



UNCOMMON IDEAS ON THE “SOFT SIDE” OF LEAN

Karl J. Ahlrichs, SPHR

Conference Presentations - Keynotes - Facilitation

Expert ideas and trends for difficult times, delivered with humor to tough audiences. Special expertise with applying leading edge Human Capital practices to LEAN implementation.

Expertise

- LEAN Theory
- Performance Management
- Employees/Workforce Issues
- Human Resources/Labor Relations
- Organizational Development
- Skilled Facilitator
- Humorist



“...a wonderful example of a speaker who offers solid information, fresh statistics, professional delivery, relevant humor and terrific storytelling.”

- AICPA Program Chair



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"Karl always provides great insights and learning points on the soft side of lean. I never fail to come away from Karl's presentations without pages of notes. His teaching on hiring practices, leadership, and communications are relevant and on target."

Greg Brewer, Continuous Improvement Manager
Emerson Industrial Automation Power Transmission Solutions
Monticello, IN
greg.brewer@emerson.com

"Karl is a gifted communicator who engages his manufacturing and human resource backgrounds to illuminate current business issues. His grasp of motivation, employee retention, demographic shifts and workplace satisfaction merges seamlessly with his understanding of continuous improvement in general and Lean Manufacturing specifically to create challenging and accessible presentations."

Joe Ely, Operations Manager
Cook Biotech
West Lafayette, IN
ely@cookbiotech.com

Also: Chairperson of Steering Committee, Wabash Valley Lean Network,
Lafayette, IN

"Karl is an outstanding speaker who always delivers a program that is both incisive, thought provoking, informative and value-adding, while at the same time entertaining and humorous. He is an HR professional with expertise in several areas, but particularly gifted at addressing the cultural-change aspects of Lean and Continuous Business Process Improvement."

Karl will fully engage any audience, warrant their full attention and cause them wish it was not time for his program segment to end. Feedback we have always received from Karl's program attendees has been, "Bring Karl back again soon!"

Pete Wagoner
Director, Industry Support
Greater Lafayette Commerce
Lafayette, IN
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LEAN and Continuous Improvement Presentations

Karl's focus is on aligning people practices with LEAN to produce bottom-line results—Leadership, Communication and Managing Change.

Each of these can be a Keynote, a Concurrent, or a Workshop.

Thinking INSIDE the Box - Working With CFOs

Themes: Strategy, Aligning LEAN with Organizational Strategy, Communication Challenges

Me vs. You vs. Them - Managing across Multiple Generations in LEAN Cultures

Themes: How we are alike, not different, new data on the generations, how to manage in a LEAN culture

Great Ideas Are Not Enough - Communicating LEAN Up and Down the Organization

Themes: Listening as the single most important skill, Understanding the audience, Presentation skills

LEAN Success vs. LEAN Failure - Changing the Culture within an Organization

Themes: Identifying the Ideal Employee, Key Supervisory Skills, Why Plans Fail

Hiring Smart - Aligning Applicants with LEAN Values

Themes: Sourcing and Staffing “LEAN” advocates, Psychometric Assessments, Applying LEAN theory to hiring

Luck as a Competitive Advantage - Find and Hire Fortunate People

Themes - Hiring, Retention, Behavior and looking at the workforce from a different viewpoint.

The New Definition of Leadership in a “Not Normal” World

Theme: Building leadership at all levels, Setting high standards, Personal “Branding”



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Karl Ahlrichs, SPHR

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Karl Ahlrichs is a professional presenter in the LEAN Theory, Strategic HR and CFO marketplaces. He has developed and presented complex presentations for multiple industries, and has facilitated challenging meetings with tough audiences. Karl has a proven understanding of the motivation and psychology that enables behavior change, and he has achieved the Senior Professional, Human Resources certification from the HRCI. He has learned from the masters in the speaking profession, working with Patricia Fripp and Alan Weiss on platform skills, and is comfortable in all industries and organizational types.

Selected 2012 Presentations Include:

- Wabash Valley Lean Network**, Indianapolis, IN – “The Soft Side of LEAN – Building a Sustainable Culture ”
- Firestone Building Products**, Florida – “Aligning Organizational Values with Continuous Improvement”
- American Institute of CPAs**, Washington, DC – National Conference for Not-For-Profits – “Hot Topics in Human Capital”
- Thalhimer Commercial Real Estate**, Williamsburg, VA – Annual Meeting of Regional Cushman & Wakefield firm – “Strategic Generational Issues in the Future”
- Tobias Leadership Institute**, Indianapolis, IN – Keynote for Senior Leadership Dinner – “Risk, Rewards, and Cannibalism”
- Wisconsin SHRM Conference**, WI, - Opening Keynote – “Great Ideas Aren’t Enough - Selling LEAN Theory to HR and CFOs That Don’t Care”
- Washington Banker’s Association**, Leavenworth, WA, - “Applying LEAN Theory to Wellness and HR”
- Maryland CPA Society**, Towson, MD – Luncheon Keynote – “Trends and Future Issues”

Professional Experience

Over 30 years of presentation experience in all industries, with a focus on LEAN Theory, Strategic Human Resources and Human Capital issues. Over 20 years of training and facilitation experience with a wide range of clients, including Apple, Amdahl, Roche, Boeing, Marsh & McLennan, AB Dick and IBM. Keynote and concurrent presenter at dozens of conferences per year, with audience sizes from 20 to more than 1000.



