

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

The Lean Line

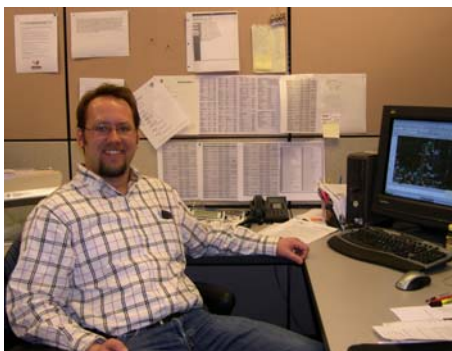
Last Planner Improvements

One area where we continually examine our processes to improve is with the Last Planner. Many of you are familiar with this planning tool that is used to identify what tasks need to be completed, when they are expected to be done, and any obstacles that may have arisen that requires adjusting the schedule. By writing down the items and discussing the tasks with all key members of the project team, it helps understand who is working on what, where, and when.

To make the electronic Excel form more efficient, we added some macros into the Last Planner program when the project team for a major medical facility started using it in 2005. For those unfamiliar with computer jargon, a macro is a series of commands and instructions that are grouped together as a single command to accomplish an electronic task automatically. In other words, by picking the 5 different pre-programmed macros, we were able to shave off a total of 27 manual steps to prepare the Last Planner for the next week's work. Multiplied by the many weeks that Grunau worked on the medical facility project, you can see how we saved a lot of time and unnecessary work by adding the macros.

As we were training two people how to use the program this year for their upcoming service and plumbing projects, Trevor came up with another time-saving efficiency to improve the electronic Last Planner even more. He created 5 buttons right on the Last Planner Excel worksheets so users could just press the button to run the macros instead of using the steps "Go to Tools ⇒ Macro ⇒ Macros, select the specific-named macro file ⇒ Run". This improvement again shaves off additional steps and time.

Each process we do can gain from continually examining where we can make improvements. We challenge each of you to look at your processes and if there is a better way, ensure it doesn't negatively affect another area in the long run, and then implement it accordingly.



Way to go, Trevor, in "Leaning" the Last Planner!



Example of Macro buttons in 1 worksheet of Last Planner