Lean Enterprise Transformation: Building the Infrastructure

Plenary Wrap-Up Lessons Learned

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Conference Accomplishments

• We shared **stories** of progress, impact, insights, lessons learned, principles, problems, plans, and prospects for the future

• We continued to build a **learning community** and network of resources bridging across government, industry, and academia

• We challenged ourselves to **dream big**: from local projects to national and global enterprises, from operational to strategic, from customers to stakeholders, from aerospace to healthcare

• We had **fun**!
Some Observations of the Conference

• A lot of positive energy in the room during the talks: real interest, excitement
• A trusting atmosphere where people could reveal setbacks as well as successes, ask tough questions, and talk about the politics of change
• Change is a contact sport: many examples of learning from others, inside and outside the organization and industry, asking for and getting help. “Our culture is when people need help, you send very good people."
• Our graduate students have had wonderful conversations and offers of support
Voices Of The Consortium

• “It’s tough to transform without changing”
• “Lean is a way of life”
• “It’s about people, nurturing hearts and minds… every employee, every day, making their process better”
• “An engineer organization is training skeptical”
• “Our lab is our whole aerospace industry Consortium”
• “My guys in the Pentagon tell me they can’t get me this data; where did you get it?”
• “Big step to commit to grow our own lean leaders”
• “Culture is where the gold is”
• “Understand your enterprise before doing lean”
• “Start where you’re wanted”
Wrestling With Big Questions

• Constant temptation to deliver tactical results vs. enterprise transformation

• Does change require a “burning platform”? Can a mature culture sustain and grow lean without fear? Are there many ways to create/assess readiness for lean change?

• Does the same approach work in every organization, defense or civilian, large or small? Top-down, bottom-up, middle-up-down?

• Leaders go first, except when they go second. How can we socialize and coach leaders, e.g., “walk the wall”?

• How can we influence things outside our control?
Infrastructure for Transformation

• Shared language, shared definitions and understandings, and collaborative work

• Trustful relationships underlie empowerment, leadership success as role models, valuing multiple stakeholders’ participation. Connect people first. Focus on valued results and equitable incentives rather than credit and blame.

• Leadership support and participation

• In-house expertise

• Culture that supports openness and learning, helping each other, teamwork, “try-storm”
Spiral Development

- system thinking
- enterprise capabilities
- supply chain
- knowledge sharing
- culture
- BLInG
- standard processes
- EVSMA
- participation
- events
- black belt training
Enterprise Transformation?

• **Challenge 1**: Take action with partial planning: spiral development of lean thinking, lean projects. “More is possible than you think.” Work together on real problems that people care about. “Visioning is hard work.”

• **Challenge 2**: Standardize tasks and processes, but in ways that encourage innovation. Remember, lean is a way of thinking about and seeing the system, not just tools.

• **Challenge 3**: Reluctance to define enterprise for “fear of stepping on toes.” Not about control, but customer value and stakeholder relationships. Defining enterprise narrowly may be limiting.

• **Challenge 4**: Patience. Business case is based on faith; measures and numbers come later. Culture based on successes: “take the hill, plant the flag, move on” but enterprise change needs persistence due to J-curves.
Parting Thoughts

• We are *all* part of this learning community.
• We welcome your participation and need your inputs.
• Help us make research part of *all* we do.
• Your inputs are essential in shaping the Consortium’s future direction and goals.
• Hope you have enjoyed the conference and are taking away some new ideas you can use.
• Stay connected! See you next year!