# LEANOhio PROJECT STARTER KIT

With this quick-take assessment, you can pinpoint opportunities for putting your Lean know-how to work.

# PROJECT SELECTION ASSESSMENT

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read each item, then check a box on the 1-to-5 scale to show how often this occurs in your workplace:
**1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = sometimes 4 = often 5 = very often**

**!** Have a well-defined scope as you respond to each assessment item. Avoid trying to evaluate the agency as a whole. Rather, focus on the work area or office or section that you manage, and maintain this same scope throughout the assessment. If you don't manage a given office or section, narrow your scope to your immediate work area.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | In my work area, we spend too much time looking for the items we need to do our jobs: files, materials, equipment, and so on. If the physical work area was better organized, we'd be more productive and less frustrated. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **2** | When we get inputs from customers or from other sources (from paper forms or online web forms, for example), we often find that the incoming information is incomplete or inaccurate. We have to circle back to people to get the information we need. If we received complete information from them the *first* time around, we'd be a lot more efficient. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **3** | We find ourselves wondering what our customers are thinking. *Are we meeting their needs and expectations? Are they happy with our work? Are there things we can do to increase their satisfaction?* If we had answers to these questions, we could serve our customers better. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **4** | My co-workers and I don't really know whether our day-to-day work is having a positive impact. We can't tell for sure whether it's meeting customer expectations, helping the agency achieve larger goals, or contributing in some other way. If we had a set of meaningful measures that were easy to see and understand, we'd have a better sense of how our work makes a difference. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **5** | I work with good people, but it sometimes seems like one person doesn't know what the other person is doing, even though we all work in the same work process. If we had a better sense of what each person does and how we all fit together as one system, we'd be more productive and probably even happier. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **6** | We've been getting complaints from our customers. We respond the best we can, but it's on a case-by-case basis. If we dug deeper to understand what's *causing* the complaints – and if we went on to fix those underlying causes – we would end the complaints and set the stage for some compliments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **7** | The work process that I work in moves too slowly. If we took the time to step back and fully analyze the process, we'd come up with major improvements to the workflow. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **8** | When my co-workers and I talk about our work and our overall work process, we talk mostly about negative things: delays, rework, overwork, red tape, confusion, and so on. If we as a group had the opportunity and guidance to dig deep and rework the process, we'd develop some big improvements. | 1 2 3 4 5 |


version 1.3

# LEANOhio PROJECT STARTER KIT

Continued...

With your quick-take assessment from the previous page, you can get a better idea of which Lean-related tools and methods are most needed in your workplace. This will help you as you move closer to identifying a worthwhile project where you can successfully put your Lean know-how to work.

## If you checked "often" or "very often" here, then you should consider...

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | In my work area, we spend too much time looking for the items we need to do our jobs: files, materials, equipment, and so on. | **5S+**<br>5S+ stands for sort, straighten, shine, standardize, sustain, and safety. The 5S+ process, which can be used individually (for your own work area) or by a group, is used to create and maintain well-organized work areas. | Go to page 3 |
| 2 | When we get inputs from customers or from other sources (from paper forms or online web forms), we often find that the incoming information is incomplete or inaccurate. | **Poka-Yoke**<br>From the Japanese term for mistake-proofing, poka-yoke is all about putting measures in place to prevent errors from occurring as a process unfolds. In government, a big improvement opportunity relates to forms, because forms that arrive with incorrect or incomplete information require extra processing time. | Go to page 4 |
| 3 | We find ourselves wondering what our customers are thinking. *Are we meeting their needs and expectations? Are they happy with our work?* | **Voice of the Customer**<br>When it comes to improvement, understanding the customer's spoken and unspoken requirements is essential. You can develop different approaches, including interviews, surveys, polls, focus groups, complaint logs, and more. | Go to page 5 |
| 4 | My co-workers and I don't really know whether our work is having a positive impact. We can't tell for sure whether it's meeting customer expectations, helping the agency achieve larger goals, or contributing in some other way. | **Meaningful Metrics & Visual Management**<br>If you keep an eye on the scoreboard when watching sporting events, you know what this is about. By having a select few measures that show how well the process is doing, and by developing a dashboard or some other visual to make those measures readily visible and easy to comprehend, everyone can feel a greater sense of ownership. | Go to page 6 |
| 5 | I work with good people, but it sometimes seems like one person doesn't know what the other person is doing, even though we all work in the same work process. | **Process Mapping**<br>A well-constructed process map makes the entire workflow visible. It shows inputs, work steps, decisions, work flows, outputs, and more. This allows people who work in one part of the process to see how their works fits into the larger system – and it gives people the visual they need to pinpoint occurrences of inefficiency. | Go to page 7 |
| 6 | We've been getting complaints from our customers. We respond the best we can, but it's on a case-by-case basis. | **Process Improvement**<br>Process improvement can be scaled to fit your situation and intended outcomes.<br>• A full **Kaizen Event** typically involves five straight days of work. The Kaizen team consists of people who work in all the various stages of the process, and there's usually a customer or two. With guidance from a Kaizen facilitator, the team maps the process, pinpoints inefficiencies, identifies improvement opportunities, develops a redesign of the process, and builds action plans to ensure implementation.<br>• A **Lean Routine** uses many of the same tools that are put to work in a full Kaizen event. But it uses them on smaller processes and sub-processes. This narrower scope focuses on clearly defined "pain points" that clearly call for improvement. When properly scoped, this can be completed in one full day – or in five 90-minute meetings over the course of several weeks, or in two half-day meetings, and so on.<br>• You can use process improvement tools on an even **smaller scale**. Perhaps you want to develop your own process map to see and improve the work steps for which you are solely responsible. Or perhaps you get together with two co-workers to map out and improve a small process that you are responsible for together. | Go to pages 8-10 |
| 7 | The work process that I work in moves too slowly. | | |
| 8 | When my co-workers and I talk about our work and our overall work process, we talk mostly about negative things: delays, rework, overwork, red tape, confusion, and so on. | | |



