

Passionate Leadership

CRUCIAL IN SPREADING LEAN CULTURE ACCORDING TO STILES ASSOCIATES SURVEY OF MANUFACTURING EXECUTIVES

According to a survey by Stiles Associates conducted at the EASTEC Advanced Productivity Exposition, 83% of respondents are familiar with “lean manufacturing,” with more than half in some stage of developing a lean culture (15% have fully integrated lean and another 41% have begun the process).

Top reasons cited for implementing lean are:

1. Cost savings (28%)
2. Productivity improvements (23%)
3. Competitive pressures (12%)

The greatest benefits among those using lean are:

1. Customer responsiveness (16%)
2. Increased speed to market (10%)
3. Reduced product development cycles (9%)

The greatest obstacles to developing a lean practice included:

1. Resistance to change (27%)
2. Ineffective leadership/lack of lean leaders (21%)

When asked to identify the most important personal characteristics of lean leaders, respondents cited:

1. “Passionate” (33%)
2. “Enthusiastic” (17%)
3. “Hands on” (12%)

Employee empowerment is the backbone of the lean movement and depends on the right leadership. A unique breed of executives is required to create change and develop a bottom-up culture of waste elimination, continuous improvement, and customer responsiveness.

Respondents also identified other industries/sectors that could benefit from lean principles, including:

1. High technology (62%)
2. Health care (59%)
3. Automotive (58%)
4. Consumer products (57%)
5. Telecommunications (49%)
6. Management consulting (45%)
7. Insurance (44%)
8. Banking (44%)

The survey was conducted among nearly 100 manufacturing executives at the EASTEC Advanced Productivity Exposition in West Springfield, MA on May 20 — 22, 2003.