

The  
Principled  
Supervisor

by  
Alden B. Davis





# **The Principled Supervisor**

By  
Alden B. Davis  
2nd Edition

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## Introduction

**Principles: The foundation upon which decisions are made. That which governs my conduct. A settled pattern of action.**

I have worked with more than two thousand people who do the work of supervising since I began my career in 1980. I have met the full distribution of people ranging from those who rally people and achieve the seemingly impossible to those who antagonize people into labor conflicts and court cases. I have met people who are getting their “ticket punched” on the journey to upper management and those who have reached the pinnacle of their career. I have met people who got the job because they knew the technology and those who did not know the technology. But over all these years, it has been rare to meet a professional supervisor. A person trained and experienced in getting work done through others. A person who understands people, behaviors, group dynamics, the technology and the customer. A person who can see beyond the day-to-day and prepare their people to respond to tomorrow’s challenges. A person who is guided by principles, not self-protection and self-interest.

The Principled Supervisor is about becoming this person. It is not bound by age, culture or the country in which you work. It is obtainable by all *except* for those people with an over-developed sense of self-importance and ego. But, I know you are not that person because you are reading this.

A set of six principles is being offered for your consideration. These principles form the high level architecture of the professional supervisor. They have been distilled from years of doing supervisory development and coaching.

They are as follows:

1. To take my place as the frontline of management in a way that never compromises the work while reconciling employee and company needs.
2. To have my behaviors guided by a clear set of principles in a way that daily decisions can be made in the group without direct involvement from me.
3. To provide a social and technical environment sufficient to meet all requirements in a way that continuous improvement of people and processes is a ritualized behavior.
4. To be accountable for the accomplishment of work in a way that ensures clarity of responsibility for the carrying out of work according to clear performance expectations.
5. To model curiosity, problem solving and personal development in a way that these become a norm for the people in my group.
6. To establish expectations and requirements in a way that encourages stretch and creative thinking within the workgroup

Notice how the principles are written. There is a "to" part and an "in a way that" part. They are not written as rules, but rather guides to help us think through our decisions. The "to" part describes what is important, what is non-negotiable and the "in a way that" part speaks to the focus of creative energy. They are designed to set-up a dynamic within our thinking that gives us the paradox of structure and creative freedom.

This book is intended as a companion to the "Be the Boss" workshop and to be used in conjunction with the web-site [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com). Forms and graphics referenced in this book have been developed over the years with supervisors around the world and are posted on the site for easy viewing and printing.

Professional supervisors can make a difference in the lives of people... *All* people impacted by the business. It is therefore noble work and worthy of your effort. I wish you great success on your journey.

Alden B. Davis  
*[www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com)*

## Principle 1

**To take my place as the frontline of management in a way that never compromises the work while reconciling employee and company needs.**

The day you agree to be a supervisor your social relationships at work change. You are no longer “just one of the group.” You have separated yourself from the workgroup and become part of management. Your work has changed and so have your accountabilities. As part of management, you take care of the institution and protect it from liabilities. You are now inside the circle and as a professional, act accordingly.

**“I wear the tie, and you don’t.”**

This is NOT what I mean. When I started in industry, virtually all supervision was male and they wore white shirts and ties. “I wear the tie” was a phrase I actually heard and it meant “don’t question me, don’t offer ideas, do what I tell you.” Just because you are part of management does not mean you become a tyrant. But as we will learn with the next principle, it is very easy to fall into these behaviors. Years ago I had union president Al Frenzer say to me, “Don’t mess with the language. You are the boss and we are the workers. Don’t try to mask the situation by calling us ‘associates’ and you ‘team lead’.” There is

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### Supervisor Role Description Managing Day-to-Day

**Core Work:** Orchestrate the work of people flowing material and information through the shop on a daily basis.

**Accountable for:**

- Frontline HR
  - Interacting with people in a way that they choose to give their discretionary effort and choose to stay with us if given the choice
  - Selection
  - Performance management
    - \* Establishing performance standards/expectations
    - \* Feedback
    - \* Coaching
    - \* Development
    - \* Merit planning
    - \* Administering consequences
  - Administering people-based policies, i.e. time & attendance, labor reporting
- EHS
  - Ensuring the safety of those around you
  - Complying with all rules and procedures
  - Maintaining the orderliness and cleanliness of the work area and equipment
- Quality
  - Ensuring specifications (spec), documented processes and standard work are followed
  - Recording data on Quality Control Process Charts (QCP) and EVMS
  - Documenting variations to standard work
  - Ensuring that variations in spec- add documents are communicated to the technical support community prior to the next occurrence
  - Meeting the requirements of people upstream and downstream in the flow
  - Maintaining and improving customer relations
- Work
  - Getting work done in the most energy efficient and effective way
  - Reconciling customer's Level 1 schedule with our Level 2 and 3 schedules
  - Delivering to takt time within the area
  - Staffing to balance cycle times with takt time
  - Deliver on budget and to schedule
  - Providing more specification to work scopes received
  - Teaming with others to accomplish tasks
- Providing guidance around day-to-day problems such as, ehs, quality and production
  - Identifying the problem
  - Framing the issue
  - Scoping possible solutions
  - Implementing solution within pre-defined parameters such as \$ and impact
- Cost
  - Working to the agreed level 2 and 3 schedule
  - Participating in year-to-year process improvements for reducing cycle-times in accordance with business and market needs

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Supervisory Role Description focuses your effort.

Download a copy at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

a job for a supervisor to carry out and this can best be described in a job description as shown.

Go to [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com) and follow the link "Principled Supervisor." From here you can view and print a copy. It is offered as a starting point to understand your work. It is not a generic description. It was written for an industrial setting but with very slight modifications it can be customized to your specific situation. Note that your Core Work is to *orchestrate* the work of people doing the day-to-day work.

You may be a working-supervisor, but your primary duty is to ensure work is accomplished. You are accountable for dealing with all the daily people issues, ensuring their safety, ensuring the quality of the work, delivering to schedule, solving daily problems and keeping costs in control. You sequence tasks and allocate resources. The professional supervisor is also concerned about sustaining and improving the day-to-day work as you can see on the second page of the description.

The principle also speaks to never compromising the work. I have heard supervisors say, “get it on the truck and we will fix it under warranty when it arrives.”

Conflicting organizational metrics can create the perception that compromises to the work make sense; you can get away with this when the customer is your hostage. But if the customer has choice, compromises to the work quickly erode the business. The professional supervisor takes the long-view and will be extra vigilant to not allow the situation to ever get to the point where compromises would be entertained. In addition to the the work, the supervisor administers company policy without alienating the employees. Our desire is that people choose to be fully engaged with their work instead of doing just the minimum required to get by. The Department of Labor likes to quote a study by Prichett and Associates that states the average worker gives 4.8 hours of productive work per day; they are working 60% efficiently. The professional supervisor knows how to work with people so that they choose to give their best at work. Their people

give a solid day of work, they show up more than 94% of the time, they participate in problem solving discussions, they are engaged and give their discretionary effort; effort over and above the minimum required.