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Thinking Inside the Box: What the “C Suite” Thinks of LEAN and Continuous Improvement

Themes: Strategy, Aligning LEAN with Organizational Strategy, Communication Challenges

Operations has advocated continuous improvement for years, but the same love is often not felt at the Executive level, especially in the CFO's office. In this fast-paced session, the efforts of continuous improvement is reviewed from several points of view.

How does the VP of Operations think LEAN lines up with efficiency and economy of scale? How does the CFO think training pays off? How does the CEO think that Six Sigma efforts help with the sustainability of the organization?

After reviewing the strategic viewpoints of departments outside of Continuous Improvement, Karl will offer three specific tactics to overcome the disconnects. Practical methods that will be reviewed include aligning hiring with LEAN values, using wellness and training as engagement strategies, and improving communication through management training.

Learning objectives:

- How LEAN aligns with the strategic plan, and impacts organizational operations
- Metrics that CFOs use to evaluate continuous improvement, and what metrics will be used in the future
- How LEAN aligns with Human Capital Financial Statements, and how strategic planning can use workforce planning to build a sustainable culture.
- When engagement is not the answer - business models that reward high turnover
- How Wellness and Health Benefits can become a key part of an effective engagement strategy
- How to properly communicate the value of what you do with the C-Suite



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Me vs. You vs. Them - Managing and Communicating Across Multiple Generations in LEAN Cultures

Themes: How we are alike, not different, new data on the generations, how to manage in a LEAN culture

Simply put, much of what you think you know about the newest generation in the workforce is out of date. In this fast-paced update to your knowledge, Karl Ahlrichs will share some new and quite surprising information about the latest crop of employees that are arriving in our organizations.

Some samples of the new information:

- We are more alike than we thought - there are three core values that all generations rate as the “top 3”.

- Video games have more of an impact than you think, in a surprising way. We may have to redesign what we call work.

- 65% of respondents agreed that generation gaps make it hard to get things done at work

- 24% of Traditionalists, 30% of Baby Boomers and over 60% of Xers said they feel their generation is viewed negatively

- Money isn't a motivator. Millennials indicated that flexible workplace and opportunity for promotion was more important than salary

Why bother learning this? Generational and personal differences make it difficult to create a “high performing” culture, and good metrics are hard to find. Karl Ahlrichs, consultant and expert on these issues will share insight on generational challenges that may be causing problems. The “newest generation” that has been moving into your organization is going to either be a wonderful asset or a problem to manage. Come and learn which will be true for you.

Karl practices what he preaches, and has built high performing cultures in tough environments using leading edge tactics and an “Employer of Choice” culture. In this fast paced presentation, Karl will share his “real world” experiences and will offer direct advice on measuring and leveraging your biggest off balance sheet asset, and probably your biggest asset, period. That asset is, of course, people.



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Communicating LEAN Up and Down the Organization

Themes: Listening as the single most important skill, Understanding the audience, Presentation skills

Why bother? Effective communication skills form the foundation for sustaining a LEAN culture. We make two common mistakes - we overlook the significance of communication, or assume that we are good at it.

You cannot implement LEAN without being able to communicate your ideas well. People will not follow you unless you establish trust, which is a result of effective two-way communication. **This is important.** When you master this topic, you harness a great deal of power - the power to get things done through others.

Effective communication is:

- ✦ Knowing who needs what information, and communicating that information in a concise, timely way.
- ✦ Choosing the most appropriate communication medium-oral or written-for who will receive the information and how will be used.
- ✦ Knowing how to listen effectively

Helping others communicate effectively, to ensure that communication occurs among all workers and at all levels.

This presentation covers five key communication skill areas:

Listening to others, actively listening and understanding the comments and questions of others.

Speaking effectively; speaking clearly and expressing ideas well, both in groups and one-on-one conversations.

Delivering presentations; preparing and delivering clear, smooth presentations. Comfortable in front of a group

Promoting open communication, creating an atmosphere in which timely and high-quality information flows smoothly up and down the organization.

Preparing written communication, able to convey information through both formal and informal documents, and can constructively review and edit other's work



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LEAN Success vs. LEAN Failure - Changing the Culture within an Organization

Themes: Identifying the Ideal Employee, Key Supervisory Skills, Why Plans Fail

Everyone hates a train wreck. The road to LEAN is littered with the failures of organizations that were organized on paper but unprepared for the culture change that happens with LEAN. In this fast paced session, we look at getting ready for change, then changing to the new world of LEAN, and finally sustaining the change into the future.

