

Turning PDCA into a Routine for Learning

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Table of Contents

.....	1
Plan-Do-check-Act-Cycle	6
The Plan Phase	12
Distinction between Management by Objectives and Lean management.....	13
The Use of Incentives to Motivate Creative Thinking and Encourage Employees to Generate Ideas for the Plan.....	20
The Do Phase.....	24
Hiring the Lean Team-Who Is Responsible for Making Improvement?.....	25
The Check Phase.....	27
Aligning the Improvement Efforts with The Overall Demanded Outcomes for Maximum Efficiency	28
Tips.....	31
The Use of Cost Benefit Analysis in Decision Making.....	32
Short-term Focus on Cost Reduction.....	34
What Is Behind Success?	37
Appendix. I	39
Gemba.....	40
Appendix. II.....	45
Toyota Coaching Process	46
Appendix. III.....	48
Lean Resources.....	50
REFERENCES.....	51

Dedication

I created this book with the help of many different business resources.

These academic articles and books are all cited at the end of this book. A number of people have influenced my learning journey and my entire career. I would like to acknowledge them here.

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TURNING PDCA INTO A ROUTINE FOR LEARNING 5

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Plan-Do-check-Act-Cycle

Mistakenly, many people think plan-do-check-act (PDCA) is a continuous improvement cycle, even if they neglect the human part. PDCA does aim to improve the process, but if you have only improved the process without developing and teaching your people, you have put the process at risk of slipping back. People must be trained in the culture of continuous improvement so they can keep managing the process with the new method.

PDCA is actually a remarkable learning cycle because people learn by doing. The best thing is to pick up a real project and start improving a process (Soliman, 2016). You don't learn to play football by watching a game or golf by watching the coach. You have to practice under the watchful eye of the mentor to develop new habits and change the bad ones. An attentive coach is critical to helping you make a new method become routine.

Toyota has several steps in its problem-solving process, steps that cycle through the famous PDCA wheel (Liker, 2012):

1. Define the problem relative to the ideal (plan).
2. Grasp the current situation (plan).
3. Break down the problem into manageable pieces (plan).
4. Find the root cause of the problem (plan).
5. Develop countermeasures (plan).
6. Implement the solution (do).
7. Examine what the actual outcomes are (check).
8. Adapt, adjust, standardize and scale the solutions to other areas (act).