It is a tough job being a supervisor. If you do not like people, do not be a supervisor!

## Principle 2

**To have my behaviors guided by a clear set of principles in a way that daily decisions can be made in the group without direct involvement from me.**

Principle 2 defines who you are. This principle establishes your tone and gives people clarity about what drives your decisions. The first principle places you in the organization and talks about what you do. The second principle defines who you are. I believe this to be the single most important principle because it speaks to you and your values. In the workshop we learned about Boss#1 and Boss#2.

Remember Boss #1? This person is all about “me.” “Self” is at the heart of this person and it creates behaviors that tend to disengage people. When a problem arises with the work, Boss #1 reacts as follows:

- \* Set the tone with confrontative, accusatory and aggressive body language...their carelessness just made your life more complicated;

- \* Be emotional and release your frustration and anger on them since they did this to you;

- \* Cut-off the other person's use of excuses as they try to shirk responsibility;
- \* Quickly sum up the situation through interrogation and draw conclusions before they finish the story;
- \* Immediately affix blame so they know you are serious about fixing the problem;
- \* Too much talk erodes intensity; be concise, to the point and don't let the other person dominate the conversation;
- \* You are now accountable for fixing the mess they created; dismiss them from further involvement with the caveat "this is not over" and make known there will be consequences and repercussions;

## Boss #2: The Basic Principles

1. Focus on the situation, issue or behavior, not on the person.
2. Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.
3. Maintain constructive relationships with your employees, peers and managers.
4. Take initiative to make things better.
5. Lead by example.

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"Let's solve the problem," is what Boss #2 is heard saying. Reference the Basic Principles card found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

\* Leave them to think about what they just created and let them grow through stewing.

These behaviors are in stark contrast to Boss #2.

Boss #2 is all about solving problems. “Seems we have a problem here,” is what we hear Boss #2 saying. Boss #2 is free to focus on problems because Boss #2 is not worried about self protection and looking incompetent. Boss #2 solves problems and enlists others to help. Boss #2 has nothing to prove to their manager. Boss #2 is free to focus on problems because they believe one simple thing and can say without hesitation,

***“I am competent.”***

If you want to unlock the door to becoming a professional supervisor believe this one simple thing...you are competent!

You are competent! You got this job because somewhere along the way you proved to someone you are competent. You can deliver results, you can solve problems, you understand what is going on around you, you are dependable and committed. In other words, they can count on you. Believe this, and you too can say, "It seems we have a problem here." Remember the boss who said "I wear the tie and you don't"? This person has Boss #1 written all over them. The only time a person needs to invoke power is when they feel over-matched by the situation. Boss #2 never needs to resort to "pulling rank."

Boss #2 is driven by a clear set of values; those items of importance. The list includes:

Trust	Respect
Teaming	Quality
Loyalty	Safety
Self-worth	Ethics
Self-initiation	Customer
Commitment	Diversity
Learning	Simplicity
Reciprocity	Fairness
Winning	Openness
Integrity	Consistency
Process	Stewardship
Data	Problems

This is in sharp contrast to Boss #1's value set of self, power and winning.

My ability to articulate the principles that guide my daily decisions allow people to understand my positions and it makes me predictable. People know what to expect from a professional supervisor. My principles give people structure to frame their creativity and guide their choices. As people choose to align with the principles they assume more control over daily activities, leaving the supervisor more time to focus preparing for the events just beyond tomorrow. In my essay titled "Insights from the Ocean," I call this person an "edge walker." The professional supervisor becomes invaluable to the organization when they master edge walking.

The principles that we have developed over the years cover a wide range of topics such as Operations, Social, Environmental Health & Safety, Diversity, Labor Relations, Employee Development, Continuous Improvement and Materials. These are available for you at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com). These principles become great conversation starters for your staff and there are enough to cover a year of weekly staff meetings. The Operation Principles are formatted into a workbook to facilitate the discussion. You will be surprised at the richness of thought that exists in your staff when engaged in such a conversation.

When Boss #2 is present, people experience **respect**. The kind of respect that says, "we are all people in this together." As a result, people's Spirit and Will moves into the green zone, creating the

The Dignity and Respect Checkup Sheet	
1. The position I hold is valued and appreciated	31. I feel safe enough to admit I am wrong
2. I am included in decisions	32. When I get positive feedback
3. I am allowed to be plainful about future events and actions I receive	33. When I am brought in confidence and "inside the circle"
4. Someone asks for my opinion	34. I am able to make my point without interruptions
5. I am given constructive and thoughtful feedback	35. I am included in making the decision
6. Others listen to me	36. When I am given choice vs being "told"
7. People thank me	37. When I am given eye contact
8. My integrity is affirmed	38. Not insulting my intelligence, not passing a positive picture when it is negative
9. My input is sought and valued	39. When you take the time to argue with me
10. Others back me up	40. When work responsibilities are fulfilled in my absence
11. There is concrete evidence that my input was followed	41. When it is assumed that I am competent, professional and successful
12. I am listened	42. When supervisors ask for my opinion
13. My work is appreciated	43. When I am not publicly taken-to-task
14. I am rewarded	44. I am often change
15. I feel a meaning and people show-up	45. I am given the freedom to manage my work
16. I am invited to be a part of a special event	46. I am given the reasons for decisions
17. People pay attention to me when I speak	47. When issues/difficulties are not acknowledged
18. I am given more responsibility	48. When my feelings are validated
19. I have an affirming word of voice	49. When personal interests are considered
20. I receive public recognition in front of customers and peers	50. When people don't go around me
21. I am given the whole story	51. When I am not the dumping ground for others' frustrations
22. I am listened to during an my conversations	52. I am not undermined
23. When others respond to my requests	53. Recognize I exist
24. I am asked for advice and help	54. Help me when I get stuck
25. People feel confident in me	55. I am known by my name
26. When I am out of S.S. everyday	
27. When I feel I have something to offer	
28. I am treated with a minimum of politeness	
29. When "what I am" is more important than "what I am"	
30. People feel confident in me	

Dignity and Respect Audit Sheet found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com)

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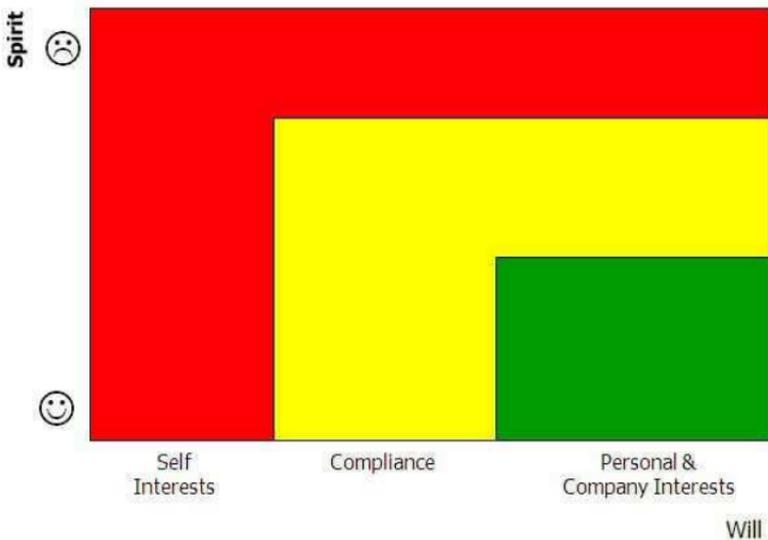
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powerful by-products of allegiance and engagement. Reference the Dignity and Respect Audit sheet to remind yourself of the behaviors that say to people they are respected. This list was compiled after interviewing hundreds of supervisors and listing the behaviors that made them feel respected. I have concluded that this list of behaviors applies to people around the world.