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# LEANOhio PROJECT STARTER KIT

This page will guide you through the initial steps for setting up a **5S+ project**. The explanatory text and fill-in templates cover key areas that are crucial to success.

5S+ stands for sort, straighten, shine, standardize, sustain, and safety. The 5S+ process, which can be used individually (for your own work area) or by a group, is used to create and maintain efficient and effective work areas.

## • STEP 1: Identify a draft scope for your 5S+ project.

If you're focusing on your own work area, you can do the project yourself, and you'll be able to complete it more quickly. But if you'd like to apply 5S+ to a larger work area that's shared by people, you'll need to involve them.

! After you talk about this with others, conduct your walk-through, and gather relevant data, you might end up revising the scope of your 5S+.

If you have have sole responsibility for the area that you want to improve, you can use 5S+ on your own.

If you have 5S+ in mind for the **surrounding work area**, you'll want to involve your co-workers who work there.

## • STEP 2: Build your 5S+ team.

If you plan to apply 5S+ beyond your own work area, identify who will team up with you on this project. Write their names below.

Project sponsor:

Others who need to be involved:

## • STEP 3: Decide on a preliminary project timeline.

Target dates for several early action steps will help you get this effort moving and keep it moving.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Target date:<br>What you'll accomplish: | Target date:<br>What you'll accomplish: | Target date:<br>What you'll accomplish: | ! As one of your first actions, include a walk-through of the work area with all 5S+ participants. |

## • STEP 4: Anticipate factors that could help or hinder the change process.

With 5S+, you're promoting change – which is likely to stir up factors and forces that work for and against the change process. The key is to think ahead, to anticipate these possible factors, and to take steps early on to leverage the positive and prevent (or at least lessen) the negative. That's what the following quick-take analysis is about.

**First**, focus on the likely positive factors. In your workplace, what will help to promote, create, and support this 5S+ project? Write your list below:

**DRIVING FORCES**

**Forces FOR the change that 5S+ is likely to bring:**

**Next**, consider some of the factors that might slow, stop, or otherwise complicate the change process. List a few of the most likely forces here:

**RESTRAINING FORCES**

**Forces AGAINST the change that 5S+ is likely to bring:**

## • STEP 5: Use your insights to develop critical success strategies.

Write down your "must do" strategies for leveraging the likely positive forces *for* change while addressing the restraining forces that could work *against* it.

## • STEP 6: Clarify your next step.

What is your very next step aimed at giving this project some early traction and forward momentum? Write it down here.

# LEAN Ohio PROJECT STARTER KIT

This page will help you begin making the invisible visible with a **poka-yoke**. From the Japanese term for mistake-proofing, poka-yoke is all about putting easy measures in place to *prevent* errors from occurring early in the process – so that staff don't have to spend time correcting errors later in the process. It's all about working smart and getting things done right the first time around.

For many government agencies, forms are the biggest source of preventable errors – so they're likely to be your best candidate for putting poka-yoke to work.

Many agencies require incoming information as a key input to their processes. Forms are the typical method for getting this information: paper forms, web-based forms, fillable PDFs, and so on. Ideally, a form should get all the needed information the first time it's filled out and submitted. But in reality, many forms are long, complicated, full of jargon, and impossibly difficult to navigate. The result? Agencies get incoming information that's incorrect and incomplete – and staff have to circle back to correct the errors and get the needed info. It costs extra time and money, and it frustrates everyone. And it represents a major improvement opportunity.

