

# Front-Line Leadership Capability and Motivation SPL 4.2

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**Presentation for:**

ESD.60 – Lean/Six Sigma Systems

MIT Leaders for Manufacturing Program (LFM)

Summer 2004

*These materials were developed as part of MIT's ESD.60 course on "Lean/Six Sigma Systems." In some cases, the materials were produced by the lead instructor, Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, and in some cases by student teams working with LFM alumni/ae. Where the materials were developed by student teams, additional inputs from the faculty and from the technical instructor, Chris Musso, are reflected in some of the text or in an appendix*

# Overview

## ➤ Learning Objectives

- Identify the attributes and capabilities required in front-line leaders.
- Discuss tools for developing these attributes in front-line leaders.
- Demonstrate the gains from effective use of front-line leadership.

## ➤ Session Design (20-30 min.)

- **Part I:** *Introduction and Learning Objectives (1-2 min.)*
- **Part II:** *Key Concept or Principle Defined and Explained (3-5 min.)*
- **Part III:** *Exercise or Activity Based on Field Data that Illustrates the Concept or Principle (7-10 min.)*
- **Part IV:** *Common “Disconnects,” Relevant Measures of Success, and Potential Action Assignment(s) to Apply Lessons Learned (7-10 min.)*
- **Part V:** *Evaluation and Concluding Comments (2-3 min.)*

# Attributes of Front-Line Leaders

- What are the core skills and capabilities needed in team leaders, front-line supervisors and other front-line leaders?

# Attributes of Front-Line Leaders

- **Conceptual Thinking (Sense-making)**
- **Initiative (Visioning)**
- **Communication Skills (Relating)**
- **Discipline (Inventing)**

# Implementation of the Coach/Mentor Cycle

- **Army:**
  - **Non-Commissioned Officer Counseling**
- **Navy:**
  - **EOW Training – Developing Initiative through the Coach/Mentor Cycle**
  - **Promotion to Admiral – Disconnects in Agreement**

# Coaching/Mentoring Successes and Failures

- Reflect on your experiences for examples of excellent coaching and mentoring and for examples of coaching horror stories.
- In clusters of 2-3 people briefly describe some of these experiences (2-3 min each)

# Front-line Leadership Illustrated (Slide 1 of 5)

- Necessary Attributes as seen from a plant manager's perspective:
  - Ability to look at a process and identify opportunities for improvement – creativity (Sense-making)
  - Action oriented (Visioning)
  - Effectively deal with interpersonal conflicts (Relating)
  - Build consensus among team members (Relating)
  - Perseverance and patience (Inventing)
  - Flexibility to change (Inventing)
  - Ability to deal with ambiguity (Inventing)

# Front-line Leadership Illustrated (Slide 2 of 5)

- Methods for developing key attributes:
  - Keep using the "5 why" process to teach them to dig into processes and start to see improvement opportunities
  - Coach them through developing solutions to problems on the floor based on lean fundamentals
  - Ensure they are properly trained so they have a framework for problem solving and acting independently
  - Measure progress and provide regular feedback
  - Provide resources to help with the challenges of start-up



## Front-line Leadership Illustrated (Slide 3 of 5)

- Utilizing Front-line Leadership (a real world story):
  - Team leader X was part of the initial planning for the cell roll out for the first lean cell in the plant. As the cell started up, interpersonal conflicts developed between cell members. Many of the conflicts were a result of changes in layout and workstation space as a result of cell start up. In addition, all the team members were sharing work instead of working individually and it became apparent that some work rules would have to change.
  - Team leader X was unable to effectively deal with the conflicts and keep the team moving forward. Team leader X couldn't cope with the amount of change within the cell. All the rules for the hourly workers had to be re-established. Someone had to make the call.