The Spirit and Will Index is an easy way to take the pulse of my Sparkle and Spark. My spirit and will is directly impacted by how many of the behaviors I experience listed on the audit sheet. Both are found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

One final point on Principle 2, as you consider how you want to relate to your people, is called Murphy's Laws. Tom Murphy was the HR Manager at a large manufacturing facility in Maine. He is also a lobsterman. This is relevant because it gives insight into Tom's character; hard working, independent and protective of resources. Before Tom retired he

My Spirit and Will Index from the Company's Perspective



"Spirit and Will Index" identifies Spark and Sparkle. Find it at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

summarized what he had learned over the years and offered it to us for our continued success. I strongly encourage you to adopt these hard earned lessons as your own and let them guide your decisions.

### **Murphy's Laws**

1. Don't Speak To The Future: You Can't Control It.
2. Don't Promise What You Can't Deliver.
3. Don't Fight With Those Who Are Equal To Or Subordinate To You In Position – Always Fight Up.
4. Do Not Put the Company Between An Employee And His/Her Family – If You Do, The Company Will Lose.
5. Take Care Of Those Who Take Care Of You.
6. The First Report/Information That You Receive On Any Topic Will Be Wrong.
7. Don't mess with an employee's spouse, pay or bereavement.
8. Retain A Judicious Mix of Consistency And Compassion In All Decision Making Affecting An Employee.
9. You Work For The People In The Plant, You Report to an Executive.

## Principle 3

**To provide a social and technical environment sufficient to meet all requirements in a way that continuous improvement of people and processes is a ritualized behavior.**

Principle 3 speaks to the environment you are creating. Quality guru Dr. Deming would say that workers control only 15% of product quality and management controls 85%. How could this be? Answer these questions to understand Deming's position: Who provides the tools, drawings and work instructions? Who provides the training to the workers? Who set-up the work area? Who provided the materials? The answer to all these questions is 'management.'

This principle causes you to examine both the technical environment and the social environment. The technical environment includes safety, the process, the equipment, the layout, the tools, the process sheets, the materials, the specifications...all the physical items needed to deliver the requirements. If you are not an expert in the work this principle would cause you to get smart; to create alliances with technical people to provide you insight. Your job is to ensure the workers have what they need to be successful.

The social environment focuses your attention on workforce health, group dynamics, employee

paperwork/employee folders, work design and sexual harassment. Your job is to provide a workplace where people can apply all their energy to the work and achieve their full potential.

The creation of world-class technical environments begin with kaizen, and are characterized through the concepts of takt, pull and flow. This is an entire study on its own and a topic of great relevance for the professional supervisor. Beliefs on designing cellular manufacturing areas as well as material flow principles are a good starting point for creating technical environments; reference at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

One of the tools to focus our efforts in the creation of the social environment is the Workforce Health Audit.

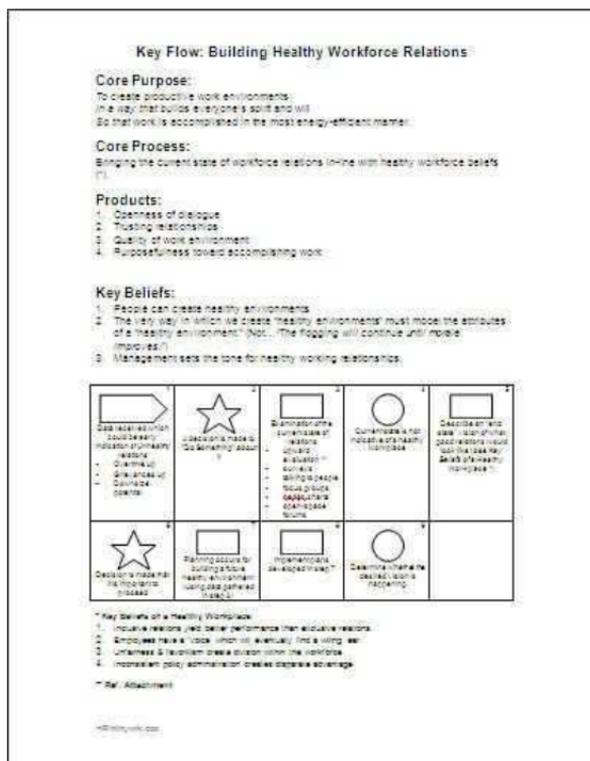
Attribute	Description	Rating (0=low-5=high)
Communication	Notice boards, notification of visitors, agendas posted, notices posted, photos, names visible, meeting areas, informed people, open and honest conversations	
Time keeping	Punctuality, disciplined start and stop times, disciplined equipment start-up and shut-down times, adequate and proper time keeping by teams, audit trail of plant entries and exits	
Time management	On-time corrective action reports, on-time projects, low salary OT, punctuality	
Direction	Schedules visible, planning charts, budgets known, visible production meetings, priorities understood, commitments met	
Goals	Goals visible, logically set, understood by people	
Quality/Reject issues	Low scrap, low rework, low warranty, no escapes, no otbs	
Absenteeism	Less than 2%, sick days unused	
Accidents/safety	Safety audits in use with continually improving scores, safety metrics posted and improving	
Housekeeping	3-5 in use with continually improving scores, pleasant work environment, tidy exterior	
Workforce attrition	Voluntary attrition rate around 2% annually, learned-out organization with fresh insights coming in, no involuntary layoffs	
Costs	Meeting goals, improving trends, people getting raises, improving ROI, displays, open-book management, approach with employees	
Personal grievances	Common themes understood, tracked for significance, surveys taken, upward assessments	
Training & education	> 40hrs/person delivered, educational assistance program with 20% participation rate, skills matrix posted, low OT in critical skills areas, processes not individual dependent	
Turnover	Personal drama, low coverage @ = 5 Plant closing, wide-spread coverage @ = 0	
Job satisfaction	Smiles and winks, smiles, body language, peoplesaying "hi", music, people engaged, willingness to do more than job scope, willing to give discretionary effort, ability to surge	
Suggestions	Ideas are shared, openness in discussing problems for improvement, team problem solving, tool-box meetings, people taking action items with ability to implement	
Workplaces in parking lot	No oil, no oil on pavement, no water, vehicles clean, vehicles seasonal sporting equipment, people feeling that job is stable and pride	
Management turnover	Business unit manager and above in place for 60 months minimum, workforce has sense of stability in management and direction, loyalty to company, excited about product	
Support staff attrition	Seasoned engineers, supervisors, production control, people who can provide solutions	
Business name	Stability in name, recognized by community, logo exists, positive association	
People	Pride in appearance, good attire, positive personal hygiene habits, working involved in extra-curricular activities, pictures displayed, work life balanced, lowest attrition, approachable, attendance to the work, self-motivated, have needed tools and resources	
Personal opportunities	Growth opportunities exist and are available, known progression systems, freedom to grow	
Equipment availability	TQM program in use, equipment running, clean, capacity matches work (not), tools & equipment not stolen	
Plant layout	Logical, understandable, no-hurt signage, line-of-sight, few barriers, management by eye	
Management style	Yelling not tolerated, explanations readily given, willing to listen, Leader's Window in use, cares about the workforce by being attentive to issues, attempts are made to accommodate employees needs, unilateral actions are infrequent, fairness in policy use	
Performance mgmt.	System in place and used, expectations known, age, standards known, people criticised for poor performance	
Policy administration	Time & attendance, OT distribution, vacations, make-up time, flex-time, promotion are consistently administered	
Work instructions	Available, clear, complete, success oriented, visual, current	

