

RDK Hosts Lean Design Charette

What is Lean?

At its core, Lean is a philosophy that seeks to increase customer value and eliminate unnecessary waste. By applying systems thinking, Lean organizations see the whole value stream of their operations and find ways to use less material, effort, energy, and equipment to deliver increased value to customers while providing meaningful work for staff. Lean has successfully been applied by the manufacturing world to a variety of organizational challenges and is increasingly being used in healthcare operations.

Why is RDK interested in Lean?

Many of our healthcare clients apply Lean to all of their projects, so improving our understanding and application of Lean will allow us to align ourselves with their approach. RDK is interested in enhancing our position in the healthcare market sector by improving our understanding and application of Lean, since our Healthcare clients have already started applying it. We realize that this is increasingly being used to deliver more value with less waste in the healthcare design and construction market. We'd also like to learn where RDK can apply Lean principles internally that would help us decrease waste and increase production and profitability.

Learn by doing...

In order to implement Lean, you must "learn by doing". Haley & Aldrich, a reputable geotech/environmental firm that we do some work with, is not only doing Lean design, but they have created an in-house group that is in charge of making them internally a Lean organization and also responsible for applying it to their clients and projects. The Haley & Aldrich team has experienced great success, and we hired them to lead our first Lean workshop. Their "Learn by doing" approach is based on three universal Lean principles: respect for people, an understanding of value, and a passion to remove waste.

Who participated?

On October 20th, we held our first Lean workshop that included members of RDK's Healthcare engineering team as well as RDK Principals.

What did we do?

We decided in pre-work meetings to tackle the RFI (Request For Information) process that we have internally at RDK. It is something that the RDK team felt could be improved and something that had a LOT of waste. In class, we laid out every single step of the process and identified very quickly all the waste that we have in this process. We had people involved at every level of the process and there was an animated exchange during which many key initiatives were brought to light. (see photos of actual workshop).

Results?

After five facilitated hours in a room together, we walked away with a Value Stream Map, which outlined our wastes and potential improvements that could be made to our process. We plan to sit down to see what is easily implemented and what we need to spend more time on.

Where do we go now?

Completing one Lean workshop does not make us a Lean Design consultant, however, it made us realize that we would like to become one. The way this happens is that we continue to do workshops, apply improvements to processes, minimize waste and then we slowly start adapting these principles company-wide. While doing this, we apply it to our project work and always consider the tremendous value that it can offer our clients.



Scott Shipp organizes our customer values.



Joe Bonanno identifies waste in the RDK RFI process.



Value Stream Map



RDK Healthcare Group discusses Improvement Profile and recommendations.