The assistant editor is such a crucial role, both from a technical and creative standpoint. They are the right hand of the editor and they are the lynchpin between production and post production. If the assistant editor is overloaded, then you may incur some costly overages at later stages in the process. We need to focus on the tasks that are crucial to the finishing process and other departments. If you ensure all necessary information is available to be drawn on, but eliminate some of those wasteful processes, you can free up the assistant editor to focus on the creative aspect of the work. There's actually another really interesting example of Lean that has been applied to the industry recently. The Mandalorian TV show has a 'making of' companion series and one episode deals with the creation of The Volume. The Volume is a 360 degree screen that displays the environment or the set on the walls and ceiling of the stage.

Over the course of a number of projects, Jon Favreau played with ideas that allowed him to treat live action production in a different way. He engaged with department heads to harness their knowledge and energy and, together, everyone decided on what they need from every other department to be able to do their job to the best of their ability in the shortest possible time frame. They changed the process by which live action is shot, both for the benefit of the product and for the benefit of the internal customers that each department was serving.

They adopted an animation style workflow during pre-production with numerous story iterations and refined the edit through storyboarding. Then they moved into a post production phase prior to cameras rolling which required the VFX dept to build all of the assets; all of the environments; all of the CGI characters and combine them in a real time gaming engine called Unreal. The actors don't have to imagine the environment they are in and it creates parallax in the projection as the camera moves, making it almost imperceptible to the viewer. They didn't have the Lean toolkit available to them but, through trial and error, they created a solution that combined existing technologies in a major step forward for the industry. Obviously, this requires huge investment from companies like Disney and ILM. It's not something that we can all do, but we can take that thinking to establish what everyone really needs in order to make the best product.

" We are a creative industry but we are built on processes and logistics

How do you see the landscape of the industry in 10 years time?

It's going to be a very interesting time for our industry, but we are no strangers to disruption. The mediums through which we watch things will continue to change. In 10 years, we'll probably see genuine VR content and interactive filmmaking in a way that we can barely imagine. I think we'll have more challenges that we need to face and the reality of COVID-19 is that we have to do things slower, more carefully and with less people to make sure everyone's safe in the workplace. That costs money. It's going to cost more to do the same as we did before COVID-19. The only way to continue to function with the funding that's available to us is to become more efficient. We need to be proactive in our change rather than reactive and the people who are willing to take risks are going to be the big winners.

Finally, do you think the industry will embrace Lean and Agile or is there a worry that the creative side of the business will be curtailed in some way?

I absolutely think it's going to be embraced. There is always going to be a concern from creative people that projects like this are going to take people away from what they do best, but the way the whole industry is set up is a restriction on creativity. Budgets and schedules are king; you have x amount of days to do the work and you don't have a day more. I see an opportunity in Lean to reduce the logistical burden; some of the technical workload; to allow us to focus on the creativity. The reality is that, in a lot of instances, the technology exists to solve these problems. We just haven't taken the time or effort to sit down and join up all the dots. It's a learning process for everyone involved, but the industry is a machine and each cog in that machine is a person whose heart and soul goes into their work. Let's make it easier for it to be heart and soul and not blood, sweat and tears.

"HEART AND SOUL, NOT BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

DELIVERING RESULTS FROM A LEAN TRANSFORMATION

Lean delivers tangible results that can be easily measured in the short term. However, transitioning to sustainable continuous improvement in the longer term can prove challenging for some organizations. **JOE LANE** *has been extensively involved in transformation and Lean programs and is focused on delivering sustainable business results. Joe is currently* **HEAD OF ENERGY BUSINESS FOR BORD NA MONA** *(Irish Energy Semi State) and has 40 years' experience working in a variety of industries, including roles in general management, operations and supply chain for major global multinationals.*
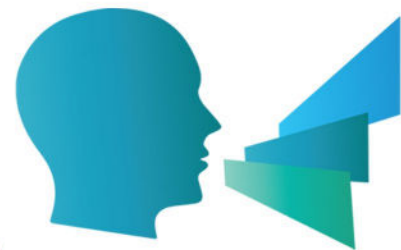
What would you consider to be the key elements required to bring about lasting results from a Lean transformation?