## Front-line Leadership Illustrated (Slide 4 of 5)

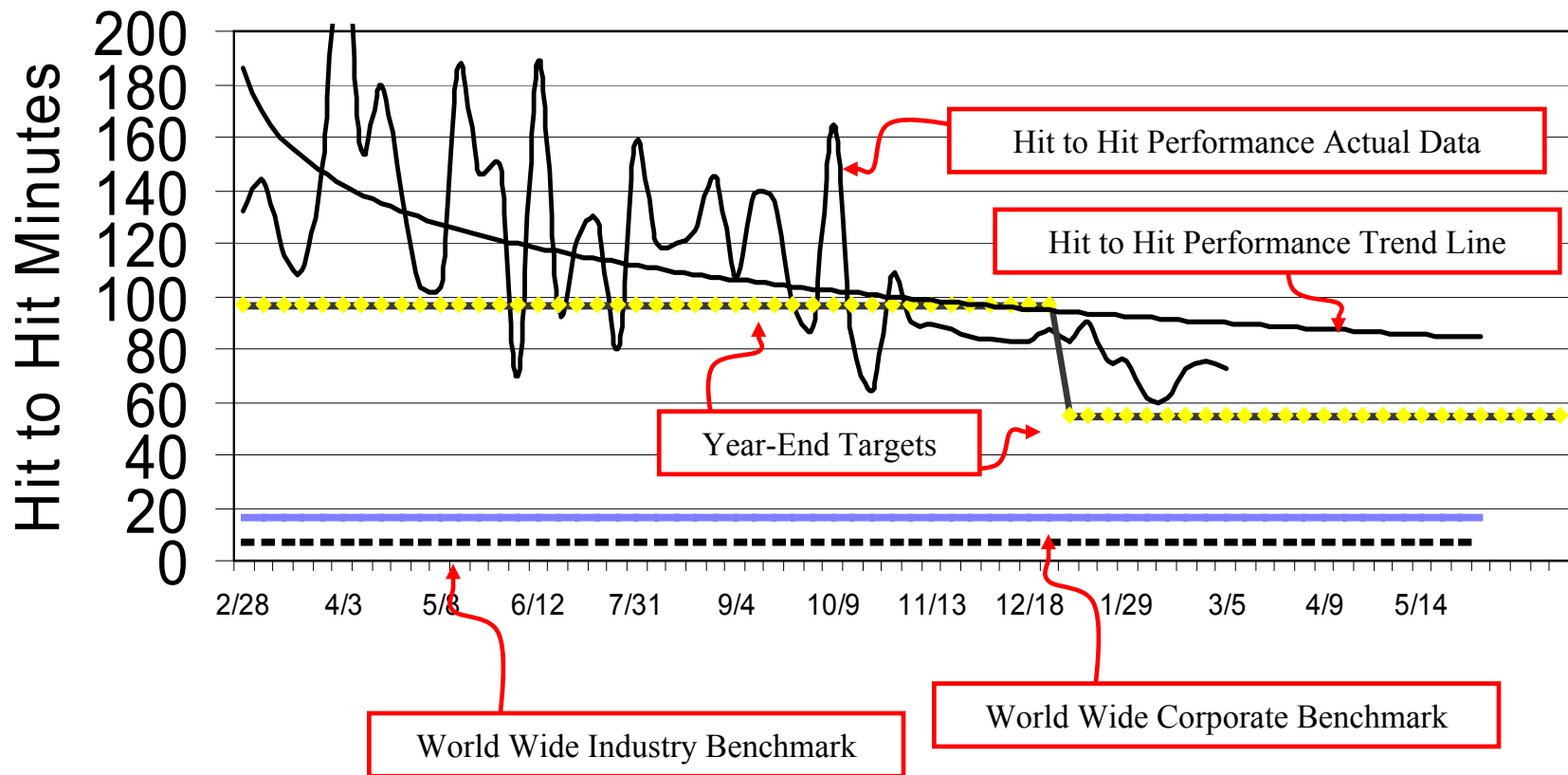
- Utilizing Front-line Leadership (a real world story, continued):
  - The cell stagnated and the morale of the team members suffered. The HR manager and the production manager started spending a lot of time with employee grievances; this hurt productivity. Team leader X was moved to another team and team leader Y started in the cell. Team leader Y had very good interpersonal skills and dealt with the cell conflicts that had not been resolved. Morale within the cell improved noticeably. Productivity improved as well. Team leader X moved on to another cell that had established work rules and was successful as a lead in that area.

