Making Business Processes Lean

Work-life balance
How to get it back
The Institute of Management Services is the primary body in the UK concerned with the promotion, practice and development of the range of methodologies and techniques for the improvement of productivity and quality, known collectively as ‘Management Services’. This embraces the disciplines of industrial engineering, work study, organisation and methods, systems analysis, and a wide range of management information and control techniques as illustrated in our Body of Knowledge.

The Institute acts as the qualifying body for the Management Services profession in the UK, focussing developments in practice and knowledge and acting as a forum for information exchange. This in turn enables our members who work under a variety of job titles across the whole of the UK economy, to make a more effective contribution to the well-being of their own organisation and to the nation's economy as a whole.

In addition to creating and upholding professional standards for the practice of management services through the adoption of a code of ethics and the provision of a system of qualifying examinations, the Institute of Management Services collaborates with national and international professional bodies in similar fields.

The Institute is a member of, or represented on, a number of other bodies including the World Confederation of Productivity Science, the European Federation of Productivity Services, and the European Institute of Industrial Engineers.

We also want your news and points of view about what appears in this journal. Something you disagree with? Tell us about it.

Write for your journal

If you want to try your hand at writing a feature for Management Services, please submit an abstract (around 200 words) explaining what your feature is about, with intended word count. (Features should be between 1500 and 2000 words, although exceptions can be made.) Send your abstract to Melanie Armstrong, Editor, Management Services, Ewell House, Graveney Road, Faversham, Kent, ME13 8UP or email editorial@msjournal.org.uk
In this issue of Management Services…

**Cover story**

**Present times**

OK, so you’ve got your workforce (elves, reindeers and Mrs Claus) but do they all know what they’re doing and when they should be doing it? Productivity is key at the North Pole at this time of year and a PDA is a must for the 21st century Santa, with so many presents to organise and millions of children to deliver them to in a short space of time. PDA stands for personal digital assistant and, basically, it’s a handheld computer which can organise both your work and home life. Most PDAs offer users a diary, daily/weekly planner, address book, calculator, email and software to play games, download films, music and pictures – even non computer types find them easy to use.

www.totalpda.co.uk for more information.

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To keep our members informed, the Regional Board met on 14 October at St James’s Avenue, Breightmet, Bolton.

The meeting commenced at 10am with agenda items including reports from the secretary, treasurer, education officer and PRO.

Main topics included NW Region membership, budgets and education issues. Current and future events scheduled for the region were also outlined. The Council delegates’ report and subsequent discussion was deferred until the next board meeting.

LOOKING TO 2007

The 41st IMS AGM took place on 6 October in Lichfield and the resolution to receive the annual accounts and raise the subscription for life membership to £220 were carried. The number of members that took the trouble to vote was very disappointing and I would urge all corporate members to exercise their right to vote. It does not take long and a pre-paid envelope is provided.

The Council of Management took place immediately after the AGM and I have detailed some of the topics discussed.

The election of Officers was as follows: President – John Thurso MP, Chairman – John Lucey, Deputy Chairman and Treasurer – David Blanchflower, Company Secretary – Harry Downes. The other members of Council are Richard Bridges, Geoff Mansfield, John Heap, Les Rose and Dennis Whitmore.

A new simplified computerised membership database will be introduced in early 2007.

From the New Year the journal will be available to members ‘online’ and you will be receiving a password with your diary. We hope that the majority of members will take advantage of this as you will receive it faster and it will reduce the cost of postage and packing.

The new work measurement DVDs/videos are now available and have been received well by our education providers.

Geoff Mansfield has taken responsibility for monitoring and improving our website and I know that he would welcome any comments or ideas that you may have.

We still have not received any applications for a grant from the Russell Currie Memorial fund which would finance research into a productivity related area.

In early October I attended the AGM and conference of the European Federation of Productivity Science (EFPS) in Germany. It was an interesting experience and it has triggered a series of Journal articles about ‘what’s going on in Europe’ with regard to productivity improvement.

On 14 November I attended the West Midlands Region AGM. It is very pleasing to see such an active Region and a very impressive quarterly newsletter which keeps their members well informed.

I attended the Annual UK Ideas conference in November to present the IMS trophy for the idea that increased productivity the most. The recipient was from the Prison Service and has promised more detail which will appear in this or the next Journal.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

John Lucey
Chairman
Further discussions took place over meeting venues and frequency, together with final arrangements for the NW Region AGM as previously advertised in the Journal.

Our Chairman Len Price closed the meeting, noting the continuing good work for our members in the region, together with the wish that all members enjoy the festive season to the full.

Do keep an eye out for information on 2007 events and keep in contact with with your Board members.

Kevan Kelly
NW Region PRO

Aston University: West Midlands Region IMS student prize

Paul Moore, a graduate of Aston University, with the best performance in 2006 on the Technology and Enterprise Management Programme, was presented with the West Midlands Region IMS prize of £100, together with special certificate to commemorate the event.

West Midlands Education Officer, Ray Postings, represented the West Midlands Region at the degree ceremony and graduation reception in July, where the presentation was made.

The West Midlands student prize is part of the continuing programme of cooperation between the West Midlands Region and the Aston University, School of Engineering and Applied Science. Our particular thanks to Dr Trevor Oliver, the Programme Director, Engineering Systems and Design. Aston University in Birmingham is well established as a leading educational centre for technology excellence.

After the formal ceremony Ray had a long chat with Paul Moore who thanked the Region for its support and expressed an interest in joining the Institute. The event was a great success but the day was particularly hot especially for wearing a collar and tie!
East Midlands Region

This year has seen the introduction of life membership and the Region has contacted lapsed members and as a result several have reinstated their membership. The Region Board continues to be enthusiastic and this year has had three meetings. The latest was a visit to the Bateman private brewery at Wainfleet which was enjoyed by all who attended. The brewery has recently invested heavily in new brewing equipment which has resulted in a significant increase in production capacity and overall productivity.

As the Board contains three members of Council, they are very aware of the ambitious change agenda that the Council have spearheaded. Equally interesting is the refurbishment of the Institute’s website which will enable members to access the Journal from the site.

The region is currently finalising the programme for 2007 which will be communicated to members and be on the Institute’s website. There will be a visit to Abacus (which is located in Sutton-in-Ashfield) in March, there will be a social event in July and a visit to the Long Bennington retail Park in late November.

The board continues to keep members informed and looks forward to another successful year in 2007.
## 2006 Award
### Management Services Certificate

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<tr>
<td>Brian Cuthbert &amp; Associates</td>
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<td>CLAYTON, Jacqueline D</td>
<td>Sheffield, S Yorkshire</td>
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<td>WILLIAMS, Kevin M</td>
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**Harry Mitchell College**

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<td>BEDFORD, Philip</td>
<td>Paddock Wood, Kent</td>
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<td>DAVIES, Thea</td>
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<td>DAVISON, Malcolm J.</td>
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<td>DeSOUZA, Michael B</td>
<td>Dawlish, Devon</td>
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<td>GANGAR, Mukhtiar S</td>
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<td>JATTA, Sulayman</td>
<td>Banjul, Gambia</td>
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<td>MILLS, Graham R</td>
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<td>NAGATY, Mohamed</td>
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<td>HIPLEYDELL, David P</td>
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<td>VARDY, Phillip A</td>
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<td>WHITHAM, Roger K.</td>
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**Scott-Grant Training**

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**2006 Award**
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**Tyneside Productivity Services**

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<td>WILKINSON, Steven G.</td>
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**Inform Management Training**

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<td>DALLIDAY, Nicola J</td>
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<td>YOULL, Julian</td>
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**2006 Award**
### Management Services Diploma

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<td>GUNAWARDANA, Don N I</td>
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<td>HENRYS David</td>
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You bit the bullet. You set up a website because new prospects and existing customers kept asking you for your website address. Then, too, there were all those stories you kept hearing about small companies bringing in significant business through their websites. So, you paid a web developer thousands of pounds to put your business on the web, or spent countless hours of your own time learning enough about the web and about html to put up the site yourself.

What happened? What’s wrong? What do you need to do to make your website start bringing you business? Here are several tips that will help you fine tune your site to make it a more effective marketing tool.

Make sure your site looks professional
Take a hard, cold look at your site – or ask a friend who will be brutally honest to look at the site. Does it look professional? Are the graphics of a professional quality and clear? Are the fonts, font sizes, and font
colours used in a consistent way? Or does your site include design flaws like these that immediately mark it as an amateur production:

- Photos that are squeezed or stretched out of proportion
- Multiple elements on the page that are blinking, bouncing, scrolling or turning in circles
- Multiple styles of type used for headlines and body copy
- Coloured background graphics or textures that make it difficult to read the type
- Background graphics that are inappropriate for the content of the site (eg bubbles on a site selling bookkeeping services)
- Text blocks that are out of alignment

First impressions matter on the web, just as they do anywhere else. And, the first impression your site makes should be one of professionalism and appropriateness for the markets you serve.

**Don't use the name of your company as the web page title**
Every web page has a windows-style title bar. The title that appears in that title bar is determined by what you include in the title ‘tag’ in the html code for the page. You or your website designer may want to make the name of your company the title of the page.