Sum of ratings \_\_\_\_\_ = 28 = \_\_\_\_\_ (5 is the goal)

The Workforce Health Audit is a good tool for assessing social environments. Find it at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

This is a good way to begin the conversation with people on their experience at work. The audit is similar in design to a 5-S assessment showing a topic, a definition and a 0-5 rating. "Zero" means the topic is totally absent and "five" means you are benchmarkable. I find working through the audit with a group of supervisors to be a very effective way to become conscious of our social setting. After working through the ratings, the group picks low numbers, discusses plans and make changes. This one tool is an easy and effective way to begin addressing the social environment.

Another way to approach the social environment is to use my "standard work" for "Building Healthy Workforce Relations."



The key beliefs foundational to this work are as follows:

1. People can create healthy environments
2. The very way that we create “healthy environments” must model the attributes of a “healthy environment.” Not, “the flogging will continue until morale improves.”
3. Management sets the tone for healthy working relationships.

This standard work is the synthesis of actual projects and it is proven to generate positive results. The objective of this work is to create a work place that builds people's spirit and will so that work is accomplished in the most energy-efficient/productive way. This work is not to be taken lightly, however. People do not appreciate insincere and half-hearted attempts to improve relations. Lack of follow through can leave people more disengaged than before you began.

Healthy work environments are also places where people are free from harassment. While we are on the subject, let me say one thing about sexual harassment...

**DON'T !!!!!**

This is a trap that will surely snare you. I have watched smart people, high up in the organization get ruined by this. Remember Murphy's Laws. If you

are having relationships with someone who reports to you, I don't care how great it seems at the moment, this is a boomerang that will hit you. You don't do it and you don't let your people do it. Check out the true case study in the appendix called Dan's Dilemma.

Working in businesses around the world, it soon becomes clear that great technology is available to all. New factories and businesses are facilitated with the newest equipment available and they look beautiful. Where the greatest variation exists is on the people side of the equation; work design, compensation system, performance management, supervisory training and a clear strategy for the social system being created. In a recent workshop, a man told me that during a period of labor unrest at their factory, 800 people "surged" and were able to continue operations normally staffed by 4,000. The obvious story is dealing with performance management and staffing, but focus your attention on what a small group of people were able to accomplish when their spirit and will was totally captivated by the challenge. People are capable of greatness and our job is to create a workplace where they can see just how high they can soar.

A study by the training organization Development Dimensions International found **Trust** to be a major component of a healthy workforce. Small improvements in trust had the comparable positive impact on people as a big pay raise. The study identified the behaviors that *build* trust and those that *bust* trust.

Notice how similar these are to the list of behaviors on the Respect Audit Sheet.

### **Trust Building Behaviors**

Straight talk  
Treat others as competent  
Seek opinions of others  
Keep promises / commitments  
Live the message

### **Trust Busting Behaviors**

Sending mixed messages  
Self-welfare first  
Take no responsibility  
Jump to conclusions  
Hide information / lie

## Principle 4

**To be accountable for the accomplishment of work in a way that ensures clarity of responsibility for the carrying out of work according to clear performance expectations.**

The day you agreed to be a supervisor you agreed to be accountable. I know this is not how the job was presented to you. Who would get excited about the job if the manager said, “You have the toughest job in the business. The buck stops with you. If anyone gets hurt, you get ‘chewed out.’ If there is a quality escape, you get ‘chewed out.’ If delivery is missed, you get ‘chewed out.’ If you overrun your overtime budget or if you miss production...you get ‘chewed out.’ If employees complain about you, you get ‘chewed out.’ If there is an audit finding in your area, you get ‘chewed out.’ And, oh by the way, you are expected to work as much time as is required and be present on the weekends if your crew is working and you cover three shifts of people and you will have to enforce unpopular policy; did I mention you get no overtime?” Wow, where do I sign up? Being a supervisor is tough work, but as a professional you learn the rhythm of the business, your people and you figure out how to make the daily delivery look effortless.

Principle 4 says you are accountable for *the accomplishment of work*. Note, it does not say you are accountable for **doing** the work. The company

has given you a crew of people and your job is to get the work done through them. This is why Principle 3 is so important. With the right environment in place your job becomes one of ensuring the right talent is assigned to the right tasks at the right time and that everyone involved is very clear on the performance requirements.

To master this work, you must have a certain degree of self-confidence. People will test you to see of what you are made. Consider this story told to me by a new supervisor:

It is all about power. Heard the phrase "alpha dog"? It deals with which dog will be the dominant one in the pack. Mike's experience would say the same is true at work. Mike is in his late 20's and just became the supervisor of a machinist group. One of the men in the group is in his mid-30's and has assumed the stereotype "biker look." A loner with wild hair, tattoos, leather, rough beard, imposing attitude. It is a daily procedure in the shop for each person to do an examination of their equipment according to a checklist and then initial each item inspected. Mr. Biker did not initial his sheet. When Mike brought this to his attention, Mr. Biker marked through the whole page with a swing of his pen...saying in effect "this is stupid, I don't agree, and stick it." Mike drew a breath and then said, "Each item needs your initial." "You can write me up," was the response. Knowing that this was his moment of truth, Mike said "Fine," and proceeded to write Mr. Biker up for insubordination and presented it to him. Before shift the next morning, Mr. Biker shows up in Mike's office with

head down. "I am so sorry for how I behaved towards you. I don't know what got into me. It won't happen again." After that, all if fine with Mr. Biker, no problems and he works hard. Go figure! When the line has been drawn in the sand, stand firm and do your job...it is amazing the results when you become the boss.

