

Creating Alignment with the Leadership Team Part 13

By Harold Chapman

EXPOSE PROBLEMS

This month we will continue our discussion on the importance of Respect for People. Again, this is the last principle in this series; we have saved arguably the most important principle for last.

One of our main business improvement focuses must be to expose problems, so those problems can be resolved. Listed below are three of the most commonly used methods.

Visual Management Tools

Live Pareto / Alarm Levels

Production Control Board

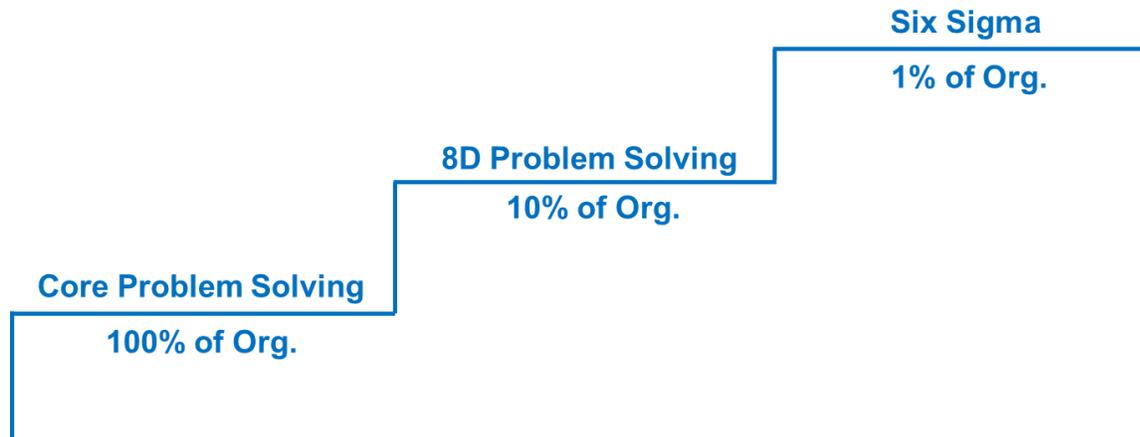
Andon / Line Stop

ESCALATION POLICY

Exposing the problem is only part of the equation; we must also respond to the exposed problem. One method to ensure proper problem response is to have an escalation policy. This policy provides the structure, the expectation, and the permission the team will need to progress up through the organization when a problem arises. Many teams have spent little to no time developing their plan for when a problem arises. We should have a response plan BEFORE the problem arises. We have plans for fires, tornadoes, and hurricanes even though those catastrophes rarely happen. However, we have plans, and we run drills to practice those plans. We need to raise the urgency in the minds of the team members to respond to problems. If we consider deviations from the standards to be "EVIL," we will put such a plan in place. Unfortunately, most companies consider deviations from the standard as NORMAL.

Any response to a problem is better than no response at all, but we should also consider having a standard response. Most companies consider restoring flow to be the only response to problems. However, this will only build the organization's ability to be heroic. Our challenge will be to restore flow and then move into identifying the root causes of the interruption. Most companies do a poor job at identifying root causes. Failure to identify causes stems from the belief that deviations from the standard are normal. As we begin solving problems, we should target solving the problem at the lowest possible level of the organization. Most problems can be solved with simple tools that anyone can use. Advanced statistical problem solving tools are only needed to solve the most complex situations. Below is our recommended training percentage by level of complexity.





As we define and implement countermeasures and validate effectiveness of countermeasures, we can begin to standardize those countermeasures across our other processes.

Jeffery Liker, in his book The Toyota Way presented some principles which align perfectly with our principle of Respect for People.

- Use only reliable, thoroughly-tested technology that serves your people and processes.
 - *Use technology to support people, not to replace them.*
 - *Understand new technology is often unreliable and difficult to standardize and therefore endangers flow.*
 - *Reject or modify technologies that conflict with your culture or that might disrupt stability, reliability, and predictability.*
 - *Implement quickly a thoroughly considered technology if it has been proven in trials and it can improve flow in your processes.*
- Grow leaders who thoroughly understand the work, live the philosophy, and teach the philosophy to others.
 - *Grow leaders from within, rather than buying them from outside the organization. We [Drive Inc.] would only modify this to include an 80:20 split to encourage outside hires 20% of the time which could introduce "fresh eyes" to the business.*
 - *Leaders must be role models of the company's philosophy and business procedures.*
 - *A good leader must understand the daily work in great detail so he or she can be the best teacher of your company's philosophy.*



- Develop exceptional people and teams who follow your company's philosophy.
 - *Create a strong, stable culture in which company values and beliefs are widely shared and "lived out" over a period of many years.*
 - *Train people to work within the corporate philosophy in order to achieve results. Work tirelessly to reinforce the culture continually.*
 - *Empower people to use the company's tools to improve the company.*
 - *Teach individuals how to work together in teams toward common goals.*

- Respect your extended network of partners and suppliers by challenging them and helping them improve.
 - *Treat your partners and suppliers as an extension of your business.*
 - *Challenge your outside business partners to grow and develop. It shows that you value them. Set challenging targets and help your partners reach them.*

RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

A discussion around Respect for People wouldn't be complete without discussing some of the reasons people leave companies. Based on the Department of Labor's statistics, the TOP 3 reasons people leave their jobs are outlined below

#1 Reason – Immediate Supervisor

- Lack of accountability
- Favoritism
- Lack of communication
- Lack of credibility/hasn't earned respect
- Lack of the knowledge/skill to do the job properly

Countermeasures:

- Build leadership of the Front Line Managers (FLM's)
- Ensure leaders are in leadership positions
- Grow leadership intentionally (own this yourself)
- Pay for performance/ focus on go-getters
- Perform evaluations and develop plans for everyone



- Ensure FLM's are engaging people in problem solving

#2 Reason – Performance Acknowledgement

- Inability to see how they can make an impact
- Belief that they are being paid unfairly for their work
- Belief that poor workers receive similar pay as excellent workers
- Inability to advance and learn new skills

Countermeasures:

- Pay for Performance/ focus on go-getters
- Engage people in problem solving

#3 Reason – Work Environment

- Poor physical conditions (noise, temperature, danger, disorganization)
- Poor cultural conditions (firefighting, repeat problems, lack of problem response)
- Unhelpful coworkers/ lack of teamwork

Countermeasures:

- Problem response system
- Engage people in problem solving
- 5S (Workplace Organization)
- Safety management

If one were to ask your employees whether or not they feel respected, would his/her answer be YES? Do you have a policy in place for dealing with problems once those problems are identified? Do you have the technology necessary to serve your people and processes? Do you have leaders who understand, live, and teach your company's philosophy to other members of the team? Do you challenge and assist your partners and suppliers to grow and develop? If you answered NO to any of these questions, Drive Inc. can help. We have experienced professionals who can coach your team through the process of gaining alignment around this principle. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491.