That's not a good idea, however, unless the name of your business includes a descriptive term that someone looking for your services would search to find what you sell. The reason: search engines place heavy emphasis on the words in the title bar. Like the text on your page, the closer the text in the title bar matches the term a web surfer is searching for, the higher your site will rank when the results of the search are displayed. So, if your company name is non-descriptive and little known, leave it out of the title page, or put it at the end of the title.

**Don't let your home page be a flash presentation**
Flash is a technology that allows you to put animated presentations and demos on the web. Designers love it because it shows off their multimedia skills, to say nothing of increasing the amount they can charge for the site. Business owners often think it makes their site look impressive and make their businesses appear to be on the cutting edge. But flash presentations can make your web page take a long time to load. Search engines don't pick them up, and they often annoy visitors who come to your site for product information or facts in a hurry, not entertainment. If you have a product or service that benefits from an animated demonstration, make that one of the choices on your home page (eg 'watch a demo'). Don't make the flash presentation the entire home page. And if your products or services don't need an animated demo, don't use the technology at all.

**Focus the home page and product pages on your customers' interests, not yours**
You’re proud of your business and your accomplishments. (As you should be.) It’s tempting to write a lengthy description of your business accomplishments and run it on your home page with a big photo of yourself, your building and/or your employees, saying, “we’re here to serve you.” But prospects and customers aren’t coming to your site to learn about all the great things you've accomplished. They’re coming to your site to find out what you sell and how it will help them.

Get their attention with benefits-oriented headline and text. The headline should make clear what you do and suggest a benefit. For example, 'fast, accurate transcription for Monroe County medical offices and hospitals,’ or ’phone systems that grow with your business.’

Don’t toss out that company information, though. After you interest the customer in your products or services, they may want to know more about your company before deciding to do business with you. So, if the purpose of your website is to sell your product or services, make the company information a link off your home page, not the focal point of the home page.

**Avoid a cluttered look**
If you sell multiple products, you want them all to be found. And if you are being billed by the number of ‘pages’ on your website, you may want to keep costs down.
Websites

not try to squeeze dozens of images or product descriptions on a single page. The page will look cluttered and make it difficult for visitors to find the products or information they want.

Instead, put small photos of a few of your best-sellers or most representative products on the home page, and then have links to other products in your catalogue. Break up the links into logical categories. For instance, if you sell sandals, you might have categories for women's sandals, men's sandals, and children's sandals. If you sell footwear, you might have pages for men's footwear, women's footwear and children's footwear, and then break down each of those pages into categories such as sneakers, shoes and sandals.

Minimise graphic sizes to make sure your pages load quickly
Photos and other graphic images make your pages look appealing and help illustrate what you sell. So, they are important to include. But don't let the size of graphics slow down your website. In most cases, images should generally be thumbnail size – no more than 1 to 1.5 inches in size. If a larger image is needed to properly display an item, then you can add a link that says ‘Click here to see a larger image.’ That way big images that take a long time to display, will only be displayed by people who really need to see a bigger picture.

Be sure you've included important supporting information
To turn web surfers into customers, you’ll want to provide enough supporting information about what you sell to make them feel comfortable buying from you. If you sell software, for instance, you’ll need information about what platform the software uses, compatibility with other products, system requirements and links to press reviews, if any. If you sell graphic design services, the ‘supporting information’ you need should include a portfolio of work you've done. If you provide consulting services, it would be a good idea to include case studies describing client problems, what you did to solve them and how they benefited as a result. (Be sure to get the client’s permission before using their name in this way on your site.) A page with testimonials from satisfied customers is beneficial as well.

Make sure it's easy to place an order
Imagine how annoyed you'd be if you ran into the supermarket to pick up a container of milk, and couldn't find the checkout counter? Website visitors are no different. They will get annoyed if they have to scroll up and down or side to side to find a place to order from you. Avoid the problem by keeping pages short and including a buy now button or link in the same location on every page. A good location is just below the text that describes any product or service.

Be sure your contact information is easy to find
Customers not only want to know what you sell and who you are, they want to know how to reach you. They may have questions about the merchandise you are selling, want to know who they can contact if there is a problem with their order, or prefer talking to a ‘real person’ instead of ordering online. Avoid losing sales by including your phone number, store location (if you have one) on every page.

Share links with other businesses in your community
The tips above will help you get found in search engines and help make your pages more appealing to potential customers. But even in the internet age, business still has as much to do with who you know as what you do. So talk to business owners who sell different products and services than you do, but serve the same market. Help each other by swapping links and giving each other referrals.


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I breathed a huge sigh of relief the other day. We found a bookkeeper to manage the accounts for our rapidly growing business!

Lizzie, my Operations Director, and I concluded that we were temperamentally unsuited to the task. Now she can spend all her time managing our busy schedules, workshops and conferences. I can do more useful things between assignments.

It is amazing how we let our lives get sidetracked from the things we know we ought to be doing, by numbers that tell us to do the opposite. Yet we often feel powerless to change the root cause of this conflict so we can get on doing the right things. Here is my initial list of common curses – I am sure you can think of more.

First come forecasts – which are always wrong, including my own! In this day of electronic point of sale and the ability to transmit real sales data upstream almost instantly, why are we still using forecasts? I so often find that delays in the information flow back upstream, are longer than the physical flows. If only we could see how information gets hopelessly distorted the more hands it passes through and the older it gets. Would we act this way if information began to rot like a dead fish?

The answer is not as simple as saying we are only going to react to sales data as they happen. We need to take account of changes in trends and to cover a degree of anticipated fluctuation in real demand. In most cases real end-customer demand is actually very stable and the degree of variation for our high volume products and services is actually quite small. So we ought to at least be able to modify our production plans based on rapid feedback from real sales data as they happen. Our model ought to be picking exact

It is amazing how we let our lives get sidetracked from the things we know we ought to be doing.
quantities of fresh vegetables in the field today for sale in the store tomorrow, based on the weekly pattern of sales and today’s sales data.

Second is the curse of economic order quantities. This algorithm is the second source of noise in our information flows. Yet the more we learn about managing lean supply chains the more we see that big batches create extra costs elsewhere in the value stream and lead to chronic instability – which in turn causes fire-fighting, expediting and chasing. The world of perfect information and everything always going according to plan simply does not exist. Batching activities separately across a value stream simply makes things worse as their impact is amplified.

Aligning batch sizes for volume products to daily or at least weekly demand makes flow possible and creates the stability for ongoing continuous improvement. Make low volume products to order separately. The same is true in distribution – picking up and delivering small batches of more products from more suppliers on milk rounds turn out to be cheaper than waiting for each supplier to fill a truck with their own products. How much noise do your systems create for your suppliers?

This leads us to the third curse, chimney costing within a department or function. This assumes that by keeping every activity busy by ensuring there is always work waiting to be done, we optimise the utilisation of every asset, department, piece of equipment or truck.

Simply calculating the OEE (original equipment effectiveness) reveals that it actually results in much poorer utilisation. By concentrating on all the causes of interruption in order to synchronise one step with another and create a flow, we end up with much higher utilisation. We are also beginning to optimise the end-to-end flow of value creation and not optimising each activity in isolation.

This leads to the fourth curse, standard costing. Just looking at the costs of direct labour and slow freight has led to many mistaken location decisions and much longer supply chains than we needed. If we look at all the costs associated with the end-to-end value stream, including all the costs of managing variation, we would take very different decisions and have much more effective supply chains. And we would not be wasting so much of the world’s energy resources and causing so much pollution!

Challenging these familiar but mistaken rules of thumb will help us do the right things for our customers, our supply chains and our organisations.

Daniel T Jones
Chairman, Lean Enterprise Academy
Lean and Six Sigma are both planned change initiatives with objectives to reduce or eliminate waste, but there the similarity ends.
Both are often referred to as programmes, but that is not accurate. Six Sigma may be a program but lean is a philosophy. As a program, Six Sigma uses a methodology called DMAIC (determine, measure, analyse, implement, and control) to identify and eliminate waste. As a philosophy, lean is all about continuous improvement through the elimination of waste.

People
Six Sigma is about exclusion. A Six Sigma team is identified for a specific area or project. The team may include several Green Belts led by either a Black Belt or Master Black Belt. The team may disappear for several days of extensive training in DMAIC, team building, communication, and so forth, before it starts plotting and gathering data for the Six Sigma project. Because of the complexity of Six Sigma, it does not make business sense to train everyone, or assign all employees to projects.

There is great excitement within the Six Sigma project team: learning, participating, and contributing. But everyone else becomes a bystander, waiting for change that may or may not have included his or her participation.

Countless stories tell of huge successes and cost savings from Six Sigma projects. Testimonials abound as trade publications provide articles on Six Sigma. I have even witnessed and led some of these successes in accounting, material management, and manufacturing.

However, in most of those cases, only the manufacturing people know about the manufacturing projects; only the accounting staff knows about the accounting projects; and only the materials group is aware of the materials management project. There is little or no participation beyond the project team. While organisations realise huge cost reductions, there is no effect on the culture or the organisation as a whole.

What happens at the end of the project? Unfortunately, some Six Sigma projects become personality driven. When the team leader goes on to another project, the team members fade away. Once in the spotlight, getting attention and recognition, they now may feel no one remembers them. Has there been a permanent behaviour change? When the project loses visibility, will improvement be sustained?

