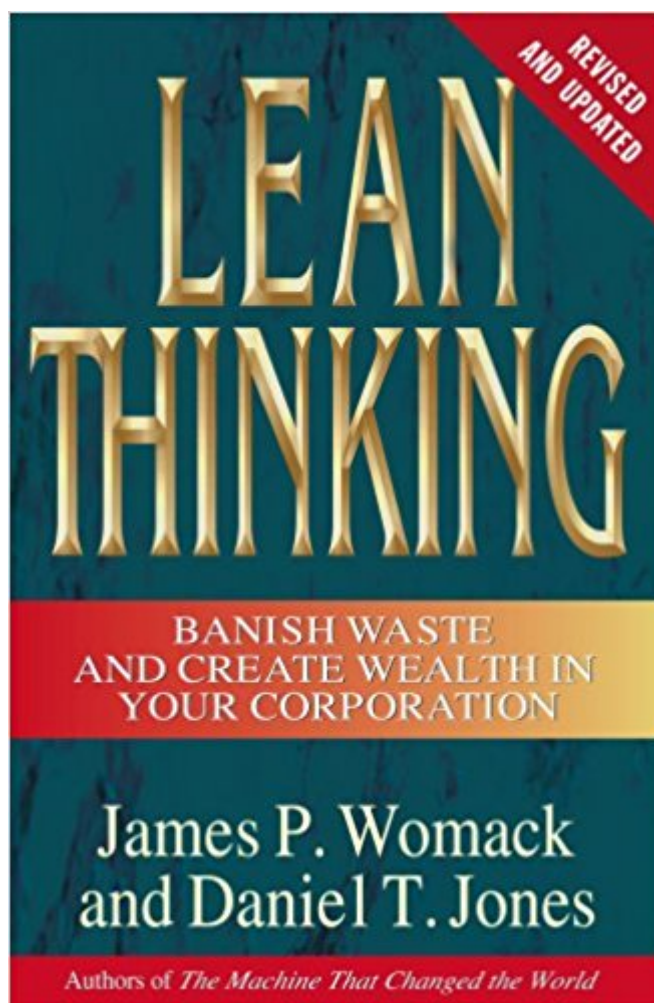


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Lean Thinking: Banish Waste And Create Wealth In Your Corporation



Synopsis

Expanded, updated, and more relevant than ever, this bestselling business classic by two internationally renowned management analysts describes a business system for the twenty-first century that supersedes the mass production system of Ford, the financial control system of Sloan, and the strategic system of Welch and GE. It is based on the Toyota (lean) model, which combines operational excellence with value-based strategies to produce steady growth through a wide range of economic conditions. In contrast with the crash-and-burn performance of companies trumpeted by business gurus in the 1990s, the firms profiled in *Lean Thinking* -- from tiny Lantech to midsized Wiremold to niche producer Porsche to gigantic Pratt & Whitney -- have kept on keeping on, largely unnoticed, along a steady upward path through the market turbulence and crushed dreams of the early twenty-first century. Meanwhile, the leader in lean thinking -- Toyota -- has set its sights on leadership of the global motor vehicle industry in this decade. Instead of constantly reinventing business models, lean thinkers go back to basics by asking what the customer really perceives as value. (It's often not at all what existing organizations and assets would suggest.) The next step is to line up value-creating activities for a specific product along a value stream while eliminating activities (usually the majority) that don't add value. Then the lean thinker creates a flow condition in which the design and the product advance smoothly and rapidly at the pull of the customer (rather than the push of the producer). Finally, as flow and pull are implemented, the lean thinker speeds up the cycle of improvement in pursuit of perfection. The first part of this book describes each of these concepts and makes them come alive with striking examples. *Lean Thinking* clearly demonstrates that these simple ideas can breathe new life into any company in any industry in any country. But most managers need guidance on how to make the lean leap in their firm. Part II provides a step-by-step action plan, based on in-depth studies of more than fifty lean companies in a wide range of industries across the world. Even those readers who believe they have embraced lean thinking will discover in Part III that another dramatic leap is possible by creating an extended lean enterprise for each of their product families that tightly links value-creating activities from raw materials to customer. In Part IV, an epilogue to the original edition, the story of lean thinking is brought up-to-date with an enhanced action plan based on the experiences of a range of lean firms since the original publication of *Lean Thinking*. *Lean Thinking* does not provide a new management "program" for the one-minute manager. Instead, it offers a new method of thinking, of being, and, above all, of doing for the serious long-term manager -- a method that is changing the world.

Book Information

File Size: 4165 KB

Print Length: 396 pages

Publisher: Free Press; 2nd edition (November 23, 2010)

Publication Date: November 23, 2010

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0048WQDIO

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #87,537 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #10 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Quality Control #34 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Management > Strategic Management #39 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Business & Money > Entrepreneurship & Small Business > Entrepreneurship > Management

Customer Reviews

This is a new and expanded second edition of a book first published in 1996. Of special interest to me was what Womack and Jones had to say in the preface regarding what has since happened to the companies previously discussed. Apparently lean thinking has enabled Toyota, Wiremold, Porsche, Lantech, and Pratt & Whitney to sustain operational excellence and economic prosperity. Briefly, how do Womack and Jones define lean thinking? It is the opposite of muda (a Japanese) word for anything which consumes resources without creating value. In a word, waste. Lean thinking is lean because "it provides a way to do more and more with less and less -- less human effort, less equipment, less time, and less space -- while coming closer and closer to providing customers with exactly what they want." Lean thinking is thus a process of thought, not an expedient response or a stop-gap solution. The challenge, according to Womack and Jones, is to convert muda into real, quantifiable value and the process to achieve that worthy objective requires everyone within an organization (regardless of size or nature) to be actively involved in that process. Once again, in this new edition they address questions such as these: 1. How can certain "simple, actionable principles" enable any business to create lasting value during any business conditions? 2.

How can these principles be applied most effectively in real businesses, regardless of size or nature?3. How can a relentless focus on the value stream for every product create "a true lean enterprise that optimizes the value created for the customer while minimizing time, cost, and errors"?In Part IV, Womack and Jones update the continuing advance of of lean thinking.

I think this book is largely bogus. Sure there is logic in having an efficient system to your manufacturing process and in buying the machines you actually need instead of something too big or too inflexible. But while the Japanese may have ninjas and 'Asian sexual secrets,' they haven't discovered any new principles of manufacturing that we insecure Americans didn't already know a long time ago. Despite the stylish Japanese mumbo-jumbo, there isn't much in this 'lean thinking' that Henry Ford didn't already have figured out by 1914, although the limitations of the technology of that day prevented him from implementing his ideas fully. Speaking of Henry Ford, among the historical inaccuracies in this book is the oft-repeated untruth that all the millions of Ford Model T cars produced over 19 years were all exactly alike. The truth is that several body styles, ranging from open touring cars to 'Torpedo Roadsters' to closed sedans were produced, and the entire line went through at least two major styling changes and thousands of mechanical improvements. Some parts of this book just don't make any sense at all, revealing amazingly poor writing on the part of the authors and -- given that this is the revised edition -- an astonishing lack of critical thinking on the part of eager readers. For example, on page 178 it is told how Pratt & Whitney replaced a particularly inefficient turbine blade grinding machine with 'eight simple three-axis grinding machines.' But in the very next paragraph they mention 'each of the nine machines,' and then go on to say, 'The number of parts in the process would fall from about 1,640 to 15 (one in each machine plus one waiting to start and one blade just completed).

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