



# lean thinking

the art of subtraction

Lean manufacturing. Lean thinking. Lean startup. The operative word is lean, defined as the absence of excessive complexity.

Originally meant to convey the essence of the Toyota Production System, lean has evolved well beyond the factory floor to become an organizing principle that engages people in creating and delivering the highest possible value through the pursuit of “better.” Processes are streamlined and problems are solved, with the ultimate goal of freeing customers from the tyranny of excessive complexity.

Excessive complexity is an insatiable beast that kills the entire experience from every imaginable perspective. It bloats your ranks, exhausts your capacity, and drains your resources, leaving you vulnerable to a leaner offering.

Lean centers on the philosophy that less is best, and making more room for what truly matters by eliminating what doesn't. It's a subtractive approach to continuously improving your capabilities that captures what Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said: *“Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.”* You start by defining the ideal, then little by little removing everything blocking the path to achieving it. Done right, it's a never-ending, relentless endeavor.

It's a different way of thinking. That's why so many companies can't quite get lean, no matter what they do.

Nearly a decade of working closely with Toyota taught me the right way. And it's what makes my lean engagements unique: they come from being an integral part of the Toyota culture. In other words, they're authentic.

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE: Operational teams  
SUGGESTED SESSION: Initial 1-day Bootcamp

## Experiential Learning

Based on Toyota's lean principles of workflow design and coupled with a rigorous continuous improvement methodology (aka *kaizen*), my lean training is applicable to everything from internal process redesign to new product development and entrepreneurial startup.

Participants are first introduced to lean thinking through the official Toyota Production System (TPS) simulation developed during my tenure at the University of Toyota to enable learners to actually experience lean principles in action.

*Toyota achieves competitive advantage on the basis of its ability to learn more quickly and consistently than its competitors.* —Harvard Business Review

Participants engage in lean thinking principles such as:

- *andon* (problem detection)
- *jidoka* (error prevention)
- *kanban* (capacity control)
- *genchi genbutsu* (observation)
- *kaizen* (continuous improvement)
- *takt* time
- 5 Whys (cause analysis)
- one-piece flow
- just-in-time/pull

The TPS simulation is followed by an exercise designed to identify problem and opportunity spaces based on real world issues facing the participants, thereby setting up a *kaizen* or *kaikaku* (radical innovation and change) session enabling them to learn lean thinking tools and techniques by solving an actual problem.

Designed to be a 1-day experience, the lean thinking workshop is easily customized to either a half-day (TPS simulation only), or a 2-day bootcamp for an intact teams in which the second day is a *kaizen* session aimed at solving a real problem facing the team.

Whether you're an entrepreneurial startup or mature company, whether you're designing a new product or rethinking a current process, lean training is invaluable.