Lean is inclusive. Lean teaches us that success is achieved when the entire value stream improves, not when one discrete element of it does. In a successful lean implementation, the entire organisation may be involved in improving the value stream. All systems must be aligned. Purchasing, scheduling, manufacturing, engineering, accounting, and human resources must all be active believers and participants in the lean journey.

Without 100 per cent inclusion, the effort will stall when it reaches the excluded part of the organisation. The lean organisation educates, engages, and empowers the entire workforce to identify and eliminate waste throughout the value stream.
Approach to change

Transformational change and change management are two approaches to effective implementation of planned changes. As change management, Six Sigma tends to focus on cost, quality, and schedule. This narrow focus is apparent even in the names of project teams: inventory reduction team, accounts receivable cycle time team, manufacturing scrap reduction team, etc.

Lean is a transformational change, one that moves the organisation to a planned state. It involves the business strategy, organisational design, structure, culture, and processes of the entire value stream. It creates and reinforces the concept of continual change through the elimination of waste, improving the entire value stream’s effectiveness. A lean change transfers knowledge and creates a learning organisation.

Improvement philosophy

Six Sigma is aimed at specific targets in the value stream. The objective is to realise a level of improvement using the structured approach offered by DMAIC. The project teams keep the group focused on specific goals and objectives. The teams work hard to identify root causes, test hypotheses, validate their analysis, implement their recommendations, and monitor them to ensure expected results are attained. When the projects are complete, the group celebrates, disbands, and the individuals return to their previous jobs. At best, they leave metrics or control charts to prevent roll back.

Control charts, however, only encourage maintaining the status quo. Now before the statisticians get alarmed, remember that for a process to be in control there should be an expected deviation around the average. Processes that show a number of points above or below the centre line are considered ‘out of control’. Unfortunately, even if the trend is positive, indicating continuous improvement, statistical thinking will still consider it out of control. The negative implication can make the typical human being flinch after having made a large investment in time and energy in a Six Sigma project.

Lean is all about continuous improvement. The philosophy says there will always be waste to be extracted from the value stream. Lean is an ongoing celebration of waste removal, a never ending process. In the transformed learning organisation, members are continually building skills and improving, making lean a daily part of their lives.

Summary

The differences between lean and Six Sigma are greater than the similarities. When the differences are recognised, returns can be maximised by knowing when lean or Six Sigma is the right choice.

About the author

Douglas Ferguson, President of Ferguson and Associates, has more than 30 years experience in manufacturing and distribution, and has promoted improvements through people and technology, including the use of lean and Six Sigma. Doug can be reached via email at fer gd@comcast.net.

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A fictitious letter to the chairman of a large UK based company to encourage the adoption of the ‘lean’ approach to business process improvement.
Dear Chairman,

No doubt you will have heard about, or read articles on, the new way of making business processes more effective – better known as making processes ‘lean’. As you know, I have been in the business of improving processes for years and a number of tools/methodologies have evolved to help improve the way a company operates. You will have seen yourself, many improvements to the way we do things in our company ………. but having carried out some research into this lean approach I am convinced it will help us to make even more significant improvements to our business. The benefits from lean will further reduce our costs, improve customer service, get things right first time and maintain quality.

Many of our competitors, if not all of them, are beginning to adopt the lean route to improved market success, and if we do not follow suit we run the risk of losing our position in the marketplace. I have outlined below an approach we could take that will begin this company’s journey to lean.

Some background to lean:

The car industry has been at the forefront of finding ways and means of improving production techniques, in order to compete in the global car industry. In the early days of motor manufacturing the American then British and European car firms led the way. Mass production was constantly refined in order to produce a vehicle that the man in the street could afford, was reliable and most importantly was affordable. From the 1960s the Japanese seriously began to seek ways of entering the market. Toyota was a prime mover in understanding, then improving upon the production methods used by the West. The Toyota Production System was born. Toyota realised that to really refine production methods it was essential to respect the knowledge and expertise of its workforce and use these skills to help develop and refine the end to end car manufacturing process – this also included maintaining the highest quality possible. The approach also allowed swift changes to a process to accommodate upgrades to cars – or the production of a new model in the shortest possible time. Such was Toyota’s success that all other motor companies adopted similar production systems. The system used was given the term ‘lean manufacturing’ – or lean for short.

These principles of lean are now being applied to business processes.

What causes waste?

In a nutshell, lean is about building world class processes that deliver best quality, lowest cost and shortest cycle time ……… by eliminating waste. Customers do not want to pay for waste. Waste is caused by:

Unnecessary ……

- Production
- Transportation
- Waiting
- Movement
- Processing
- Stock
- Defects

Lean is all about examining these potential sources of waste and finding ways and means of eradicating superfluous effort.

The following seven goals should be targeted by any organisation striving to become lean.

1. Delivering what the customer wants – not assuming they want it;
2. Excellence in what I call ‘process sufficiency’ – fit for the purpose of the job in hand – but no over engineering;
3. Processes that are the least cost to maintain – but still deliver the required value;
4. Making sure processes follow the shortest path from start to finish – no unnecessary routing;
5. Getting it right first time;  
6. Maintaining quality;  
7. Constant review of the above to remain lean.

How could lean benefit us?  
Chairman, at this stage, you might argue that lean is no different to any ‘continuous improvement’ programme – after all the seven principles above would underpin any improvement initiative. But lean is different.  
Traditionally, those involved in a process, work in a cross functional way – that is the whole end-to-end process is handled by several departments. We are a company that offers a range of products and services via mail order. Today, in simple terms, we operate as follows,

- A customer phones the order department to purchase an item;  
- The order is taken and the warehouse department informed;  
- Warehousing picks the item from the storage bins and passes it to the despatch;  
- Despatch wraps the item and adds the customers address and informs the transport department that the customer’s order is ready to be delivered;  
- Transport picks up the parcel and delivers it to the customer;  
- Then the invoice department send the customer a bill to pay.

Figure 1 (right) illustrates this process and as you can see there are nine departments involved in what is really one end-to-end business process.  
Again, you could make a case that lean could be used to improve the existing cross functional way of doing things today – and you would be right to some degree. However, to maximise the advantages to be gained through lean, the organisation MUST be organised around processes. In other words, the organisational structure must focus on ownership of the end to end process – rather than the more traditional functional ownership. This means that the organisation has to be re-built so that ‘departments’ become based on an end to end business process. For example, a lean based organisation could look like this:

**Department 1:** Manages the end-to-end process for satisfying customer orders. This covers: take order-deliver goods-invoice customer-manage customer accounts-handle customer enquiries.

**Department 2:** Manages the end-to-end process for buying and storing products. This covers: market research-marketing-buying goods/service-storing in warehouse-stock control.

Central functions such as personnel, IT, strategy, planning and budgetary control could be assimilated into the above two departments – or become one central resource.

By adopting lean, you would have a single ‘process’ team (using my example above) for Department 1 who would be responsible for anything involving the end-to-end ordering-fulfilling-invoicing process. Not only would this reduce waste in the process, it would develop much better expertise across the whole end-to-end process; this in turn makes it much easier to identify where the entire process can be improved as the functional boundaries (a root cause of delay and wasted time is when part of a process is handed from one function to another) will no longer exist.

Alongside this, a team would become more self-directed and given the responsibility (and trust of management) to identify where problems lie and solve them – an essential and successful element of the Toyota system. The role of management would focus on facilitating, coaching and supporting a process team to achieve their goal.

**Beginning the journey**

There are two important factors to get right here.

The first is to get the executive and management to see the benefits of lean – they should become our ‘lean champions’. The following gives some suggestions about how this may be done.
Lean Business

Educate them about the principles of lean. They will have been involved in change programmes before with various levels of success. So a convincing argument is needed using examples from manufacturing to explain where lean has succeeded and how it can be applied to this business.

Make them understand that the focus is NOT organisational (ie many departments each handling a sub-process that makes up the whole) .... but is on the totality of the process from start to finish – in other words the process is ‘the department’.

Convince them to focus less on ownership of the process and more on becoming facilitators – coaching, mentoring, and supporting the process teams.

Run a workshop to identify a business operation (and the associated processes) that is vital to our company and pinpoint areas where lean could be applied beneficially.

The second factor is selling the concept of lean to the workforce. For years, staff have become used to a particular cultural and behavioural way of working – often developed by themselves as a ‘how we do things around here’ attitude.

It’s one thing to sell the potential of lean to the executive who see it as a means of gaining more market share, improving shareholder value, etc, but it takes far more effort to take the workforce with you. Convincing them is a must as only they have detailed knowledge and understanding about where value is created and where waste lies – they are the process operators. So, some form of communication and educational initiative is needed here. There are plenty of examples around to show how other organisations have accomplished this.

A lean pilot project:
I realise that adopting lean is a dramatic change and requires a real leap in faith. In order to establish the feasibility of lean and identify the benefits to the company, my proposal is that we set up a pilot project.

From my workshop suggestion above, we would have identified a key business operation and I suggest this is the basis of a pilot project. The chosen operation must include processes that currently cross several departmental boundaries.

