



The Paradox of Leading from the Middle

LAI Annual Meeting

Break Out Sessions 1 & 2

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

March 24, 2010

The paradox of leading lean changes from the middle

Why does leading and sustaining lean seem difficult when it should be natural?

Lean changes

- usually, and reliably, improve performance, and
- improve working conditions

Yet, many of lean and other continuous improvement efforts

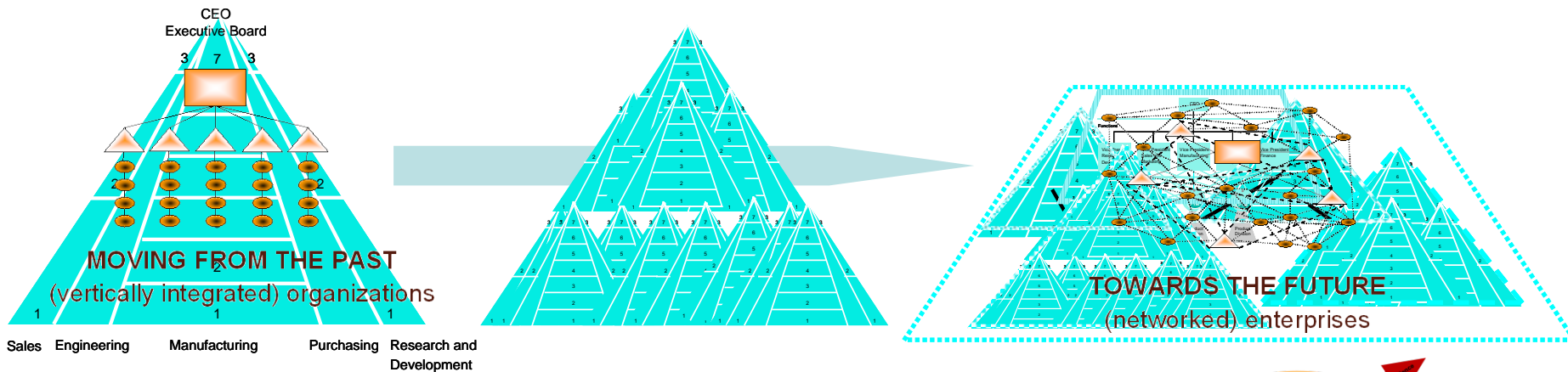
- after initial enthusiasm, stagnate, and
- fail to be sustained.

Requires “leading from the middle”

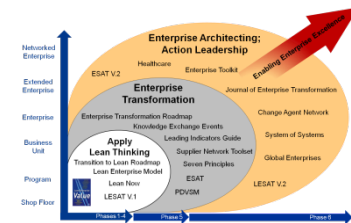
- What do middle managers do to sustain and grow their lean, quality, and process improvement efforts?

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What changes are we talking about?



- Organizations transform into enterprises
 - Executive lead lean transformation
 - Workforce is engaged in continuous improvement
 - Middle managers..... ?



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This and the next breakout session provide examples for leading lean changes in organizations, with a special focus on the role of the middle managers:

- illustrations and examples from sustaining lean changes
 - how mid-level champions worked with their executives
 - what was necessary for lean to expand beyond middle level champions
 - key attributes of successful mid-level champions
- the conflicting motivations of executives when presented with change proposals
- strategies to engage executive leaders in the change effort

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Our presenters and their companies:

BO I	The Paradox of Leading from the Middle Part I	
Start	Topic	Presentor
1:30	Introduction, overview, and expected outcomes	George Roth, MIT LAI
1:40	Northrop Grumman	Mary Anne Jones
2:05	BAE Systems	Kathy Mullen
2:30	Raytheon	Michelle Van Tassel
2:55	Discussion (part 1)	All

3:15

BO II	The Paradox of Leading from the Middle Part 2	
Start	Topic	Presentor
3:45	Summary of previous session	George Roth, MIT LAI
3:55	Raytheon	Jim Chung
4:20	Pratt & Whitney	John Kirkgasser
4:45	Discussion (part 11)	All
5:15	Conclusions: Top Five Take Away Actions	All

5:30

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Our desired outcomes:

- From each presenter:
 - What are the lessons or best practices from your experiences for leading change from the middle of your organization?
 - What are your suggestions to others for what they can do to enable lean change leadership from the middle of their organizations?
- From this session:
 - Top five actions to improve the leadership of lean change from the middle in audience members' organizations

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Top five actions:

1. Appropriately translate goals to actions for each level / group, use the right language, and then communicate... communicate
2. Every employee, every day ... help people “be accountable”
3. Build a portfolio of quantified improvement projects
4. Benchmark and steal shamelessly
5. Gemba – go see, revisit improvements to sustain them

6. Invert the pyramid