I think the most important thing is clarity around the "Why". There needs to be a clear and overarching understanding of what the problem is. Without that kind of clarity or motivation, things can get lost and do not progress. Once you have the strategic intent and it is clear, then it is about four main building blocks.

The first block is breaking the strategic intent down into the pieces of work that need to be completed. I think that strategy cascade is important to effectively translate the mission for people. If staff do not connect to strategy, then things do not move forward. The second block is about the management process. You have got to understand what the plan is. How do you execute it? Is it being executed? That is fundamental. If you don't set out what we are going to do today, tomorrow, the next day and you don't have a cadence around it, you don't have those processes to correct your course. Applying the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to this process can be effective.

Then it comes down to the two blocks we talk about the most - people and the toolkit. We spend a lot of time in Lean talking about tools, but you need to select the tools that work for your application – whether it is value stream analysis, 5S, standard work, etc. So, it is about clarity on the strategic intent; breaking down the strategic intent; measuring how you are performing and having the people and the tools to execute.

Senior management engagement is key to the success of any transformation.
How do you engage top management who may not be early adopters of the program?

It is almost a requirement of being a senior manager that you are trying to drive business performance. You are striving to improve processes and eliminate waste. Any definition of Lean says "let's not have waste", so we don't want to have to go to a senior manager in an organization and say "it's really important that you get on board with this idea of Lean". I know that might sound a little bit harsh, but we need senior management to lead an organization down a path that is challenging. You cannot progress a Lean transformation with a senior leadership team that is not actively driving the agenda and the mission. And if, for example, you have somebody who maybe does not get it, then you must bring them on that journey.

It is about making sure you have the right people with the right attitudes in leadership roles rather than having to go through an exercise to engage them. It is tough. It is not easy. It requires motivation. It requires charisma. It requires persistence. I think it is more important to have the commitment, enthusiasm, and energy. These are the important characteristics of a person who is going to be a senior manager in a transformation. There are great consultants out there to support and educate you. However, if the leadership team does not drive it, all the consultants in the world will not deliver long term success.

How do you translate the outcomes of a Lean transformation?

For me, it is fundamental. In one sense, you can think of deploying Lean tools and Lean transformations as creating potential. However, the real journey is to translate that potential into results. If you apply Lean to a process, you can take away some waste and cost. You then need to translate this to the bottom line. If you improve your lead time, how does that translate into business results?

The Lean process is not finished until you have translated it; whether that's improved profitability or sales growth or increased customer service. People will then see that you have delivered a result and will keep doing it because it works. Lean will create the potential. The transformation is turning the potential into tangible and sustainable results.

With a vaccine on the horizon for COVID-19, how can businesses transition from crisis management to a phase of continuous improvement, and seize the opportunities that the future holds?

There are probably two types of companies that are out there right now. There are those in the service and in the hospitality sector that have a fundamental issue and there are the other businesses. There has been a lot of learning in the last few months about what Lean could mean. Companies can get things done in ways that they would not have thought possible in the past.

There are two sides to it - the company piece and the human element. If you look at the Lean journey of someone working from home, there could be a lot of benefits for people in terms of time saved, productivity, well-being, and commitment. It would be a shame at the end of this process if every company decided to just go back to the old way of working. For some companies, there may be some harder cost issues to address. Do we need the footprint? Do we need all the people in all the places? There is the opportunity for companies to look at their business and its challenges and conduct a value stream analysis from end to end to learn more and identify new opportunities.

The value of Lean is that it enables this. There is time to do that in the next number of months, rather than wait until next summer when the vaccine has been deployed. Let us put as much effort into deploying Lean to the "return to work" scenario as we have put into enabling people to work from home or to managing the risk of infection. If we put as much thought into designing a Lean future, there may be some significant upsides for people and for businesses.

> **"If we put as much thought into designing a Lean future, there may be some significant upsides for people and businesses.**

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