- **STEP 1: Focus the project.**
  In your work area, what form* is the biggest source of errors and resulting rework? In other words, what form is the best candidate for poka-yoke?

* Incoming information can arrive via paper forms, but consider electronic forms as well. These are increasingly used, but the fact is, online forms can produce just as many errors as their paper-version counterparts.

- **STEP 2: Build the case.**
  What are some of the big errors that frequently occur with this form? How often? What makes it a good candidate for poka-yoke?

**Here's a sample of common errors and problems relating to forms:**

- Missing support document(s)
- Missing signature
- Missing joint signature
- Missing ID numbers
- Incorrect/incomplete address
- Missing SSN
- Missing phone number
- Too many inquiries from people asking how to fill out the form
- Too many different versions of the form
- Too many unnecessary questions
- Form is too long

- **STEP 3: Start building a poka-yoke team.**
  Who needs to be involved in analyzing and improving the form? List possible participants and a sponsor for this project.

| PARTICIPANTS |
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| |
| Possible project sponsor: |

- **STEP 4: Determine your next steps.**
  Take a few minutes to list what you will do during the next week or so to move beyond this worksheet and get the project under way.

| ACTION | WHEN |
|---|---|
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**Be sure to use data when analyzing the form.**

**Questions to ask include:** How often (percentage of times) is the form completed with/without errors? How many errors are made? What types of errors are occurring, and what is their relative frequency? Why are errors occurring? How much time is spent reviewing the form and correcting errors?

**Recommended:** Create a checklist to identify errors by type or by question. Then create a Pareto chart to see error frequency. Look for root causes. Test the improvements to the form, then refine and retest, then implement.

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With this page, you can think through the best ways to get useful **feedback from customers**. The explanatory text and fill-in templates will give you a solid start.

When it comes to improvement, understanding the customer's spoken and unspoken requirements is essential. You can develop different approaches, including interviews, surveys, polls, focus groups, complaint logs, and more.

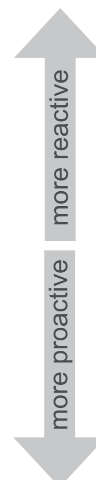
• **STEP 1:** Who is your direct customer... ...and who are some of your other customers?

**!** Your direct customer is the person or people or office that directly receives the service or product you produce in your work.

• **STEP 2:** Through your work, what do you provide the customer in terms of an output or outputs? It might be a service (such as delivering training, reviewing claims, conducting inspections, etc.), a tangible product (such as a developing training materials, generating a periodic report with needed information, filing inspection reports, etc.), or something that's more like a service-product combination (such as gathering and then providing key information by email or phone).

• **STEP 3:** How do you currently get feedback from your customers?

| | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| 1. We receive occasional calls, emails, and/or letters from customers. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. We keep a complaint log, and we use the information to take corrective action. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. We track the numbers and types of calls and/or emails we get from customers. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. We occasionally contact customers to ask for their feedback. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. We make phone calls on a regular basis to customers to get their feedback | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. We send emails to a sample of our customers to get feedback. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. We occasionally meet with a number of customers to get feedback in person. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. We send customers a periodic customer survey. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. We conduct focus groups with customers. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. Other: | | |




• **STEP 4:** What one or two **questions** would you most like to ask your customers? Ideally, you want to get as much *useful* information as possible – information that will provide insights into how your work process is doing and how you can improve. So craft your question(s) carefully.

• **STEP 5:** What **measurable data** would you like to gather from customers? As with qualitative input, numeric feedback should help you understand how the process is doing while pointing to areas that call for improvement.

• **STEP 6:** Given the kind of feedback you'd like to get from customers, what one or two approaches would work best?

Occasional calls to customers seeking their feedback • Occasional emails • Regular calls • Regular emails • Complaint log • Checksheet • In-person meetings • Focus groups • Customer survey • Poll • Other

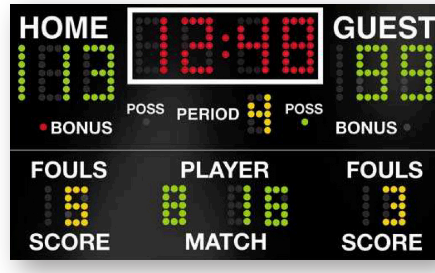
• **STEP 7:** To get moving on this, who among your colleagues do you need to talk and plan with?

# LEANOhio PROJECT STARTER KIT

This page will get you started in building or strengthening your work area's use of **meaningful metrics and visual management**.

