LEAN LINE

The LEAN GRUNAU Way

Measuring Matters

Why do we measure?

We measure in order to gauge where we are in relation to where we want to be. Measures are used to set goals, assure we sustain improvements, compare ourselves to peers and at times, because we are told to do so. Improvement is never realized unless we are able to measure where we are and compare it to future measures.

What makes a good measure?

What we measure must be timely and be a good representation of what you are trying to improve. Measures that take a long time to collect like annual sales would be collected too late to make realistic changes. The measure would need to be broken down into chunks of time that allow corrections. The time frame could be monthly or weekly depending on the pace of sales.

When we search for a good representation of what we are attempting to improve we must only measure items that pertain to our goal. If you are trying to improve on-time deliveries to jobsites, you might track the number of times deliveries met the schedule and not necessarily how long the driver took to get there. Generally our deliveries are made on a specific day not by a 30 minute expectation like a pizza.

Measures should be as simple as possible when we identify what should be measured. The simple white board with "yes" (it was done) or "no" (it was not done) is a strong visual measure that takes very little time but depicts on time delivery rates very well. All measures should be broken down into its simplest form to ease in collection and broadcasting the information.

Lean Mission: To continually examine our processes to provide greater value to our customers without waste.

Are we measuring what matters?

Since measuring is vitally important to any improvement, we must not diminish the measures that matter by cluttering up the landscape with unused or unneeded measures. You should revisit what is being measured occasionally to assure measures that are important are still being collected and those that are unnecessary are discontinued. There is often that one measure out there that someone is collecting because we always collected it, even though no one has used that data in years. Using measures to help us improve will become easier if we remain vigilant on measuring what is important and discarding what is not.

Improvement = Change

If you want something you've never had, then you've got to do something you've never done.