Setting up the pilot would involve:
- Establishing the project goal and terms of reference;
- Ensuring that the departments involved are fully committed to the pilot;
- Recruiting the project manager and project team – care being taken to choose a mix of people who are expert in the current process and process analysts/designers who will help develop the ‘lean’ version of the process.
- It is strongly recommended that a lean expert is included in the team as an advisor – even if it is on a part time basis;
- Setting up a steering committee whose role will be to ensure the project goal is being achieved and provide guidance along the way. The committee would include the sponsor, someone from the senior management team, representatives from the departments across which the process currently operates, the lean expert and the project manager.

I trust I have sparked some real interest regarding the terrific benefits this company can derive from lean. Perhaps we can meet to discuss this in more detail.

Jeff Hall
Head of Process Development

To maximise the advantages, the organisation MUST be organised around processes

Adopting lean is a dramatic change and requires a real leap in faith
Many other companies across manufacturing and service sectors have since adopted Six Sigma and achieved proportionately similar results. There are many reasons for GE’s Six Sigma success, though arguably the most significant contributing factor was the constancy of leadership during the reign of Jack Welch. Six Sigma was a consuming passion for him and all the business leaders working for him, and as a result the company made the necessary investment in training and releasing its people to undertake the process improvement and design projects that are characteristic of the Six Sigma approach. Because of sustained determination and persistence with the approach the investment has paid back many times over.

But not every company has a Jack Welch look-alike, and in today’s tough business climate CEOs are increasingly focussed on short term results from a declining level of investment. Many are impatient and demand results in the current quarter when many Six Sigma projects typically take two quarters to complete. How can we persuade the CEO to invest in Six Sigma if this requires a substantial initial investment and a payback period of close to a year in its beginning phase – no matter how good the results of companies that have invested over years to achieve three fold paybacks in the later years?

Results
Of course one answer is to find ways to lower the starting hurdle to get Six Sigma results. At Catalyst Consulting we are helping our clients to do just that in a number of interesting and different ways. We recognise that there is much ‘ground fruit’ and ‘low hanging fruit’ that can be picked relatively easily in many companies. Most companies have many processes with cost incurring steps that add no real value. Even manufacturing companies that have embraced Six Sigma have often not paid enough attention to their support service and transaction processes! Many initial Six Sigma projects do not require ‘rocket science’ techniques and complex statistical analysis – though that may well be useful later for more intractable problems once the more straightforward ones have been tackled. For every major problem that requires complex analysis there is likely to be at least one other that can be solved simply – provided we can assemble the facts and use fully the knowledge and experience of the people affected.

Select the right projects
So the first ingredient is to select the right initial projects – those problems significant and urgent to the business that

General Electric is renowned for the success of its Six Sigma improvement programme which has contributed several billions of dollars to the company’s bottom line as well as delivering improvements in customer satisfaction. GE was not the first to adopt Six Sigma – the approach originated at Motorola, but it was the first major corporation to also extensively deploy the approach in non manufacturing businesses, says Vince Grant of Catalyst Consulting.
have a high probability of being quickly and effectively addressed with a minimum of complex analysis.

The second ingredient is to simplify and shorten the training cycle to get people proficient in those limited number of simpler tools and techniques truly essential to completing these initial projects expeditiously. Whilst the traditional Six Sigma Black Belt (project leader) training has taken four weeks or more and Green Belt (project team members or leaders of more localised projects) two weeks, the fast track training for initial projects for both team leaders and members can be reduced to a week or less with considerable financial and time savings.

The third ingredient is the Six Sigma project methodology. More complex projects of course require the full traditional DMAIC (define, measure, analyse, improve, control) approach and toolset, but what if we could call timeout on these steps? We can, provided that the solution is within the knowledge and experience of the people affected by the problem, and provided that simple facts and data are available and sufficient to identify the root causes and develop an appropriate solution. This may well be the case for the correctly selected initial projects we referred to above. Getting the decision makers directly involved with the project team is also important enabling the business to cut through and implement improvements in an accelerated timescale.

Timeline
We have called the fast track approach ‘Go-4-It’. These projects have typically three phases: preparation, meeting, and follow up or implementation. All are rigorously time managed to ensure improvements are delivered in just a few weeks.

In the preparation phase a project leader (or Black Belt) will agree the subject, scope and organisation for a project with the business leaders (represented by a champion). He or she will then assemble a small team to obtain the relevant data and facts and prepare for the meeting phase. In many ways the approach is similar to the DMA steps of a DMAIC project, but the emphasis is on keeping it simple and imposing tight deadlines on assembling and analysing the facts and data, and probably focusing more on process mapping and analysis tools (including cycle time and value added step analysis) more usually seen in ‘lean manufacturing’ or ‘lean office’ rather than on statistical process control data unless that is readily available.

The meeting phase involves the project team members – augmented by other people with experience of operating the relevant processes, together with the champion and other ‘stakeholders’ in the problem. The Black Belt and the augmented project team review the data and analysis, develop and recommend solutions that are then presented to the champion and stakeholders for an immediate timely decision. These decision makers are expected to say ‘yes’ unless they have very good reasons to do otherwise – and in such cases they have to disclose these to the team. This phase is broadly equivalent to the AI (analyse and improve) steps in DMAIC, but again is time bounded by the scheduling of the meeting. The accepted recommendations are then passed back to the team for timely implementation. (The recommendations have of course included a draft implementation plan developed by the team;
furthermore the team had been instructed to come up with recommendations capable of being implemented within no more than 8 – 10 weeks).

The follow up or implementation phase is led by the Black Belt with the support of many of the project team members and reviewed with the champion on at least a weekly basis. Again this equates to the C (control) step of DMAIC and requires a professional handover to the process owners in the business.

Training
We mentioned earlier that we have found that it is usually possible to train team leaders in less than five days. Also team members in about three days, and champions in a morning or afternoon. Running the training as a project simulation based around a real company issue gets real participation and involvement – and often some of the ‘solutions’ developed during the training are actually implemented afterwards. Later a further two weeks of statistical tools training is often sufficient to then upgrade the skills of some of the team leaders and members to enable them to lead traditional DMAIC projects subsequently.

Again we noted that choosing the best initial project is key to success. By including this as part of the training, and then reviewing the list with the group of champions ensures that there is real buy in, and business meaningful projects that are actually ‘doable’ within a tight timeframe. And since success breeds success – the success of the initial projects then provides fuel to ensure investment in the downstream Six Sigma programme.

After such initial projects have been fast-tracked in this way there will still be many other problems (the ‘mid-level’ and ‘tall’ fruit) that really do require the full rigorous DMAIC approach with carefully planned data collection and statistical analysis – and perhaps ‘design of experiment’ studies. These projects will take four to six months to complete, and the Black and Green Belts will require further training to upgrade their skill-sets to undertake these projects. But by then the CEO and senior leaders will have recognised the value of the Six Sigma approach through the early successes of the initial projects and have developed something of Jack Welch’s passion for and persistence with Six Sigma.

Nothing of course is risk-free. The initial project selection is critical because the fast-track approach is not appropriate to more complex problems – and leaders have the habit of encouraging ‘scope-creep’ and aspiring to tackle too complex problems too quickly. But it is appropriate to those problems where the solution is reasonably within the knowledge, minds and experience of those people working within the relevant processes – and with care meaningful problems of this type can be identified and prioritised.

To delay making improvements because more data and analysis is needed often involves more business risk than proceeding with improvements based on simple facts, analysis and relevant experience.

General Colin Powell’s 40/70 rule is applicable here – if you have less than 40 per cent of the data you need don’t make the call, but if you have more than 70 per cent then if you don’t make the call now the enemy (your competitors) will steal a march on you.

Our experience tells us that more and more companies are seeking faster and lower cost of entry to Six Sigma – the approaches above provide one such route.

About the author
Vince is an expert in Six Sigma methodologies, and regularly trains Black Belt and Master Black Belt programmes. He is a graduate from Cambridge University, and obtained his PhD in Physics from Manchester University. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. Vince had international senior executive experience at Hewlett Packard before forming Catalyst in 1995.

www.catalystconsulting.co.uk.
Ian is the UK’s leading clinical hypnotherapist and coach and stress management specialist and is renowned for using the very latest and most advanced behavioural change techniques in order to achieve fast and effective results for his clients. Ian has over 15 years experience in hypnotherapy, coaching and behavioural change and through his experience has compiled the following definitive top ten tips to combating corporate stress.

1. Learn to delegate: you can only do so much in a day. Spread the workload and spread the responsibility.

2. Learn to say ‘no’. Often in a busy work environment you are called upon to do work that you are not experienced in, or in an area where you lack training. Learn to say ‘no’ and keep your stress levels low.

3. If you are in a poor physical working environment, perhaps the office is too hot or cold, it will make you stressed (as you either freeze or swelter!). Either turn the air-con on or turn the heating up. You will work better and be more productive if you are comfortable.

4. Plan your day; nothing causes more stress than unexpected events. Plan each day with prioritised tasks and stick to them.

5. Learn to switch off for a 15 minute power break each day. Just a 15 minute break will refresh you and lower your stress levels.