By having a select few measures that show how well the process is doing, and by developing a dashboard or some other visual to make those measures readily visible and easy to comprehend, everyone can feel a greater sense of ownership.

If you keep an eye on the scoreboard when watching sporting events, you've benefited from visual management in action. In a similar way in the work world, agencies can use signs, charts, information displays, process maps, dashboards, scorecards, and more to communicate key information to employees – about processes, customer satisfaction, other important results, and more. When visual tools are an everyday part of the workplace, people can see how their day-to-day work is having a positive impact – and they can get important information that points to improvement opportunities.




! Focus on the work area or office or section you manage. If you don't manage a given office or section, narrow your scope to your immediate work area.

• **STEP 1: Assess current process measures.**

Currently in your work area, what is measured to track the performance of your main work process?

**Process Measures**

How are the **process measures** circulated and displayed so that employees can see what's going on?

Time-based process measures can include: lead time, cycle time, waiting time, travel time, time to complete form, etc.

Count-based process measures can include: process steps, handoffs, decision points, loopbacks, delays, customer complaints, phoned-in inquiries, emailed inquiries, inventory quantity, backlog, etc.

• **STEP 2: Assess current outcome measures.**

Right now in your work area, what is measured to track the outcomes and results of the process?

**Outcome Measures**

How are these **outcome measures** circulated and displayed so people can see what they're producing?

Outcome measures can include: customer satisfaction, expenses (example: postage expense), direct cost savings, customer cost savings, ratios showing changes in outcomes from one time period to another, etc.

• **STEP 3:** If you were creating a scoreboard to be posted in your work area for all to see, and it had room for just four measures, what measures would you include?

Process measure:

Process measure:

Outcome measure:

Outcome measure:

• **STEP 4: Set the stage for a conversation.**

Your best next step is to involve your colleagues in a conversation about this – to raise awareness, initiate planning, and move toward implementation.

| PARTICIPANTS |
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# LEANOhio PROJECT STARTER KIT

This page will help you begin making the invisible visible with a **process map**.

A well-constructed process map makes the entire workflow visible. It shows inputs, work steps, decisions, work flows, outputs, and more. This allows people who work in one part of the process to see how their works fits into the larger system, and it gives people the visual they need to see occurrences of inefficiency.

- **STEP 1: What process do you want to map?**
  You only need to write a few words (example: claim-checking process), but make sure you have a process in mind and not a general problem (example: bad communication) or a vague concern (example: morale).

- **STEP 2: Create a SIPOC.**

| 5th | 4th | Start here | 2nd | 3rd |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SUPPLIERS** | **INPUTS** | **PROCESS** | **OUTPUTS** | **CUSTOMERS** |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |
| | | | | |

- **STEP 3: Build your process-mapping team.**
  Who needs to be involved in this project? List possible participants below. Make sure that people from every major step of the process are included.

| PARTICIPANTS |
|---|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| Possible project sponsor: |

- **STEP 4: Determine your next steps.**
  Take a few minutes to list what you will do during the next week or so to move beyond this worksheet and get the process-mapping effort under way.

| ACTION | WHEN |
|---|---|
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# LEAN Ohio PROJECT STARTER KIT

If you plan on doing some sort of **process improvement**, your next step is to determine the process or subprocess you will address. The following prompts will help you clarify your focus while setting the project up for success.

You can use this template whether you're considering a Kaizen Event, a Lean Routine, or something smaller involving yourself or a small group of colleagues.

- **STEP 1: What process (or subprocess) do you want to improve?**
  You only need to write a few words (example: claim-checking process), but make sure you have a process in mind and not a general problem (example: bad communication) or a vague concern (example: morale).

*Remember that process improvement can be scaled. **(See page 1.)** A full **Kaizen Event** is a team undertaking unfolding over 5 days. A **Lean Routine** is more focused and typically takes about 8 hours over several meetings. You also can improve your own work steps **by yourself or with colleagues**.*

- **STEP 2: How do you know that this process (or subprocess) needs to be improved?**
  What are you seeing that suggests that the work flow is falling short? Posssible signs of a troubled process include delays, long waiting times, customer complaints, rework, big backlogs, unmanageable inventories.

