



January 23, 2006
Volume 7, Issue 02

LEAN THOUGHTS

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Applying Lean Mfg *in the Home* *Some New Year's Resolutions*

Well here is a different perspective aimed at getting us all to recognize that 5-S or other Lean Thinking attributes do have a place IN THE HOME... Our thanks go to our very good friend, Kevin Meyer who is the father of www.superfactory.com

"I'm sure I'm not unique in the world of lean manufacturing professionals in that I return from the office every evening and see lean opportunities around the house.

Some continue to frustrate me, but I generally don't change anything... in deference to keeping the peace with the family, having higher priorities, or due to simply being too tired. A recent holiday visit to my in-laws' extremely neat and organized... but decidedly non-lean... home has prompted me to suggest some "lean home" New Year's resolutions. I have also noticed some surprising parallels between lean and [feng shui](#)... perhaps a topic for a future post. At the risk of turning [Superfactory](#) into the next [MarthaStewart](#), I'd honestly encourage you to add your comments and suggest-ions.

5S+1 - Workplace Organization

This is probably the most important to the home. And here they are, as they have evolved from Henry Ford's CANDO from the early '20's - it's frankly, the foundation for what the world today calls "5-S"... The recent addition of Safety now making it "5-S+1"

Sort... the first component of 5S will strike fear into most homeowners. The dreaded activity of going through the basement or garage and sorting out everything that's not required in the near term. Just as in manufacturing, having unnecessary "stuff" sitting around makes it more difficult to find what you need and it takes up space. It might be easier to use the [red-tag](#) method to determine the disposition of all items, keeping mind to "when in doubt, throw it out", then move all items to be disposed into the garage for that upcoming sale. Get rid of books gathering dust, old files, rusting tools, and all that "might need someday" junk you know you'll never really need. A few months ago we wrote about the [dangers of horizontal surfaces](#), where we mentioned that one advantage of new flat-screen TV's is that *clothes can't be stacked on top of them*.

Set in Order... Time to organize. Are kitchen utensils in the right drawers? Do you even have "right drawers" identified? Are the tools in the garage organized? Financial records and files in order? You could even go to an extreme and [tape off](#) areas to provide more visual organization. This must be done after the sort. Otherwise you end up with situations like my in-laws, where they have a huge box of Christmas lights, all neatly coiled and put in

labeled bags... with an Excel spreadsheet recording when they were purchased and from where, where they are used, and other notes. Problem is that there are about thirty strings of lights... and only three or four are currently needed.

Shine... Thoroughly clean your newly-organized home, finally reaching those areas previously covered by unnecessary items. Perhaps it's time to treat yourself to a housecleaning service.

Standardize... Create a cleaning checklist, including required cleaning supplies (which are now kept in specific locations!), required interval, and who is responsible.

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- CFN Precision
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- EATON Cutler Hammer
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- NESTLE WATERS CANADA
- STACKPOLE



Where "Lean Thoughts" Become Reality

Sustain... Mark on your calendar when monthly or quarterly cleanings of the garage or basement are due. Continually review the effectiveness of the program and make any necessary changes.

Safety... Especially important in the home. Do you have fire extinguishers in multiple critical areas of your home? Are they checked once a year? Do you regularly check your smoke alarms? Is there at least one carbon monoxide detector on each level of the house? Do you have a first aid kit, and is it stocked? Are emergency phone numbers posted? Do you have a communication plan to get in touch if something happens when everyone's not at home?

One Piece Flow: Trying to convince your spouse (let alone kids!) that one piece flow is more efficient than batch processing, especially for administrative tasks, could be difficult. It is very counterintuitive and sometimes seems to go against fundamental human nature, but those of us in the lean world know it works. So think about home processes that are currently batch-oriented, and see if you can make some changes. David Anderson at the Agile Management blog has a [great post](#) comparing one piece flow versus batch methods for the annual chore of writing Christmas cards. Besides actually being slower, batch processing creates unnecessary inventory and hides quality problems (ever made a huge batch of soup, hoping to save it for several meals, then find out it tastes bad?).

Inventory Reduction: This falls in line with the 5S topic. As manufacturers we know that excess inventory lengthens production cycle time, takes up space, is at risk for obsolescence, hides potential quality problems, and is basically cash that has been turned into a depreciating asset. The same applies to the home. I know of some people that will buy many months worth of cereal when it goes on sale just to save a few pennies. But how much room does it take to store, will you still like that brand of cereal a few months from now, and could that cash be put to a better or more immediate use... such as earning money? Do you really need cabinets full of office supplies, multiple propane cylinders, and a year's worth of toilet paper? Does it really cut down on trips to the store, and do the savings really offset the increased clutter? I doubt it. Get rid of it.