Here is another story told me by a more senior person who was pushed to the point of breaking.

Tom has been the leadperson in a group of 14 men for many years. He was asked to be the group's supervisor and after much consideration, agreed.

Immediately the group turned on him and began challenging every decision he made. They argued with his direction. They put-up road blocks. They confronted him and gave him attitude any time he had to assign work. They made his life miserable. After many weeks of this struggle, Tom told his wife "tomorrow I'm resigning from this job." Before work he met with his manager and informed him of his decision. The boss encouraged him to hang tough a bit longer, knowing what was about to happen. Tom called his group together for the morning "tool box" meeting but before he could resign, one of the men said "we need to say something to you." "I'm sorry for how I've treated you," the first man said. "I am sorry for causing you so much trouble, " the next man said. Each of the 14 men individually apologized for their behaviors. Immediately, the performance of the group became the best in the plant and the trouble ended. So, the question is, why did these men behave so badly toward someone they knew, and a



This chart describes, what I like to call, the hidden knowledge of HR. It graphically displays good, fundamental practices that hold true throughout the world. It is meant as a reference for you, not something to post on your wall. Consider this a professional supervisors "cheat sheet."

Since you are the boss and accountable, it seems only fair that you can have expectations for people's performance. Refer to the white-paper titled "Be the Boss" found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com). I encourage you to have at least four performance categories as your personal non-negotiables...Safety, Quality, Proficiency and Use-and-daily-PM of tools and equipment.

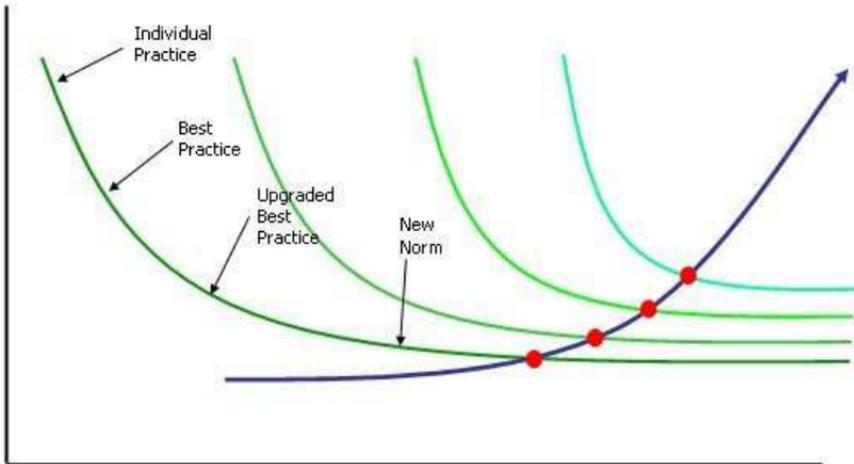
Remember, when it comes to performance management, as a group of supervisors you are only as strong as the weakest one of you. Whatever behaviors the weakest one of you allows, these become the acceptable precedent for the business.

The performance management aspect of Principle 4 is covered in nice detail in the workshop presentation material found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com) and click on the link for Presentations. Pay particular attention to the section on attendance and take time with the other supervisors to agree on your approach.

## Principle 5

**To model curiosity, problem solving and personal development in a way that these become a norm for the people in my group.**

Principle 5 and 6 set-up the dynamics of a learning organization\*. A learning organization is a group of people capable of achieving increasing expectations with greater ease over time. This interplay is captured in the following graphic:



The interplay between learning and improvement is captured in this graphic of a Learning Organization\* found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

The blue line going up to the right represents increasing expectations and the green line coming down from the left represents the group coming down a learning curve. The red dots represent increasing targets over time.

Principle 5 addresses the green line coming down.

“Learning” is what drives people down this line. Each time I repeat a task I get better at doing it until the rate of improvement gradually slows to nothing. I am “learned out.” Principle 5 says that curiosity, group problem solving and personal development are essential ingredients for a group of people to continuously improve. A professional supervisor models these behaviors for their people. Curiosity comes from a genuine interest in discovery; how things work, cause and effect, inputs and outputs, action and reaction. Inviting your people to tour the total process, guest speakers from other organizations, presentations of customer feedback, explanations of the technology or rationale that designed the work processes are all good ways to demonstrate curiosity.

Teach your people the seven problem solving tools. Start collecting data on key aspects of the work and use the problem solving tools to find new solutions to areas of interest shown by the data. As a professional supervisor you have sought out training in these tools and are comfortable showing others how to use them. You send people to training and you take training because personal development is important. One of the best ways to demonstrate a valuing for personal development is by using the Upward Assessment. The Upward Assessment is a simple tool for gathering feedback from the people you supervise.

# UPWARD ASSESSMENT

## MY SUPERVISOR

My Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Title #)

Exceptional  
Fully Competent  
Developmental Needed  
Unsatisfactory  
(Please check ONE response)

1. Is a good listener and **COMMUNICATES** work assignments, group objectives, program plans, company strategies and relevant information to me in a clear, concise and timely manner.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **EMPOWERS** me via delegating responsibilities, recognizing innovation and prudent risk-taking, "Coaching" team and rewarding accomplishments.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **DEVELOPS** me by recognizing my abilities, providing challenging assignments, offering a variety of tasks, encouraging cross-training and providing me with visibility to customer management.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **MANAGES TIME** effectively, is available when I need him/her, plans for short-term and long-term activity and manages resources.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Demonstrates **EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT** through a candid performance appraisal of me, career development, frequent feedback, acknowledging a job well done and recognizing merit.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Exhibits strong **LEADERSHIP** abilities through using sound judgment, innovative problem solving, accepting responsibility and striving for high performance; understands the tools/methods required to perform my job and demonstrates technical problem solving.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**OVERALL RATING:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Based on the above 6 criteria, my supervisor is best rated as:

- Supervisor/Team Leader  
 Individual Contributor (no supervisor)

Repeat this process every  6 months  12 months

Find the Upward Assessment at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com)

Designed by a supervisory/worker team this process has seen wide use around the world. Six attributes are reviewed. They are communication, empowerment, training and development, time management, employment commitment, and leadership. Not only will this assessment help you improve your supervisory skills it sends a powerful set of messages to your people..."I am open to receiving feedback from you;" "Personal development is important to me;" "I hope you are open to feedback from me." Your behaviors will send all these messages without you ever having to say a word.

These behaviors will eventually be adopted by your people as you consistently demonstrate curiosity, problem solving and personal development to your group.

Two other skills that put life into Principle 5 are Effective Listening and Coaching. Both reference sheets are found at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com)

## Principle 6

**To establish expectations and requirements in a way that encourages stretch and creative thinking within the workgroup.**

In many ways, Principle 6 is what separates the professional supervisor from the others. Principle 6 goes beyond managing the day-to-day and prepares for the future.