# Front-line Leadership Illustrated (Slide 5 of 5)

- Utilizing Front-line Leadership (a real world story, concluded):
  - The morale of the story: CULTURAL CHANGE IS DIFFICULT; YOU NEED A GOOD LEADER
  - When you move into a lean cell structure, you can plan the 80% solution and "just do it" or you can plan the 100% solution and you'll never change. front-line leadership must be capable of working through the 20% that you couldn't foresee during the planning process. This is a much more difficult task for senior leads because all the little work rules that developed over the years must be re-established. When you change the way people work by rolling out a lean cell, something as simple as the placement of the coffee pot is a really big deal. These are the issues that will stop your initiative -- if you have a leader who can resolve them, great. If not, you must coach your leader. If your leader can't deal with the ambiguity of an 80% solution, you must step in.

# Front Line Leadership Illustrated with Data

## Stamping Plant Hit To Hit Performance in Single Production Line



Note: This chart was on the wall in a work group meeting room (the organization's name has been masked). The reduction in variance around 11/13 corresponds to the addition of hourly work group leaders, hourly scrap representatives and committeepeople to the daily shift start meeting for the work group. Also, the Industry and Corporate Benchmarks are both in "Greenfield" Plants with newer presses designed for quick changeover. The reduction in variance and continued downward trend line after 11/13 provide a tangible indication of the way social systems can impact production operations.

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# Concluding Comments

- Lean/Six-Sigma is a knowledge driven process and therefore depends on distributed leadership, specifically effective front-line leadership.
- Front-line leaders must possess key attributes if they are to effectively deal with the ambiguity of a lean/six sigma implementation.
- Supervisors must step in to coach front-line leaders when necessary to guarantee success.

# Appendix: Instructor's Comments and Class Discussion on 4.2

- Key Enablers for lean/six sigma front line leadership:
  - Lean/six sigma knowledge
  - Career paths that reward success with lean/six sigma
  - Coaching and mentoring on lean/six sigma from direct management and skip-level management
  - Forums for dialogue and agreement appropriate to lean/six sigma (such as forums for ensuring prompt action on employee improvement suggestions)
- Important point: Good leaders can often keep people in positions—firing can may seem easier than coaching and helping people to grow, but what are the implications for the system?

# Appendix: Instructor's Guide

<b>Slide</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Additional Talking Points</b>
1-2	2-3 min	Introduction, overview and learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify overall themes.</li></ul>
3-6	7-10 min	Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask for class input on attributes necessary in a front-line leader.</li><li>• Review key attributes in terms of 4 point Sloan leadership model.</li><li>• Discuss Coach/Mentor cycle as a method for developing attributes in subordinates and discuss applications of the Coach/Mentor cycle from work experience.</li></ul>
7	3-5 min	Exercises/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have class divide into groups of 2-3 and come up with examples of good and bad coaches/mentors.</li></ul>
8-13	7-10 min	Disconnects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss real world examples.</li></ul>
14	1-2 min	Concluding comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-emphasize key concepts.</li></ul>

# Appendix: Selected Sources

- Cutcher-Gershenfeld, Joel, *Front-Line Leadership Training Materials* (Summer 2004).
- Valuable Disconnects in Organizational Learning Systems: Integrating the Bold Visions and Harsh Realities by Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld and Kevin Ford (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)
- Oliver, Dave, Jr., Rear Admiral U.S. Navy, *Lead On! A Practical Approach to Leadership*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992.