*If you can't justify having this process be the focus of you improvement efforts, then go back to the previous step and redefine what you want to improve – or gather data to confirm your suspicions that the process needs attention.*

- **STEP 3:** Now that you have a process in mind for possible improvement, take this 2-minute reality check.
  For each statement, put a check in the YES or NO box to mark your response.

| | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I have data showing that this process needs to be improved. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. I know exactly how we can improve the process. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. I work in this process. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. The process has recently been changed. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. If we improve this process, customers will be thrilled. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. Improving this process would probably require us to address collective bargaining issues (salaries, grievances, benefits, etc.). | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Efforts to improve this process would fit the overall mission, vision, and goals of the agency. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. The problems with this process have been a pet peeve of mine for a long time. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. My manager(s) would support the idea of improving this process. | ☐ | ☐ |

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PROJECT STARTER KIT

Continued...
The checkmarks below show ideal responses based on best practices. The text on the right explains why. Wherever you see a mismatch between *your* response on the previous page, and the ideal response shown below, read the explanatory text and consider how you might need to redefine your process improvement project.

| | YES | NO | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I have data showing that this process needs to be improved. | ✔ | | *Before moving forward with process improvement, you should have objective data to demonstrate that action is needed. If you don't have it, take time to gather it. Good data will also help you scope your process improvement effort.* |
| 2. I know exactly how we can improve the process. | | ✔ | *It's never wise to begin an improvement project with preconceived changes in mind, or to use a project to rubber-stamp your already established plans. The data and analysis will lead you to the best solution and the smartest plan of next steps.* |
| 3. I work in this process. | ✔ | | *You should work in the process that you're aiming to improve. Don't try to solve other people's problems.* |
| 4. The process has recently been changed. | | ✔ | *If the process has been changed recently, wait before making more changes. Allow time to see how the new approach(es) afffect outcomes, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.* |
| 5. If we improve this process, customers will be thrilled. | ✔ | | *You want to focus your improvement efforts on processes that are important to your customers.* |
| 6. Improving this process would probably require us to address collective bargaining issues. | | ✔ | *Issues relating to collective bargaining are not addressed in Lean improvement projects.* |
| 7. Efforts to improve this process would fit the overall mission, vision, and goals of the agency. | ✔ | | *Ideally, an improvement project (no matter how small) should be well-aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of the agency. The small arrow of the project should be in the same direction as the big arrow of the agency.* |
| 8. The problems with this process have been a pet peeve of mine for a long time. | | ✔ | *Pet peeves rarely point to the best improvement opportunities. Let customer feedback and measurable data guide you in deciding where and whether to take action.* |
| 9. My manager(s) would support the idea of improving this process. | ✔ | | *Support from your immediate manager, and from leadership (if your improvement project is fairly significant), is critically important. Support doesn't guarantee success. But its absence will be a big barrier when you're trying to implement changes.* |

- **STEP 4: Using your insights from above, write a project statement that identifies what process you plan to improve and what you aim to accomplish.** *Be brief (one sentence or phrase) but be specific.*

- **STEP 5: Given the scope of this possible project, how will you move forward?**

☐ I will recommend a full **Kaizen Event** (includes scoping process, five days with team, regular follow-ups)
☐ I will recommend a **Lean Routine** (includes scoping process, about 8 hours over several meetings, follow-ups)
☐ I will complete this project **with 1-3 colleagues** over the course of a few meetings.
☐ This is something that I will be able to do **on my own**.

# LEANOhio PROJECT STARTER KIT

Continued...

The template continues below, giving you a chance to create a SIPOC (which will serve as a macro view of the process) and identify key measures. These important stage-setting steps will get your project started right.

## • STEP 6: Create a SIPOC.

| SUPPLIERS | INPUTS | PROCESS | OUTPUTS | CUSTOMERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5th | 4th | Start here | 2nd | 3rd |
| | | | | |
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## • STEP 7: Identify key measures.

Without measures, it's hard to tell whether a process is being improved – and impossible to tell the degree of improvement. The key with Lean is to identify a set of meaningful measures that drive the process improvement effort.

Some of the most commonly used measures are listed on the right. For example, lead time (which measures the total process time from first step to last step) is a mainstay measure in Kaizen, with most teams aiming to reduce lead time by at least 50%.

For your own process improvement project, what are three critical measures that will best convey the degree to which your improvement effort is successful? What will you most want to track?

You can easily justify having additional measures, but for this exercise, narrow in and write down the top three.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Time-based process measures** | ↓ Lead time<br>↓ Cycle time<br>↓ Waiting time<br>↓ Time to complete form<br>↓ Motion, travel time |
| **Count-based process measures** | ↓ Process steps<br>↓ Handoffs<br>↓ Decision points<br>↓ Loopbacks<br>↓ Delays<br>↓ Customer complaints<br>↓ Number of forms<br>↓ Inventory quantity<br>↓ Backlog |
| **Outcome measures** | ↑ Customer satisfaction<br>↑ Direct cost savings<br>↑ Customer cost savings<br>↑ Redirected work hours due to gains in efficiency |