Principle 6 makes you valuable to the organization and sets conditions for your people to increase their value as well.

Principle 6 is all about improvement. When coupled with

Principle 5, a powerful dynamic is created within the

workgroup...the interplay between learning and

improvement. When this dynamic is successfully created,

people want to work for you and management wants to

promote you. It is through the application of Principle 6 that

people experience a sense of accomplishment and progress

and the expectation of things to come. You know this

principle is in action when you see trend charts posted and

being discussed by people.

The process to establish expectations and requirements

begins with an understanding of the total flow of which you

are a part. A good tool for picturing this is called a SIPOC

chart; Supplier – Inputs – Process – Outputs --- Customer.

This can be enhanced with a more detailed description

called a flow map. You decide the key places to monitor,

collect data and graph it. This is not new to many



supervisor clear line-of-sight from the daily activities they manage to increasing the value of the business. In addition, The ValueTree shows how the continuous improvement tools link to budget items, allowing the supervisor and their people the ability to design a targeted plan for improvement. Your copy is always available at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

## The Principled Supervisor's Leadership Platform

**Platform: A declaration of the principles for which a group of persons stands.**

It is possible to find a wide diversity of interests within the ranks of professional supervisors . People tend to gravitate toward subjects to which they have an affinity. Some people love finance while others find it incredibly tedious. One person is passionate about environmental, health and safety and for another it could be engineering. You may love materials, lean, quality, information technology, human resources, industrial relations or customer satisfaction. You may get to a point where you are recognized as a content expert and people begin to follow your lead.

As previously discussed, Principle 2 states “my behaviors are guided by a clear set of principles.” This is also true as you begin to take a stand on the topics of interest to you. People will take notice as you articulate the thinking (the principles) driving your passion. You have transcended from being a “boss” to a “leader” the day people choose to follow you, not because of your position, but because they like that for which you stand; your platform.

This section explores the principles making up various leadership platforms for topics shown in the following graphic. Our exploration begins with Lean.



Leadership agendas develop around topics of personal interest after the core principles of supervising have been mastered.

## Lean Leadership

**Lean: Having little fat.**

**Leading: Taking people to a place they want to go, but would not go by themselves.**

- Joel Barker

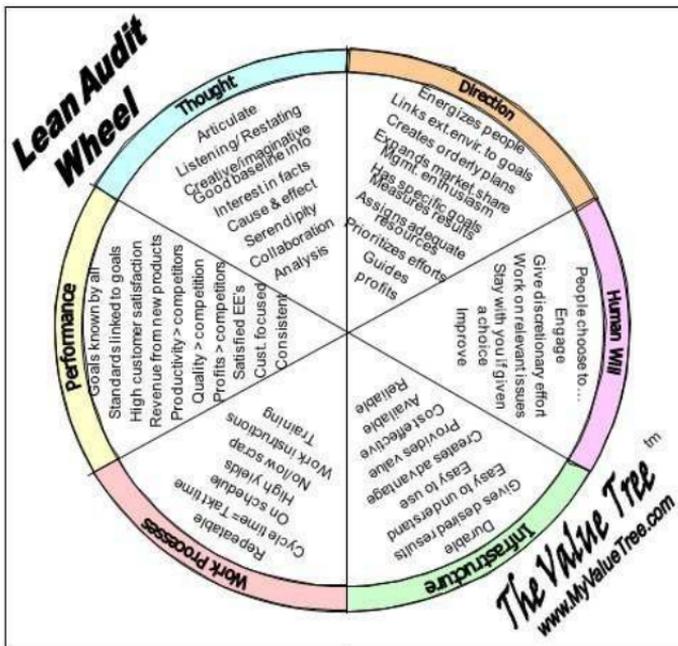
800 people did the work of 4,000 during a labor strike at an overhaul facility with no reduction in quality or schedule. Adjust these numbers for the fact that they worked 16 hours a day and one might conclude that the actual number of people required to do the work might be around 1,600. This was the experience of someone who was actually there. A similar situation at a large diesel engine assembly plant demonstrated that the plant could actually be staffed with about half the people. The work practices that evolved over the years resulting in such performance are *not* lean.

Leaning a process means cutting out the fat. Removing work that is not essential and perfecting work that is. Creating an environment that is efficient and effective. Lean is an attitude that sees waste as unacceptable. Lean is the evolution of Just-In-Time from the 1980's and over the years a set of tools and practices has grown up to help people see and eliminate waste. Lean defines how I see the world and the tools help me make it happen. When lean becomes a supervisor's platform the results are dramatic:

- 20% - 30%      Productivity improvement
- 30% - 40%      Increased equipment uptime
- 30% - 50%      Reduction in space rqmts.
- 10% - 20%      Reduction in purchased costs
- 50% - 60%      Improvement in product quality
- 70% - 90%      Reduction in WIP inventory
- 10% - 20%      Reduction in worker's compensation

So, how do you see the world? Is waste evil, or is it just part of life and you say, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try, again?" Do you focus your attention on making production today with the intention of getting to improvement projects tomorrow or do you know that it is the system generating the production hours that must be improved and you broker a balance between production and improvement? Do you see improvement projects as consuming scarce hours and hurting production or are projects an investment in the future? What about managing the work? Do you feel upper levels of management should tell lower levels what to do and how to do it or do you see the total organization dedicated and trained to improve the daily work? As for pay, do you believe people are paid and trained to do a job or is pay based on operating, maintaining and improving a process? As a lean leader, you will be taking a stand on these and other issues.

Would you know a lean operation if you saw it? Have you developed the eyes to see lean? Go to [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com) and under "Leadership Platform" get a copy of the Lean Audit Wheel. The audit looks at lean

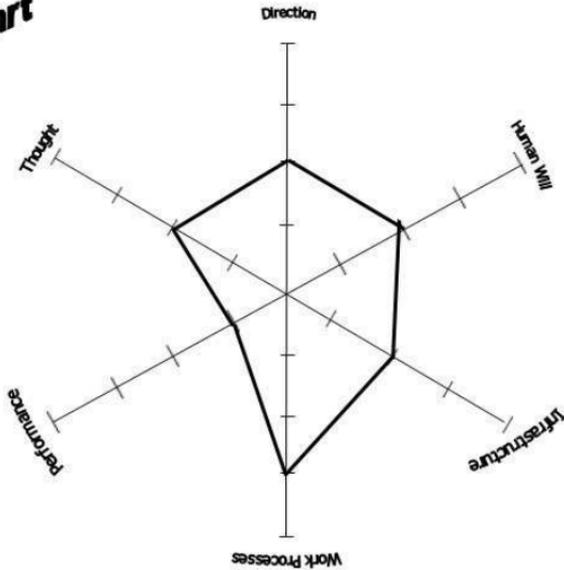


The Audit Wheel examines lean through six lenses. Download a copy from [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com).

through six different lenses. They are Work Processes, Infrastructure, Human Will, Direction, Thought and Performance. Each is described with a list of characteristics. A lean leader initiates action to advance in each area. A radar chart is a good way to graphically depict leanness, as seen on the next page.