6. Avoid caffeine! Although coffee, tea, and other caffeinated drinks taste great, caffeine raises your heart rate and anxiety levels. Drink water instead. Dehydration can lead to migraines and headaches and an inability to concentrate.

7. Take regular exercise. If you live within 15 minutes of work try walking or cycling instead of driving. If you live further away go to the gym at least once a week or walk at least thirty minutes a day. You will get fit, increase the oxygen in your blood, and be more alert.

8. Keep your sense of humour! Smile. At the end of the day no problem is so great it’s worth risking a heart attack over.

9. Introduce monthly stress buster meetings. Sit down with each employee and discuss how things are going. This approach will help cut stress because people will not bottle things up and will feel valued if you lend a sympathetic ear.

10. Remember, your staff are your best asset. Treat them with the respect – the same that you would expect in return – in order to ensure a happy, stress-free working environment.

Ian Broadmore, founder and managing director of the Harley-street based, Abintra Clinic, reveals his definitive top ten tips for beating corporate stress.

Ian Broadmore (D Hyp-Psy, SQHP, MIAH, MNHR) is a leading Hypnotherapist, coach, and stress management specialist who provides a range of life-changing solutions to individuals, companies and business executives. He has more than 15 years experience in hypnotherapy, coaching and behavioural change, and was awarded a senior qualification in hypnotherapy practice from the General Hypnotherapy Standards Council.

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When you don’t have this balance it leads to even more pressure building. You may be getting it from home and your life outside because you are not devoting time to that, or possibly from work as you struggle to cope with the demands there whilst keeping ‘life’ going. As these pressures mount and the imbalance becomes worse, there is a probability of stress occurring. Organisations are more aware of the costs of stress related issues these days – local government included. Not achieving balance can begin to affect you as an individual, your team or colleagues, your family and friends, so it matters!

For most people, the lack of desired work-life balance is a result of things creeping up on them rather than a specific event causing it. The trouble is they do not take action on these small issues and changes as they happen, and before long these are the habit. This is often combined with events around them at work and the culture which has evolved around use of time and expectations from staff.

Having said this, the reality is that the problem of a lack of work-life balance is self inflicted. You have
allowed it to happen! The other challenging factor is that the solution lies within yourselves! You need to start by accepting more responsibility for how you use, or abuse, your own time. You need to acknowledge that the underlying problems arise because you are allowing others to take more control of your time!

To change your life and begin moving towards getting the right work-life balance for you, begin by thinking about what it would be. One of the problems many people face, is they do not know what their ideal work-life balance would be like! (They often know they don't want what they have.) To get an idea of what you want spend some time doodling your thoughts. Write them down, mindmap them or even draw an image of what you want. As with many other activities, it can help you mobilise yourself into action if you have a really clear and compelling idea of what the end result will be. Be specific about what you want for you, personally, and for time with family and friends – and for work.

Now you know what you want, think about what needs to be different to achieve this. Identify what is happening with your time, and your life, currently. You can start with some generalised thinking, but this may lead to you overlooking some vital events or people! It can be useful to back-up your thinking by completing a time log to make a note of exactly what you are doing, who and what interrupts you and how long these things are taking. Assess the activities against the key tasks of your job – and ask yourself which of these could or should be done by someone else?

The next step is to do a form of 'gap analysis'. You can be specific about what needs to change in order to begin to achieve the desired balance which you created earlier. Before setting plans in place to address these areas, you can help yourself with a bit more self assessment.

Over a number of years of working with groups and individuals in all aspects of time management and stress
Managers sometimes find it difficult to achieve a satisfactory balance between work and personal life. This article will help you begin to identify your values and beliefs, and how they affect your time management, in order to help achieve a balanced life.

Firstly, identify what are your values. (Not something many people do or have done!) List them and then leave alone. Go back and look at them, decide what else you might want to add and then prioritise them. This can be a great exercise to do with a partner or significant other! When prioritised, evaluate how well you think these are being met with your current work-life balance. Where there is a gap, there will be a greater probability of pressure and stress being generated. If these really matter to you, you will take steps to start to make sure that your life is being lived to achieve them. This is why I said earlier, the solutions to getting your work-life balance lie with you!

The next stage is to do an action plan to tackle the areas in your gap analysis. Check back on your time logs and notice what is stealing your time from what would be your priorities in your balanced life. Be open to change – remember, ‘if you continue to do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got.’ Some basic things to do:

- Decide what you need to reduce or cut back at work;
- Learn to say ‘no’ more often, be OK about being unavailable to others in order to get on with your own work. This includes the telephone!
- Accept that you need to take breaks and have a life in order to be more productive;
- Organise your time with basic time management techniques, ‘to do lists’, time planners etc;
- Plan to do things for yourself and with your family and friends – and stick to those plans;
- Schedule to leave work at a certain time – and stick to it;
- Avoid taking work home and doing it during the evenings or at weekends, only allowing yourself very rare exceptions;

If your work-life balance is not what you want it to be, recognise that one of the reasons for this is you have allowed others to take control of your time (and life!). To achieve the balance you want, which leads to a happier life, less pressure and greater contentment, you need to put yourself back in control. To do this, be willing to change, taking responsibility for your own actions and reactions and use the appropriate behaviours to get the work-life balance you want.

Graham Yemm is a consultant with many years experience of working with groups and individuals on their time management and handling pressure and stress. He can be contacted through info@managing-pressure.com or +44 (0)1483 480656.
In the book *Managing with Power* Jeffrey Pfeffer, suggests that ‘power’ is used more frequently under conditions of moderate interdependence.
According to Pfeffer, it is important to develop power and influence when the people with whom you are interdependent have a different point of view than you, and thus cannot be relied upon to do what you want. Interdependence results from many things, including the way in which tasks are organised. One factor that is critical in affecting the nature and the amount of interdependence is the scarcity of resources. Slack resources reduce interdependence, while scarcity increases it. As an example, consider the case of job promotions. If an organisation is growing rapidly and there are promotional opportunities, the competition for promotions will be less intense.

Managers have to operate and survive in many worlds and are reliant to some degree on the ‘good will’ of other peer managers. Some academics have argued that a comprehensive view of the interdependence of a manager-manager relationship should include not only interdependence (relative power), but also total interdependence (or total power). McManus, 2006. The total interdependence refers to the intensity of a relationship. A high level of total interdependence is an indicator for a strong, co-operative long-term relationship in which both managers have invested. Like ‘good will power’, mutual trust and mutual commitment will characterise these relationships. Besides loyalty towards the other party and the accompanying desire to continue the relationship, there is an alternative motivation for both parties to keep the partnership intact. In the case that both parties know that the other party possesses much power, it is not likely that either side is going to use it.

The risk of retaliation is often considered as being too high. In addition, when total interdependence is high, both managers are faced with high exit barriers. In accordance with the teachings of Bacharach and Lawler (1981), we may measure total interdependence in a relationship by ‘the sum’ of the manager’s dependence on one another.

Although power is inherent in a given formal position, leaders cannot maintain authority unless followers are prepared to believe in that authority. In a sense, leadership is conferred by followers. As previously pointed out, it is not enough to know the sources of power or that power exists.

It is also critical to know how power may be used and to have an armoury of strategies and tactics that translate power and influence into practical results. One such strategy is power sharing.

**Power sharing**

Power sharing is a strategy for resolving difference of opinions over who should have the power. Instead of fighting over who should have power over whom, power sharing relies upon the joint exercise of power. If conflicts can be reframed to focus on how such power sharing might take place, they can become much more constructive. Power sharing can take a variety of forms.

One approach is to grant minority groups autonomy over some, or all aspects of their own affairs. This autonomy can be limited to cultural issues: religion.
Power sharing is a strategy for resolving differences of opinion over who should have the power

Demands for power sharing and autonomy often ferment conflict more than they resolve it

Maintaining power
Niccolo Machiavelli wrote his famous dissertation on power, The Prince, in 1517. According to Machiavelli, the purpose of power is to maintain itself and to extend itself. It has nothing to do with the welfare of the people. It has nothing to do with principles or ideology or right and wrong. These are related to the means to the end, but the goal is power. Do whatever it takes to keep your power and extend your power. Machiavelli again notes “Men will succeed as long as method and fortune are in harmony.”

If not they stand to lose all they have gained. Machiavelli promoted the idea that a ruler (leader) should be gentle most of the time, but when necessary the ruler must make use of any form of manipulation, deceit, and even murder to achieve his ends. People in power are seldom challenged or given bad news, and even when challenged, they have a tendency to reject the discrepant information.

It is no wonder, then, that changing circumstances often produce, with some lag, a dynamic that causes those in power to lose that power, (Pfeffer, Chapter 16). To avoid losing power, managers (or leaders) should be sensitive to subtle changes in the political, economic and social environment, and understand how a particular management style, or a particular set of actions jeopardise their position and power base.

Managing conflict
Conflict may be described as: a struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing desires. It could be argued that a manager’s view of the cause of conflict is encouraged by the perspective offered by the classical theory which is largely related to the breakdown of formal authority linked to legitimate power and the need for measures to maintain such power and restore it when need be. In some respect management sees the occurrence of conflict as a rejection of its legitimate right to govern and control.