This is not a session on how to implement LEAN. This is a session on getting your people (and your new hires) to adapt to the new mindset required for a sustainable LEAN operation.

We will look at:

- What is the ideal employee for a LEAN culture?

- What supervisory skills fit a LEAN culture?

- Setting the stage for cultural change

- Training supervisors in managing others through change

- Screening new people for alignment with LEAN principles

- How do you know you are succeeding? What metrics to watch.

Our presenter is expert in the “soft side” of LEAN, having led multiple staffing and supervisory training projects that have been key to the success of LEAN efforts in both manufacturing and service industries.



UNCOMMON IDEAS ON THE “SOFT SIDE” OF LEAN

Hiring Smart - Using “Lean Thinking” to Align Hiring With Organizational Values

Themes: Sourcing and Staffing “LEAN” advocates, Psychometric Assessments, Applying LEAN theory to hiring

Why do organizations struggle with hiring new team members that align with LEAN principles? How can a company get it so right once and so wrong the next time? This is for people who have ever hired someone who didn't meet expectations, invested in their training only to see them leave, or they just can't find enough good people.

It's time to look beyond the “buzzwords” and truly rethink the hiring process. This is a fast-paced look at some clever and aggressive new hiring processes that save money, time and effort and are legally compliant. Mixing fresh case studies with psychological theory, Karl covers new ground with a data-driven look at the hiring process.

The content is directly aimed at the issues of Staffing and Management, with significant external strategic business areas of operations and finance included in the session. It is presented by an HR professional with SPHR certification, and was presented at both the SHRM National conference and SHRM Strategic HR Conference in 2007.

The agenda includes:

- The view from CEO - the alignment of values and purpose
- Why very little has changed in 50 years
- Why hiring managers are blocking new hiring methods
- Sincere but failed strategies
- How to fix the problem – real life case studies

All of this is based on an examination and re-thinking of the hiring process using “Lean Thinking” processes, and can be applied to any organization.

Bad hires come from bad data, and this session shares good, practical secrets for HR Professionals. Karl will challenge existing hiring processes, and give practical tips and advice on making clever process changes that will produce real results.



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Luck as a Competitive Advantage - Find and Hire Fortunate People

Themes - Hiring, Retention, Behavior and looking at the workforce from a different viewpoint.

It never fails. A few “unlucky” people often cause a high percentage of an organization’s safety issues. Wouldn’t it be great if you could spot “bad luck” BEFORE you make a hiring offer, or coach “fortunate” skills in existing employees? Given the importance of luck, it is vital to understand and measure it, and then assess and hire or train for it.

Take a look at a key area of the workforce from a fresh viewpoint. This presentation is based on ongoing research on the psychological and behavioral foundations of fortunate behavior. Engaging the audience with a data-based examination of luck, the presentation uses assessment methods and psychological theory to develop a better understanding of fortunate behavior, and closes with direct, practical advice on reducing the “victim” mentality in an organization.

Topics covered include:

- The four main differences between lucky and unlucky people
- Benefits of luck in the workplace to a sustainable LEAN culture
- How to screen and hire for luck
- How to make unlucky people more fortunate

Results

- A solid understanding of fortunate behavior, in life and in the workplace
- How to select a lucky workforce
- How to train your existing workforce to be more lucky.



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The New Definition of Leadership in a “Not Normal” World

Theme: Building leadership at all levels, Setting high standards, Personal “Branding”

Simply put, leadership is at the core of the workplace issues on our collective front burners. The economy is pushing everything, and the new workforce has shorter attention spans and higher standards. The leadership model must change to reflect this new world.

Karl shares how good leadership can be the “silver bullet” for building a sustainable LEAN culture, and gives “real-life” examples of how to grow a high performing continuous improvement culture in any organization.

Topics covered include:

The rules are changing—What is behind the new challenges, and how it will get worse before it gets better.

A short list of what makes a leader — the four main character traits in leadership.

A job description for a modern leader.

Why is leadership so hard to attain? Three reasons why leadership is so elusive, and two ways to fix the problem.

Managers v. Leaders—how to tell them apart.

How to make order from the chaos, and the importance of standing for something.

Shakespeare got it right — the passage from “Hamlet” that summarizes it all.

Overall lessons learned:

Leaders are authentic.

Leaders are listeners, and are fueled by curiosity

Leaders encourage, but are never satisfied. They are always raising the stakes

Leaders provide direction (That’s different than providing the answers)

Leaders make unexpected connections. They see patterns

Leaders protect their people from danger, but expose them to reality.

Leaders stand for values that don’t change

And, finally, leaders make more leaders.