The lean agenda is rooted in the early 1900's with Frederick Taylor. Mr. Taylor introduced the idea that work could be broken into definable tasks each with an optimum approach and time. The stop watch was his tool. To this day, this is the foundational concept of the Percent Load Chart, Standard Work and Performance Management. Walter Shewart follows

# Lean Audit Radar Chart



A radar chart is a good, graphical way to depict progress on the six aspects of lean.

in the 1920's showing that data can be used to control processes. Statistical Process Control is his legacy to this day. Henry Ford masters these concepts as he builds his auto business, described in the book Today and Tomorrow, and he kept the beat of his shop with the assembly line.

1930, Ed Deming expounds the importance of quality and asserts that management controls 85% of what makes a worker successful. 1940, the industrial engineer Shigeo Shingo challenges people to transcend SPC and with good engineering design out defects. The lean concepts of Poka-yoke, SMED and Zero Quality Control are all from him. And today, *you* continue to advance the lean agenda, adding

your energy, insight and creativity to process improvement. Are you ready for the challenge? Reference the Lean Comparison Table on the next page for a range of specific topics that you will eventually address and how to respond in a Lean environment.

A lean leader is driven by, and has energy around the following:

- \* **Synchronicity:** Like the meshing of gears, everything happens just at the appointed moment;
- \* **Perfection:** Knowing that there is an ideal and always striving to get there;
- \* **Engineering:** Loves solving problems in a methodical fashion with data;
- \* **Curiosity:** A master of the question, "Why?"
- \* **Human Spirit:** Knows that a person's spark and sparkle are essential to keeping people engaged in the work;
- \* **Stewardship:** Taking care of things not owned, be it the customer or product;
- \* **Lean:** Only what is necessary, the harmony of balance;
- \* **Integrity:** Commitments are key

**Lean Comparison Table**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>LEAN</b>	<b>CONCEPTS</b>
Production Rates	To standards Common models	To TAKT Mix Models	
Attitude toward "waste"	Waste happens	Waste is evil	5-S
Line balancing	Equalizing load	To takt time	Standard work
Equipment	Complex wizardry Surplus capacity	"Off the shelf" Minimum required	
Lot sizing	Large lots give safety	Large lots hide problems	One piece lots Zero inventory
Set-ups	Fixed	Variable	S.M.E.D.
Machine assignments	Person and machine linked. Person identifies with machine.	Separate person and machine. Person identifies with the flow.	
Skills	Operation focused	Flow focused	Flexibility
Work groups	Individuals with specific assignments	Individuals coming together to oversee the flow	Self-initiated EE delegation Self-regulated
Visual control	Information closely held and directions given	Everyone knows the status all the time and actions to take	
Storing material	Warehouse	Where consumed	P.O.U.S.
Product flow	Villages of equip.	Product flow	Cells
Measurements	Generated by outsider after the fact	Generated by user real-time	
Maintenance	Reactive	Predictive	T.P.M.
The customer	A nuisance	The essence	Internal/External
Shop scheduling	Push: MRP	Pull: kanban	
Meeting product specification	Inspection	Prevention	SPC; Certified Operators
Mistake-proofing	Caught by inspection	Operation "locks-up"	Poka-yoke

## Operating Principles

**EHS:** To take responsibility for the environment, health and safety in a way that work is only performed when safety has been considered and incorporated.

**Product Quality:** To ensure that the understanding of customer requirements guides the decision to pass work on.

**Work Quality:** To work in such a way that the desired result is achieved the first time with fewer and fewer mistakes through time.

**Orderliness:** To put things where they belong in a way that makes them available for use next time.

**Continuous Improvement:** To systematically eliminate all non-value adding activities in a way that focuses on over-production, unnecessary processing, transportation, motion, defects, excess material, waiting, set-ups, over inspection, damage, paperwork...

**Material flow:** To drive lot quantities to one (1) while simultaneously meeting customer schedules.

**Stewardship:** To take care of people, equipment and products in a way that leaves them better and safer than found.

Lean leaders create world-class operations using the Operating Principles to guide their thinking.

Fueled by these values, the lean leader unleashes their creative power guided by the Operating Principles.

***Lean is NOT about implementing the tools; lean is about eliminating fat, the waste in business, through a thoughtful application of the principles.***

If you know nothing more than the principles, you are powerfully armed to make improvements. The

Operating Principles have been distilled through the years and reach back in time to capture the essence of what drove the people who founded this movement. They cover EHS, Product Quality, Work Quality, Orderliness, Continuous Improvement, Material Flow and Stewardship. Go to [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com), "Leadership Platform" to get a copy of the Operating Principles. Begin a conversation with people and ask them what would change if the principles were followed. Make the changes and you are on the path to lean.

## **KAIZEN**

"take apart and rebuild"

"Kaizen" has become known as an event-based approach for making step-function shifts in work processes and the production system. The purpose of a production system is to answer the following questions:

What is required?

When is it required?

Who requires it?

How is it to get done?

Where will it take place?

Why is it needed?

It is normal for a production system to answer these questions using a traditional Materials Requirement Planning or "push" approach. This type of batch manufacturing can result in excessive inventory, after-the-fact quality, long lead-times, large lot sizes and sluggish production habits.

These concepts are demonstrated in the original JITskit video (1985), seen at [www.MyValueTree.com](http://www.MyValueTree.com) under "Resources."

A fast-paced, high energy approach like Kaizen to make changes can help counter the bureaucratic effects of a culture that has grown-up around traditional production systems. In just a matter of days, an entire manufacturing area is literally uprooted and repositioned based on a different production system concept; the fundamental elements being takt-time, "pull" production and flow. A Kaizen event allows change to happen almost instantaneously by taking the creative process out of the conference room and putting it squarely on the production floor.

<b>Kaizen</b>	<b>6-Sigma/Continuous Improvement</b>
Event-based change process	Incremental improvement with increasing skills over time
Systemic focus	Operational focus
Conscious shock	Water dropping
Enema	Fiber diet

Kaizen and 6-Sigma are different processes on the road to lean.

## HR IMPLICATIONS

### of Kaizen

**Summary:** Factory changes happen quickly during a Kaizen workshop. When these changes are combined with a supportive HR strategy sustainable results are achievable.

A Kaizen workshop physically demonstrates the potential for double-digit performance improvements within a two-week period. Workshop participants learn to lead a participative process geared toward the rapid transformation of work processes based on the concepts of Takt, Pull, and Flow. Understanding the basics of these concepts will help prepare the HR professional to design required strategies in tandem with operational improvements.

**FLOW:** The foundational concept of Kaizen requires that a **repetitive** and **sequential** and **progressive** build-up of product or information exists. Viewing the product moving through the factory or office as water moves in a river is the challenge of **flow**.