As a consequence, conflict is identified as abnormal behaviour and therefore is likely to result in punishment for the perpetrators of deviant behaviour. In some respects this supports the view that management is based on a ‘unitary view’ which carries with it the expectations that everyone within the organisation shares the same view, will work together as a team, acknowledge the legitimacy of hierarchy and respect senior management.

Anything which appears to interfere with this view is considered ‘bad’ for business and is dealt with according to the rules, procedures, customs and conventions which exist within a particular organisation.

Causes of conflict
As stated above conflict results from incompatible or opposing desires. Conflict is a natural outcome of human interaction. Conflict exists whenever there is disagreement and derives from differences in attitudes, beliefs, and expectations. As described above conflict can result from not acknowledging management authority or legitimacy or lack of
1. Conflict between manager and managed
Conflict between the manager and those that are managed is more likely to occur when communication is not clear and when there is confusion about what is valued and rewarded. It is the responsibility of the manager to make goals and expectations clear.

It is imperative that the manager translates the more general customer expectations into activities and achievements that are discipline specific. In my own management experience and experience based on 15 years in project management conflict between those who manage and are managed tends to be an issue in the early phases of a project and issues tend to centre on time, cost and resource priorities.

These three attributes create tension between parties because managers have limited control over external risks that are likely to impact these areas. Keeping the objectives clearly in mind goes a long way towards minimising disruptive conflicts as does involving personnel directly affected by the decisions made by the manager. Table 1 outlines some sources of conflict.

2. Conflict between individuals
Conflict between individuals occurs when they operate under different value systems. Some individuals prefer to see themselves as responding purely to the demands of their own set of values. The view of another’s value system and position is probably the greatest block to handling conflict between individuals constructively.

Some of the more common misrepresentations can be found in almost all conflicting positions between individuals, groups, and organisations. Three of these misrepresentations are:

- **Mirror image**: each person thinks they are an innocent victim representing truth and justice. Each may see the other person as ‘the enemy.’ Each perceives themselves as totally right; the other is totally wrong. The position is ‘everything I do is right; everything you do is wrong.’

- **Tunnel vision**: each person can see clearly the underhanded, slanted, or false and vicious acts of others while being totally blind to the same behaviour in themselves. This position is described as ‘What is okay for me to do is not

Table 1: A-Z Sources of Conflict (Source McManus & Wood-Harper, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Conflict resulting from poor exchanges between manager and staff. Misunderstandings of goals and objectives (Over 90 per cent of conflicts are attributed to faulty communication).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Conflict arises from lack of funding or who gets what part of the budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Conflict arises from a need for the manager to take strategic decisions or from lack of decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>Conflict that develops over how the project will be managed, including reporting relationships, responsibilities, group relationships, project scope, project plans, work agreements and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Conflict that centres on issues of power and control, or hidden agendas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Conflict centres on inter-personal differences rather than the job in hand. This may include conflict from prejudice or stereotyping individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Conflict resulting from competition for resources among other managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Conflict that arises out of technical differences of opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
acceptable for you to do.’ This distortion allows a double standard, even when people are aware of the unfair actions on both sides.

**Polarised thinking:** this kind of thinking happens when one or both parties have an oversimplified view of the conflict. A value judgement is involved, with one side seen as good and the other side seen as bad.

If managers allow these misrepresentations to control the way they handle conflict, the issue will probably remain unresolved. The focus is on blaming the other and justifying yourself, rather than focusing on the issue at hand. The other person almost instinctively will become defensive in an attempt to justify their own positions.

The result is likely to be hostility rather than resolution. Each person in the relationship probably will see the other as overly emotional and unreasonable. The relationship ends up with more conflict rather than less. It should also be noted that conflict that is allowed to run its own course is more likely to be destructive. Managers need to be ready to manage conflict.

However, two precautions must be noted. First, how a manager responds to a conflict affects the conflict. Even when a manager opts to ignore an existing conflict, their silence affects the conflict. Second, the manager’s response is never static in that a manager brings to each conflict a personal set of beliefs, perceptions, and expectations.

Managers need to remember that their perception of the persons involved or the situation may not be congruent with reality. Only by identifying the interests underlying the issues and positions and recognising the different levels of importance each party gives to these interests can the disputing parties create mutually satisfying, durable solutions to conflicts.

**Conflict resolution Strategies**

Strategies or ways of dealing with conflict vary according to its nature. Managers faced with the inevitability of conflict brought about by competition over resources, priorities and objectives and reinforced by
is also common sense to keep conflicts current. Old conflicts simply clutter up your relationships. Managers do not have a monopoly on interpersonal skills so review your interpersonal skills periodically. It is almost impossible to resolve conflict without the ability to listen well, express your feelings honestly, and avoid judging the other person.

Managers must be willing to listen to the other person’s point of view and try to understand it. That doesn’t mean you have to agree. It just means you have to try hard to understand and identify with that person’s feelings. As managers you should avoid creating conflict over unimportant matters.

If you find yourself frequently in conflict over trivial matters, you may need to seek help to find out what is underneath the hostility. It

Some of the more common misrepresentations can be found in almost all conflicting positions between individuals, groups, and organisations

References
McManus, J (2006), Leadership: Project and human capital management, Elsevier Publishing

With the advent of life membership we are attracting new members. There are still people who are engaged in management services who are not members and we would like them to join the Institute.

We can use our ‘direct entry’ route to fast track this and information is available from Brooke House.

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**Incentive**
*A Prize Draw at Regional level will be established and all current members who recruit new members will be entered. The prize draw will take place in early 2007.*
A new paradigm for leaders: The MACRO-TO-MICRO approach

Joan Marques reviews the new millennium paradigm, the macro-to-micro approach, in which leaders first consider the macro needs and then formulate ways to fulfil those needs. In this perspective profits are reformatted from a starting point to a rewarding consequence of need-fulfilling actions, and gratification of all stakeholders at all levels is guaranteed. The article provides five considerations that leaders could use as a guide toward implementing the macro-to micro approach.
In the past years several authors have indicated that we are going through a tremendously important transition stage at this point in time. Barbara Marx Hubbard, author of the 1998 book *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential*, stresses that humanity has "gained the powers of co-destruction of our world, or the co-creation of immeasurable futures" (Hubbard, 2003, p 359). Hubbard (2003) further asserts, "We stand at a threshold, and it has become clear that if we continue to use our new powers in the same state of consciousness in which we created them, we can wreak greater havoc upon ourselves and the other species on earth" (p 359).

Along the same lines but in more radical language Daniel Quinn, author of, among others, *Ishmael* and *Beyond Civilisation*, underscores the importance of a paradigm shift as the only way for us to save our planet from rapid destruction. The basic message in *Ishmael*, Quinn’s 1992 book, is that we can no longer hold on to our ‘taker’ mentality of storing, controlling, and thinking that the earth was made for man. The taker culture, as described by Quinn, is what we now know as modern civilisation. Quinn (1992) affirms that there are three hard lessons the taker society has to urgently adopt:

1) The earth is NOT the centre of the universe (p 103);  
2) Man evolved, like all other creatures, from the common slime of the earth (p 103); and  
3) The gods did not exempt man from the law that governs the lives of all other creatures (p 103) [which entails that] species that do not live in compliance with the law become extinct (p 104).

Quinn subsequently warns that takers have to realise as soon as possible that their culture does not ‘fly’, but is heading for a fatal crash (Quinn, 1992, p109), unless they restart obeying the rules of the game, which boils down to empathy and reverence toward one another and the environment based on the awareness of our foundational equality to all life on earth. He thereby stresses that lesson three will be the hardest to accept by the takers, and explains that it will require an awakening and a renewed respect for natural laws, thereby putting mother culture – the foundation of the takers’ perception of uniqueness and superiority – to sleep forever (Quinn, 1992, p 144).

As an elaboration for those who doubt the possibility of anything beyond our current civilisation and, hence, our present ways of behaving toward the environment and the global results of our mismanagement, Quinn points out in *Beyond Civilisation*, “No invention is ever unsurpassable. The steam engine was surpassed by the gas engine. The radio was surpassed by television. The calculator was surpassed by the computer. Why should civilisation be different? (p 3). It is Quinn’s opinion that “the flaw in our civilisation isn’t in the people, it’s in the system” (p 171).

The reality of interconnectedness

For leaders in our times there is nothing more important than the act of waking up. Not in the literal sense of the word, but as an act of realising that, with the new millennium, the imperative requirement has manifested itself more steadfastly than ever before to shift into a radically different way of perceiving the most foundational aspects of our existence. In this day and age the realisation that everything is interconnected should lie at the basis of every thought and act.

Interconnectedness may still be perceived by some as an overly idealistic and surreal perspective, but it is far from that. There is actually no reality more factual than that of our interconnectedness, not just to all of humanity but also to all life on planet earth.

Through the ages we have learned that our planet is just one miniscule part of a vast universe and that, thus far, although highly probable in the near or far future, we have not encountered another microcosm in the universe that has proven to be habitable for our type of life. Moreover, it is yet unknown when and how we will come across such a location which we
then – depending on its circumstances, livability and existing population – could consider as an alternative to mother earth.

