

















City of Decatur, Georgia's Process Improvement Story

Steps to Lean Process Improvement Success

Don't forget your resources: A facilitator, background data on the issue, the right people, butcher paper, colored post it notes, markers, a light-filled room, coffee and food!



What's your problem?

Do your research! What is it that you are trying to solve? Consider starting small, gaining success, and moving on to more complex issues. Dissatisfaction with the status quo, employee-generated ideas, areas of customer interaction, internal services are all good places to start.



How do I make sure I don't get in trouble?

Remember to engage your senior leaders; executive support is paramount. This must be a problem that NEEDS to be solved. Also remember that you may need to engage external stakeholders and consider making them a part of the Lean process improvement event.



Who's on the team?

Anyone that has responsibility for the process. Consider including an employee with an objective view without knowledge of the topic. Consider inviting an external stakeholder of the process. This is a great opportunity to build good will among residents and staff and to gain important insight.



How do I identify the current process?

Using butcher paper on the wall and swim lanes for positions, ask a facilitator to lead the team in a discussion through each step in the current process. You will be surprised how much employees know, and don't know.



How do I capture improvement ideas?

As the team talks through each step, the facilitator captures the step on a post it note and places it in the appropriate swim lane- moving from left to right until you complete the process. Save another color of post-it notes and encourage the team to document their own improvement ideas as the current process is mapped. After the current process is documented, each person can place their idea near the step it most closely improves. You'll be amazed at how quickly the new ideas spread. Review these new ideas together.



Where's the improvement?

Develop the ideal future state. Considering all that has been shared and discussed, and map out what the best process would look like. This will include new positions, different roles, and different steps.



How do we get from current state to future state?

Create an implementation plan! Tasks, target dates, ownership. Including the team, present the project to your City Commission before you have made significant changes- giving them an opportunity to provide ideas and input.



How do we make people actually do what they are supposed to?

Identify a project manager and hold routine team meetings. Check your items as completed and move on to the next.



Celebrate progress!

Document your savings and improvements. This includes staff time, process time, money, resources.