Standardized Work: Dealing with my father-in-law's illness has made me concerned about some home aspects of this concept. I handle the financial side of our household duties, but if I was incapacitated would my wife be able to immediately take care of it? I feel that I need to write up a procedure on how to update Quicken, describe which bills get paid electronically and which don't, how to evaluate the investments each quarter, and how the money flows from and to various parties.

Likewise I feel in the dark about how some of the animals (such as a diabetic cat) are taken care of.

Kaizen and Value Stream Mapping: Ok, I'm probably treading on very thin ice here, but have you ever thought of VSM as a relationship tool? We all know that men and women think differently... not wrongly, just differently (ahem!). What would happen if during your next disagreement each of you take the time to flowchart your thinking and perspective. Then use VSM and kaizen tools to brainstorm a new solution? I'm guessing that this would be construed as just another example of how men think in a linear, non-emotional fashion while women include deep emotional factors (I'm really on thin ice now...!). I can just hear it now when you suggest VSM in the heat of an argument... "You want to WHAT???"! My wife already makes fun of my love for process mapping.

Total Productive Maintenance: Generally we wait until the house needs painting to schedule painting. But on the favorable side we do consciously adjust the mowing schedule to when the grass needs mowing. And on a preventive side we often do schedule seasonal maintenance on hot water heaters and furnaces. Take a look at regular home maintenance items and identify what the interval and next occurrence is. Then reevaluate this interval so that maintenance is always proactive.

Policy Deployment: Planning for the future is a critical aspect of homeownership. From a policy deployment perspective this can include a regular review of wills, powers of attorney, savings and investment plan, retirement plan, charitable giving, and vacation plans. How many of you formally sit down a couple times a year to do family planning, then document it and review it at the next session? This then indirectly ties in with New Year's resolutions, so therefore here are some...

New Year's Resolutions for the Lean Home

- 5S your home: sort and discard all unnecessary items, order what remains, and standardize regular cleaning.
- Evaluate and improve on the safety aspects of your home.
- Buy only what is needed for the near term. Think of the total cost of holding the item, not just the initial procurement cost (a major fallacy of coupons!).
- Document critical procedures, such as how to handle the family finances.
- Start a practice of sitting down and reviewing critical plans for retirement, budget, etc. Just like checking smoke detectors has become associated with the change to and from daylight savings time, perhaps another date can become associated with family planning.

Best wishes for a happy, prosperous, and peaceful new year from Superfactory and Evolving Excellence."

Kevin Meyer, Superfactory.com



Tour Workshop Conference



Consortium Event Schedule

January	February	March	April	May	June
<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 25 <u>Eaton Electrical</u>, contact Joe Fisher, JoeRFisher@eaton.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 15, <u>CFN Precision</u>, contact Barry Wood, bwood@cfn-inc.com</p> <p>W</p> <p>Date & location TBA Your own "STEP Diagnostic" to create Vision, Mission and Direction Contact Richard Kunst Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 22, <u>Nestle Waters</u>, contact Mariela Castano mcastano@perriergroup.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 19, <u>CTS Corp.</u>, contact Bob Garces, Bob.Garces@ac.ctscorp.com</p> <p>Consortium Shareshowcase</p> <p>Saturday 22 <u>CTS Corp.</u> Contact Cindy Grolleman cindy.grolleman@stackpole.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 17, <u>Stackpole CSD</u>, contact Don Barber Don.Barber@stackpole.ca</p> <p>W</p> <p>Date & location TBA "Compartmentalize the Noise" * Daily Report-outs * Standard work for Leaders Contact Richard Kunst Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 21, <u>Morrison LaMothe</u>, contact Tony Vita tvita@morrisonlamthe.com</p> <p>C</p> <p>AME Regional Conference Mon 12 to Thurs 15 K-W Ontario Contact www.ame.org</p>
July	August	September	October	November	December
	<p>W</p> <p>Date & location TBA "Establish Anchors" * VSWI ... Visual Work Instructions * TPM ... Total Productive Maintenance Contact Richard Kunst Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 20, <u>Kraft Foods</u>, contact Hanif Jivraj hjivraj@Kraft.com</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 11, <u>Stackpole PMC</u>, contact Cindy Grolleman cindy.grolleman@stackpole.com</p> <p>C</p> <p>AME National Conference Mon 16 to Friday 20 Dallas, Texas Contact www.ame.org</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Wednesday 15, <u>Messier-Dowty</u>, contact Richard Evans Richard.Evans@Messier-dowty.on.ca</p> <p>W</p> <p>Date & location TBA Your own "Get Organized" * 5S+1 Contact Richard Kunst Richard.kunst@la-z-boy.com</p>	