Repetitive: Customer demand is sufficient to require that similar product be produced every day;

Sequential: Repetition of production allows a series of steps to be defined in the most efficient order;

Progressive: Each step of the process is additive to previous steps.

Visualization of flow is facilitated by the creation of a

"flow map" using symbols to pictorially describe what the material experiences. This map is a fundamental document for the work that follows.

**TAKT:** A German word for "rhythm or beat." The second foundational Kaizen concept that defines the rate at which product must flow through the line. The rate of flow is stated in terms of time per unit and is calculated as follows:

Takt time =

$$\frac{\text{Available time on one shift (approx. 450min/day)}}{\text{Customer Demand (units required/day)}}$$

26 secs/unit is the takt time in a window air conditioner plant. This means that every twenty-six seconds a unit must be ready for the customer. Each person's work content along the line is stated in relation to this rate of flow.

**PULL:** The third concept of Kaizen governs the amount of material required to maintain flow in the system. The rule is to only begin work when the previously completed work has been taken by the next operator. This defines a system based on replenishment as opposed to accumulation. Each time a person buys milk from the small, corner grocer "pull" is experienced. A small amount of material is kept on-hand due to short shelf life; the customer pulls milk from the refrigerator, containers slide forward leaving an empty space in the back. The instructions left with the stockroom person are "Any time you see the space empty, fill it with another container of milk." Shop floor scheduling conducted

in this way is often called a "Kanban" system.

Process re-designs based on these concepts increase in effectiveness when human resource implications are understood and addressed. Culture, physical layouts, flow/work design and people issues are just a few of the areas where the HR professional can help the organization create appropriate responses, as discussed below.

**Culture:** A Kaizen workshop stresses the importance of involving those who know the process in the improvement of the process. Sharing key business data, such as the forecasted market numbers for the next year, creates a business context within which people can place their improvements. This means making more detailed business information available to a broader base of people and then allowing them the access to organizational resources to implement required changes.

**Implication: Organizations not open to sharing information need to debate their underlying beliefs and then decide that their people can be trusted with more business information.**

**Physical layouts:** Kaizen concepts coupled with the desired culture provides guidance in workplace design. High density layouts, removal of chairs and benches, elimination of objects obstructing the view of an area, problem solving areas, co-location of dissimilar processes and visual controls such as andon boards, skill matrices and kanbans all require people to adapt to new environments.

**Implication: Indiscriminate and poorly discussed changes can result in equity issues among groups, loss of personal identity, anger at loss of personal comfort/status items and feelings of exposure.**

**Flow:** Equipment is co-located to facilitate flow and the balancing of cycle times to takt time.

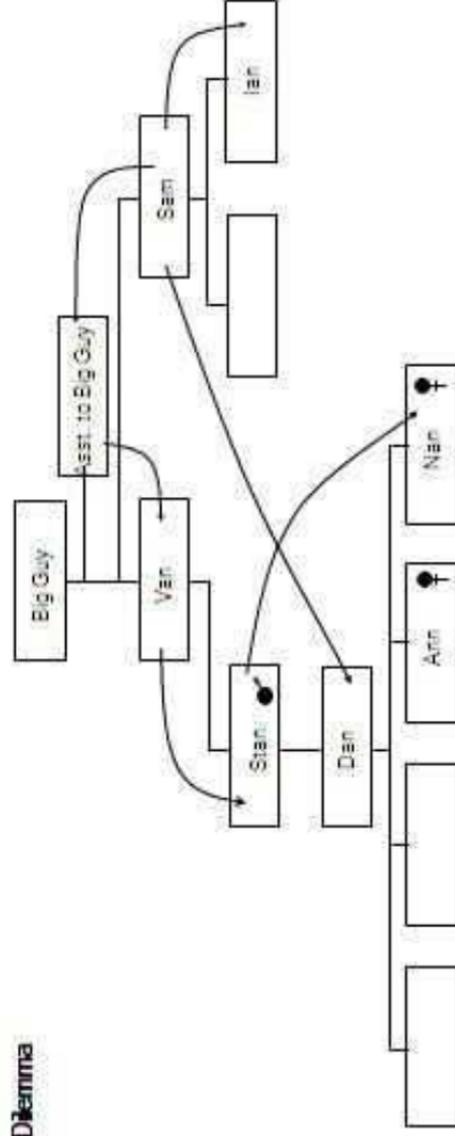
**Implication: Effective line-balancing requires that employees have the ability and skills to operate in an environment demanding greater variety of tasks performed. An assessment of the current job descriptions will determine if the organization would be benefited by re-writing job descriptions and addressing related compensation issues.**

**People:** Kaizen can be more than a one-time workshop. Sustainable results are contingent on the capability of all employees; management, technical and line. Capabilities are needed to provide positive leadership and make decisions based on the new measurements required by takt, pull and flow as well as capabilities to provide technical information to people in a way that is meaningful and useful to them. Capabilities to produce product within a "cell." Capabilities to problem solve and effectively team with people to achieve specific objectives.

**Implications: Selecting, equipping, rewarding and retaining people with the required skill sets to function in a Kaizen environment requires an integrated human resource strategic plan.**

# Appendix

## Dan's Dilemma



Business drops and Dan must lay off a person. He ranks his people and Nan is the weakest performer in the group. Stan asks Dan who will go, and Dan says "Nan."

Stan is having an affair with Nan, but says he will not interfere. Until the next day. Stan tells Dan "you can't fire Nan, pick Ann." Ann is a good performer but out she goes. Sam is a functional head mixed with Dan. Sam asks "who is going?" and Dan says Ann. Sam is confused because it is well known that Ann is a performer and Nan is not. Dan dances around the issue. Sam asks Ian "why Ann not Nan?" To which Ian replies, "Everyone knows that Stan and Nan are having an affair and it is clear that Dan was influenced by Stan." Sam informs the Assistant to the Big Guy of the situation who in turn tells Van that he has a problem in his organization. Van fires Stan, Dan has a near death experience with Van, Nan gets moved out and Dan, now bruised, continues on less than two people as punishment.

**Moral:** Sex, power and position clouds judgment and sucks others into its impact zone.



Alden B. Davis

Known by colleagues and friends as the “corporate plumber,” Alden B. Davis designs, orchestrates and leads large-scale institutional change. In industry since 1980, he started in production control, moved to frontline supervision, business unit manager, Operations management team and today he focuses on plant “turnarounds,” collaborative labor-management relationships, leadership development, and financially based change processes. United Technologies Corporation has been his most recent focus. Alden is a frequent conference speaker and workshop leader and has presented to numerous organizations including the Business Council to the UN, Goal QPC, Connecticut Quality Conference, Univ. of Puerto Rico, UCONN School of Business, MIT and Boston University. Alden is degreed in Business and Engineering from Arizona State University, holds two patents and lives in Avon, CT.

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## WORKSHOP NOTES

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