

Note to Sarah Begg re Lean Manufacturing

1. What are the main principles behind lean manufacturing.

Answer.

The word "Lean" was first applied by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (part of the IMVP (International Motor Vehicle Program)) to Japanese car manufacture in 1990. The superior Japanese techniques were "lean" in inventory and space.

2. What is generally involved with going lean.

Answer.

This is best answered by applying the 25 guidelines developed by Blakemore Consulting. In a nutshell it involves culture change and innovation, superior planning, superior customer driven processes and operations.

3. Why do you think "lean manufacturing" has emerged?

Answer.

Japanese products, despite a high yen, and despite Japan's lack of natural resources, needed to develop superior products and offer superior value to survive in the global market. They then became so good at manufacturing that the whole world took notice and now copies their techniques.

4. How common is it becoming for manufacturing companies to adopt lean principles.

Answer.

The adoption of the general principles is very common all over the world. However, many companies try to implement the principles with mixed success. Much of the americanisation of the principles has led to slow progress. To really understand how it works it is necessary to visit and work in Japan.

5. How does lean manufacturing compare with six sigma and total quality management?

Answer.

Lean is a derivative and includes all of the principles of TQM, six sigma and kaizen.

6. What are the main benefits of adopting lean manufacturing?

Answer:

Lean manufacturing offers superior product and process quality, lower costs, superior workplace relations, faster innovation, with lower working capital.

7. How can Blakemore Consulting help manufacturers adopt lean manufacturing?

Answer.

Blakemore Consulting International can assist all manufacturers and service organisations go lean by analysing their processes and systems and strategically choosing pilot studies to demonstrate the improvements possible and link these to the overall strategic direction of the company. This is done by applying the 25 lean guidelines to all processes and systems in the business.

8. Why would you recommend manufacturers go lean?

Answer.

If companies wish to remain competitive in the global market, then it is essential that they run a lean innovative organisation.