Now, since this alternative has not presented itself yet, we should be very cautious about the ways we treat our precious home. And here’s where the key surfaces: Earth is our home. All of us who live on it should realise that any act we undertake toward harming our earth in any way, shape or form, ultimately harms ourselves. Even more importantly, we should realise that every time we become aware of some imbalance or suffering on this planet, and we choose to ignore it because it seems “far from our bed”, we basically approve of it, particularly when we are in a position to do something about it.

The wakeful approach: a responsibility of every leader
Because we are all sharing one house – our planet earth – we are all responsible for its preservation. And although not all of us are capable of contributing on such a massive scale as Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, each of us can engage in enlightened behaviour on our own level. As leaders of our companies, families, and most of all, ourselves, we can start behaving wakefully by questioning the purpose of all our actions. This, too, is nothing new. Emmanuel Kant, an 18th century German philosopher, introduced the idea of universalisability, entailing that we should contemplate, for every act we plan to undertake, whether it is universally acceptable, and only when our examination of our intentions passes the test of universalisability, should we work toward implementing them.

Even though Kant’s theory has thus far been highly praised yet left dormant, it can no longer be treated as such. Today’s leaders in any setting, whether they are billion dollar business leaders, managers of micro-level non-governmental organisations, owners of small mom and pop stores, or heads of families, should be aware of the tell-tale signs that we face in today’s global environment. These include global warming, famine and war, all of which ultimately are the consequences of shortsighted and short term profit oriented behaviour from our side, driven by a win-lose (if I win you lose),
rather than a win-win (if I win, you can win too), or better even, a win-win-win (if I win, you can win, and the environment can win as well) mindset.

It is unacceptable in a world where everything is increasingly transparent and interdependent – a world where most of us can easily witness at any time of any day what’s wrong in various corners of the globe – to continue ignoring that, or even worse, continue enhancing it through short-term focus on immediate profits at the expense of other constituencies in the world.

It is not more than our moral duty to realise that if not us, our children and theirs will ultimately suffer tremendously from the consequences of our shortsighted greed if we keep that going.

A New Paradigm

Business leaders who want to practice wakefulness should realise that the time for micro-to-macro thinking, which entails the sequence “A) What can I do, and B) How will it possibly benefit others?” has become obsolete. Today we actually have no other conscious choice than the application of the macro-to-micro perspective, which entails exactly the reverse: “A) What does my neighbourhood, city, country, continent, or world need; and B) How can I best help – given my talents, connections, skills, and education – to make it happen?”

Awakened leaders can easily see that the new paradigm, the macro-to-micro way of thinking, entails no less profits than the outmoded micro-to-macro prototype. On the contrary, the gratification that will be earned from applying this mindset reaches far beyond financial profits. This new mindset will enhance profits to a logical and satisfying consequence of enlightened behaviour rather than a starting point, but more importantly, it will bring gratification to all parties involved, because it involves “doing good while doing well”.

So, how can any leader initiate his or her individual implementation of the macro-to-micro paradigm? Five Guiding points may help:

• **Need assessment:** What need is there in my surroundings, city, country, or in the world that I can fulfill given my strengths, talents, education, specialisation, available resources, and interests?
• **Need analysis:** Is this need a constructive or a destructive need? (Cigarette companies, street drug traders, and the big cocaine bosses that supply them also fulfill a need, but it’s not a constructive one. Awakened, conscious leaders only consider the fulfillment of constructive needs)
• **Need fulfillment options:** How can I fulfill this constructive need in a way where I do as little harm as possible to the environment?
• **Restoration evaluation:** If I do unavoidable harm to the environment through my activities, how can I help to restore that? Example: if you run a company that processes trees to wood for building purposes, you could ensure reforestation whether required by governments or not.
• **Other ways of contributing to quality of life:** How
The macro-to-micro approach allows every leader to act in line with his or her mission in life, that although it represents the only way to guarantee longevity for our world, it can be executed in an almost infinite magnitude of methods, driven by the leaders' interests, talents, education, location, and other prerequisites. So, at the individual level, the macro-to-micro approach allows every leader to act in line with his or her mission in life, and work toward those things he or she wants to be remembered for. Executing the macro-to-micro paradigm provides the advantage to every leader in his or her own circle to contribute toward the elevation of the quality of life in their organisation, neighbourhood, city, country, and ultimately, the world. It also enhances feelings of gratification amongst those who get the opportunity to partake in noble activities, particularly if these noble goals are communicated appropriately. And it enhances the rewards for immediate, mid-range and far-away stakeholders through the results generated from such initiatives.

References:

About the author
Joan Marques (www.joanmarques.com) facilitates courses in business and management at Woodbury University in Burbank, California. She has authored two books on the topics of leadership and global awareness, and is currently in the process of publishing two additional ones on workplace spirituality, and leadership. She presents a weekly radio column in the Netherlands; and regularly co-organises and presents workshops for business and non-profit entities in the Los Angeles area, through the Business Renaissance Institute, (www.bri-usa.com) which she co-founded in 2004. Dr Marques holds a Bachelors degree in business economics; a Master’s degree in business administration; and a Doctorate in organisational leadership.
The Beatles told us money couldn’t buy love. Well, maybe that’s true. But it can certainly buy a special and extremely valuable kind of friendship; at least if you are about to embark on a major change programme and are – possibly justifiably – worried about the possibility of it not living up to expectations.

Unfortunately the vast majority of change programmes don’t live up to expectations. This doesn’t necessarily mean they fail completely; but even change projects that don’t completely fail may experience compromises and reductions in the achieving of overall objectives, and of course such compromises are inevitably minor failures.

What is the link between friendship and the failure risk of change projects?

To understand this we need to look in more detail at why all types of change projects carry a significant risk of failure. The risk applies to change projects run by organisations of all sizes, but clearly the financial risk of failure is all the greater the larger the organisation. We should also bear in mind that where public money is being spent, as in a change project carried out by a department of central or local government, a failure in the change project will be regarded especially seriously. Yet failure of major projects of all kinds – and change projects in particular – are extremely serious for both private sector and public sector organisations.

Why are change projects so much at risk of failure?
Ultimately there are probably as many reasons for this as there are unsuccessful change projects, but some generalisation is possible. In practice, the following are the most likely reasons for change projects to fail:

- Inadequate initial attention has been devoted to identifying the desired business outcomes of the change project. There is a pressing need for clear thought here, but often the very fact that the organisation needs to engineer the change, while at the same time continuing to deliver a ‘business as usual’ service to its customers, places the organisation in something of a quandary. Clear thought is always more difficult when the organisation cannot take ‘time out’ from its everyday activities in order to pursue the clear thought in a tranquil and uncluttered state of being.

- There has been insufficient effort to communicate to stakeholders exactly why these business outcomes really matter.

- There is often a temptation to assume that the technology involved in the change project can shoulder more of the burden of change than it actually can in practice. In fact, while technology can be a hugely powerful agent to put change into practice, it is essentially a neutral resource in that it must be firmly directed to achieve a particular objective; it won’t do so automatically. Using technology is no replacement for strong, energetic and flexible control of the project.

- The person at the organisation appointed to run the change project may not be experienced at making change happen. Most organisations will appoint what is generally referred to in the public sector as a ‘senior responsible owner’ (SRO) who will be responsible and accountable for the success of the change project. He or she will usually be given considerable authority. However, one basic problem that often arises is that SROs are frequently appointed from within the organisation. They may be very good at their job, but their normal job is likely to be managing the business rather than implementing change within it. In practice, they may be too close to how things currently function and to internal politics to be objective about radical alternatives.

- Even if the SRO is in fact a good choice for the task in hand, there is still the practical danger that he or she won’t be given enough time to get the job done properly. Unfortunately the way many organisations work is that when people are given new responsibilities these are simply added to the list of the person’s
current responsibilities. It takes a brave organisation to be able to say to an SRO, in effect, ‘during this particular period we want you to forget about your usual daily tasks and devote yourself totally to this project without distraction’.

There may be a basic unwillingness at the organisation to face up to the magnitude of the change. Just because a major change project can be summarised briefly as an item on the agenda of an important internal meeting does not mean that carrying out the project will be easy. A common problem is that the demands of the project are simply not fully understood at the outset by the organisation, with the result that the resources devoted to the project may be inadequate, and the thinking and planning time extended to the change project insufficient to give it a real chance of success.

Overall, the fundamental problem an organisation faces when it embarks on a major change programme is that there is a need to change the existing business while continuing to operate it. It is difficult to think of a good analogy for this complex challenge, partly because the challenge is not only complex but also unique. A surgeon who performs an operation on a patient will have the luxury of the patient being not only still but also very likely under an anaesthetic. Embarking on a major change programme at an organisation is rather like a surgeon trying to perform a complex operation on a patient who is not only NOT under an anaesthetic but is also still running about!

If this sounds like an enormously difficult task, that’s not surprising, because it is. And this is precisely why an organisation is likely to benefit from having access to a ‘client’s friend’: a highly able, experienced professional who can advise the client on the general strategy, or the specific tactics, of the entire change process.

The fundamental rationale behind the principle of the client’s friend is that the senior responsible owner, and his or her team at the organisation, are probably not full time, professional change managers. The client’s friend, however, will be, and will also bring a very significant level of independence and objectivity; the same kind of independence and objectivity that a very good non-executive director can bring.

