

## A3 Thinking (Managing to Learn)

📅 30<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015

📍 Lean Enterprise Academy, Ross on Wye, UK



Through instruction, small group discussions and exercises, the workshop participants will learn:

- Greater understanding of PDCA and the problem solving process
- Know when to use A3 Problem Solving or basic 3c problem solving
- In-depth practice in:
  - Developing A3 Problem Solving Worksheets
  - Coaching others in developing their problem solving capability

\*Please bring along a current business problem and supporting data that you would like to work on.

### Notes

- **Attendance** - 2 Day Course
- **Class size** - Maximum 12 people per day
- **Timings** - Each day will run from 09:00 - 17:00
- **Cost** - £790.00\* per delegate per day with a 15% discount when 2 or more people from the same organisation attend
- **Materials** - A PDF copy of the materials will be available via the Lean Enterprise Academy website
- **Facilities** - Refreshments and lunches will be provided by LEA

*We can also run these workshops in-house at your convenience, if you would like to explore this option please contact us at [events@leanuk.org](mailto:events@leanuk.org) or call +44 (0)1600 890590*

\* Please note prices exclude VAT at the standard rate of 20%

## Introduction

“The most basic definition of an A3 is a P-D-C-A storyboard or report, reflecting Toyota’s way of capturing the PDCA process on one sheet of paper. But the broader notion of the A3 as a process – embodying the way of thinking represented in the format – captures the heart of Lean management. In this context, an A3 document structures effective and efficient dialogue that fosters understanding followed by the opportunity for deep agreement. It’s a tool that engenders communication and dialogue in a manner that leads to good decisions, where the proposed countermeasures have a better chance of being effective because they are based on facts and data gathered at the place where the work is performed, from the people who perform it.” John Shook author of *Managing to Learn*.

## Objectives

The purpose of this workshop is to explore the lessons and insights of *Managing to Learn* from four perspectives:

- First, participants will explore the requirements of sound A3 thinking and management by following the stages of learning illustrated in *Managing To Learn* (MTL.) MTL describes how a young manager learns to handle a significant problem-solving responsibility by creating an A3 that earns him the authority to address the problem in the ways he proposes. This occurs as he is coached on his problem solving and A3 thinking by his boss and mentor. He steadily uses the knowledge he is learning to revise his initial “jump-to-a-solution” A3 into an effective P-D-C-A story. Participants will examine how the A3 changes with each revision, what the young manager has learned about the A3 thinking and the A3 process that he applies in each revision, and what the course of his development indicates about the deep problem-solving focus that characterizes Lean thinking.
- Second, the participants will have the opportunity to develop their own eyes and ears to recognize effective A3 stories. They will describe the problem-solving thinking that is required in each section of the A3 for the PDCA story it tells to be effective. Participants will read several A3s and discuss how they would coach the authors to improve them. They will then be given final versions of the A3s and asked to determine if they are more effective and why they are more effective than the originals.
- Third, participants will create the Title, Background, Current Situation, Goal, Analysis and Recommendations sections of an A3 for a problem-solving responsibility in their own work. Participants are invited to bring real A3s they are already working on for this exercise, or they may begin a new one during the class. They will work in small groups to read, discuss and evaluate each another’s A3s. They will coach each other as authors of their respective A3s offering guidance to consider ways their P-D-C-A stories could be improved.
- Fourth, participants will learn various forms and uses of the A3 format. Examples from *Managing to Learn* will be highlighted, along with others.

Topics that will be examined include:

- Basic types of A3 stories and how the format differs for each
- Role the A3 plays in the nemawashi process for gaining alignment with the stakeholders in a problem situation and seeking their agreement to proceed with the countermeasures or improvements being proposed

- Ways the A3 functions as a change management tool, a general management tool, a human development tool and a knowledge sharing tool

### **Workshop Benefits**

Through instruction, small group discussions and exercises, the workshop participants will:

- Learn the basic formats of A3s and uses of the A3 as a management process, and,
- Gain experience in the three basic roles of the A3 process:
  - Writing an A3 (the Author/Owner)
  - Reading A3s (the Responder)
  - Coaching others about their A3s (the Coach)
- Greater understanding of PDCA and the problem solving process
- Know when to use A3 Problem Solving or basic 3c problem solving
- In-depth practice in
- Developing A3 Problem Solving Worksheets
- Coaching others in developing their problem solving capability

### **Agenda**

#### **Preparation Day:**

Two weeks before class starts, the facilitator and key sponsor members from the local team make preparations to ensure a rewarding experience for the students by assessing current problem solving capabilities in the organisation with the management team.

#### **Preparation Work:**

- Prepare a list of problems being worked on by the organisation and (where possible) any sample A3s that have been used
- Walk the work floor to understand the problems identified and prepare 'draft' A3s with any analysis that may be required – to help coach the class and increase the facilitator's knowledge of the environment
- Review the class participant list and (where applicable) divide the students into teams for exercises
- Prepare the classroom requirements for the session
- Brief senior managers about the training, and implement the appropriate advance communications in the host facility

#### **Workshop Day:**

- Understanding PDCA & the A3 process
- 7 Elements of A3 Thinking
- The different types of A3s
- Problem Solving, Proposal, Status A3s
- How to review A3s

- Applying A3 Thinking to your own work – including writing, presenting and coaching
- Implementation questions

### **Follow up (optional):**

LEA provides an ongoing mentoring service for organisations involved in making Lean transformations. A3s developed by the organisation can be reviewed at 30/60/90 intervals. This provides the organisation with help and direction in sustaining the learning from the workshop process and helps highlight further learning opportunities that can be pulled, as and when required, by the organisation.

### **Related Books**

- Managing to Learn
- Understanding A3 Thinking
- Getting the Right Things Done
- The Toyota Way Fieldbook