**Essential skills**

The kind of skills that make a good client’s friend are very much the skills first-rate management consultants are likely to possess, particularly consultants who have extensive experience of delivering business change not just advising on it. Technology experience is less important than the fact that the management consultant has a background involving practical responsibility for delivering change programmes. Furthermore, while the client’s friend can indeed be just one person, this does not need to be the case. The ‘job description’ can also encapsulate a small group of people whose job, very simply, is to bat on the side of the client and help the client plan the change strategy, put it into practice, and deal with suppliers along the way.
often need assistance with the overall strategy of the initiative, in particular the realistic planning of key business objectives. A definitely non-trivial factor here is the correct presentation and writing up of plans. It’s far too common for long, turgid planning documents to be prepared that focus in laborious and dreary detail on the intended processes of the change initiative rather than detailing clear statements of what will be delivered, in what timescale, and what will be achieved. Just as there is often a direct correlation between the expense of a celebrity’s marriage and the brevity of the marriage, there is frequently a similar correlation between the length and verbosity of planning documents and the likelihood of failure of the project.

- Helping an organisation avoid projects which vaguely promise ‘jam tomorrow’ rather than clearly defining a realistic delivery of benefits to a schedule which aligns with operational priorities.

- Setting the change issues in context in language which the organisation’s leaders understand and which readily enables them to see what kind of project is being put together and why they should buy into it.

- Arranging accurate alignment of technology options to outcomes. It is very easy, as we have seen, for organisations to generate an exaggerated concept of what technology can deliver for them.

- Accurate timetabling. How many times in business does one hear people say we were really foolish with our initial plans for the timescale of our change management initiative; we allocated far too much time for the initiative and we pulled it off in about half the time we’d allocated! These words have probably never been uttered honestly since the dawn of time. In practice, the best-laid plans of mice and men, whether they go astray or not, almost always take longer to carry out than was initially hoped. A client’s friend will be very realistic about timelines, and if he or she comes back and tells you that the project in question is going to take about twice as long as you envisaged, don’t be surprised because it probably will.

- Addressing the right procurement issues. This is an area where the client’s friend, who is – at least at one level – paid to be cynical, can be especially useful. All too often, procurement processes can feel as if they are driven by an unholy alliance of technology and procurement specialists who take a positive delight in formulating contracts which non-technical business leaders don’t actually understand and feel ill-equipped to challenge. Organisations are certainly justified in questioning whether procurement arrangements they can’t understand are likely to be in their interests. The client’s friend can insist to any supplier that contracts must be very clear and very straightforward and will have no compunction about denying supplier status to any suppliers who don’t play ball.

- The client’s friend can ensure that suitable management structures are put in place for tracking progress and identifying key decisions and their consequences. It’s too easy for the project to be managed by an unwieldy project Board that draws together all the stakeholders but is prone to indulge in extensive discussions without making very much happen that is truly positive. Indeed, the phenomenon of ‘analysis paralysis’ can be a major problem: so much energy is expended on analysing what is going on that not enough does go on.

- The client’s friend will help the organisation to focus less on processes and more on achieved and delivered benefits. The client’s friend, in effect, will cut to the chase, which is something that all change programmes need to do if they are likely to work.

Cost implications
What about the cost of using a client’s friend? This will of course depend on the size of the project that is being supported and the scale of the involvement the organisation needs from the client’s friend. But it’s best to hire the friend at the very outset and keep the individual or team in place until the initiative has been brought home to a successful conclusion.
Organisations should bear in mind that hiring a client's friend is, in effect, a form of insurance that should dramatically increase the chances of the initiative being successful. For this reason, an expenditure of about two percent of the overall cost of the initiative itself is by no means unreasonable as a ball-park figure for the cost of using a client's friend. While it is true that a client's friend will often consist of a number of people rather than only one, a reputable consultancy that offers a client's friend service should be able to justify its precise resource allocation very convincingly to the organisation. Beware of consultancies that appear to be taking a positive delight in maximising the number of people involved with the project.

There is a growing belief in both the private and public sector that paying to obtain such support for a major initiative is not a sign of weakness but rather a sign of resourcefulness and good forward planning. Indeed, the National Audit Office (NAO), which has the job of ensuring that the government gets value for money from its expenditure, has specifically suggested that government departments should spend some part of their budget for a major change initiative on getting support for that initiative. Private sector organisations could usefully learn from this suggestion.

The cost of hiring a client's friend is therefore likely to be something that it is in an organisation's interest to incur, as long as a client's friend is chosen that seems to empathise with the project and is convincing from the outset as a potential ally. Besides, the cost of engaging a client's friend is likely to be fairly small compared with the dangers of a major change initiative running into significant budgetary and time overruns.

But having a client's friend on board is much more than just a kind of insurance policy. It's also potentially a massive boost to confidence and a real catalyst for making the project go according to plan. It's so useful and comforting, for example, in a meeting with a highly-technical supplier, to have a client's friend on board who really speaks the supplier's language but is batting for you, and will score plenty of sixes and prevent you getting stumped.

Dave Andrew is the head of the public sector and utilities practice at the business and information technology consultancy Charteris plc. Tel: 020 7600 9199. Email: dave.andrew@charteris.com www.charteris.com.

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The Institute has re-issued its collection of six training videos in DVD format because of the ongoing relevance of the training material they contain. The original training material has been digitally enhanced and packaged into DVD format to meet modern training needs.

Originally sold as £200 per programme or £2000 per set we are pleased to be able to offer the new DVD versions at £100 per item or if all six programmes are ordered at the same time at a cost of £500 plus VAT.

To take advantage of this offer please complete the order form and return to: The Institute of Management Services, Brooke House, 24 Dam Street, Lichfield WS13 6AB.
The exclusive five-star resort has recently introduced an annualised hours system of working, replacing the traditional 40 hours per week. Now, employees’ hours are rostered and averaged over a year to reflect hourly, daily and seasonal variations in business demand.

The full-scale overhaul was introduced in March to cope with an anticipated surge in business generated by the famous Ryder Cup and the All Star Cup celebrity competition which has drawn stars including Catherine Zeta Jones. This year’s event took place from August 26 to 28, when more A-listers and golf pros, including Colin Montgomerie, tackled the Roman Road course.

Anticipating the interest both events would generate, the Celtic Manor called on leading consultants, Working Time Solutions, to investigate options for improving the old working time arrangements, to deliver benefits for staff and management alike. Now the resort boasts some of the best human resource practices in the industry – and the happiest staff. The changes are also set to save the company thousands of pounds within the first year.

Mark Colcomb from the Celtic Manor Resort began consultation with Manchester-based Working Time Solutions in August last year (2005).

He said: “Working Time Solutions did a lot of research into the business, and staff needs, and provided us with a solution. The efficiency of annualised hours has provided us with the opportunity to take on 30 extra full time staff. This will mean our customers get a better service, and staff are generally happier.”

The Celtic Manor Resort, in the Usk Valley, boasts two hotels including a 330 luxury bedroom hotel and a 70 bedroom 19th century Manor House Hotel. Other facilities include two championship golf courses, a state of the art golf academy, two spas, two health clubs, four restaurants, a 1,500 delegate convention centre and 31 function rooms.

To cope with peaks and troughs in the seasonal and weekly demand at such a massive resort, the Celtic Manor Resort in South Wales has revealed an innovative approach to staffing as it prepares to host the prestigious Ryder Cup golf tournament in 2010.
Manor Resort often drafted in expensive agency staff. Full time staff were also working excessive hours some weeks, but were underutilised during quieter times.

The whole operation caused mountains of paperwork, and additional administration costs. However, annualised hours helped to solve these problems.

Now, full time staff work more hours during busy times, and take time off during quieter periods – rather than working a set number of hours per week. And, once the full compliment of permanent staff are in place, the need for agency staff will be drastically reduced.

The workforce is happier with the system, which, through better forward planning, not only provides them with bigger blocks of time off, but also allows them to see their rosters six months in advance, rather than being notified of their hours for the next working week every Thursday.

Staff also have the ability to earn extra money through additional hour contracts if required. From the resort's perspective this provides a lower cost and significantly improved service when compared to agency staff.

"Staff were suspicious at first but quickly settled into the new routine," added Mr Colcomb.

"The initial resistance appeared to be from people who hadn't understood the concept.

"Now the comments I hear are positive. They are happier with the structure of their shifts and they are enjoying the visibility aspect of seeing them so far in advance."

Working Time Solutions, which has advised the Government on recent working time directives, has transformed employment practices with leisure providers including The Gleaneagles Hotel in Scotland, and multi-nationals including Coca Cola Enterprises.

Robert Crossman, from Working Time Solutions, estimates the changes will save the Celtic Manor Resort £200,000 in labour within a year.

"The tangible benefits will be there in black and white, but I would expect the system to have far-reaching benefits for everyone involved with, or visiting, the Celtic Manor," he said.

"Quality of service will improve as the reliance on temporary workers reduces and as staff turnover – which has been 40 per cent per year – lessens."

He added: "Many sectors of British industry have suffered because of the archaic staff rostering systems commonly used, but it really doesn't need to be the case.

"Celtic Manor is a great example of what can be achieved with good planning."

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