

Beethoven, Shakespeare and the Ancient Greeks Knew the Secret to LEAN Success—First Design a LEAN Process then Teach the Process

Abstract: Companies who first train their people in LEAN fail to become LEAN. To be a LEAN organization do the same with your processes as does an orchestra or the theatre. They build a process first then they teach the process. First build a LEAN process then teach how to do the process right.

Keywords: LEAN manufacturing, LEAN process, business process design

In the 18th Century Beethoven knew how to make LEAN work. In the 16th Century Shakespeare knew how to make LEAN work. Even the ancient Greeks in 600 BCE knew how to make LEAN work. What Beethoven with his music, Shakespeare with his plays and the ancient Greeks with their drama knew was you need the right process first, then you teach the people to do the process right.

Figure 1 shows the start of a Beethoven orchestral score. The score sheet is the process design, the process description, the procedure and the work instruction in one. When you want to hear this Beethoven concert you give the orchestra the score sheet and then they play their instruments just as it says to do on the document. If you do that you will get Beethoven’s music every time.

CONCERT
 für die Violine
 von
L. van BEETHOVEN.
 Stephan von Breuning gewidmet.
 Op. 61.

Serie 4. N^o 29.

Componirt im Jahre 1806.

Allegro, ma non troppo.
 TUTTI.

The image shows the beginning of a musical score for a concert. It features multiple staves for different instruments: Flauto, Oboi, Clarinetti in A., Fagotti, Corni in D., Trombe in D., Timpani in D.A., Violino principale, Violino I., Violino II., Viola, and Violoncello e Basso. The score is written in musical notation with various dynamics and markings such as 'p dolce' and 'cresc. f'.

Figure 1 – Start of a Score Sheet for a Beethoven Concert

If you want to present a Shakespearian play or a Greek tragedy you first get the entire script, then you give it to the actors to learn and to do what is written in the playwright’s script. The script is a theatrical document containing the process, the procedure, and the work instructions of how to do the play exactly as Shakespeare and the ancient Greeks designed them to be presented. By following Shakespeare’s script you will replicate the play he wrote centuries ago just as he intended it to be

delivered. So too with an ancient Greek drama. You take the script of a Greek tragedy or comedy written millennia ago, follow the script and you will get your Greek drama theatre show. The composer's music score and the playwright's script are documents containing the complete details of what to do and how to do it. They must first be created and made available in a useable form before you can get people to play the music and act the play right.

Whether it's a score or a script, they each contain and explain the "role model" for each person in the orchestra or in the play to follow. What is important for each of the orchestra members' to do is clearly stated in Beethoven's score. What Shakespeare wanted each actor to say and do is in his script. Both men died centuries ago but their creations live on exactly as they wrote them during their lives because they precisely contain the instructions of what everyone must do to get their music or plays right. No matter who in the world wants to present a Beethoven concert or a Shakespearean play they have the complete process available to follow, and they only need to teach people how to do it right. This pre-documented role modelling is also what companies must first do if they want their people and organization to become LEAN and remain LEAN.

If you want to be certain to create a LEAN company, you must first plan, design and build LEAN processes exactly as you want them to be done. You then teach the people doing the processes how to make them work properly. That is the secret to sure LEAN success. It's the same "secret" that composers and playwrights have known for centuries—the right process design comes first and then you train people how to do the process right. Nothing else works as certain as doing things in that order.

In our world-wide LRS Consultancy, the Plant Wellness Way methodology is used to plan, design and build successful LEAN processes. First we help you to create the right process, then we help you teach your people how to properly do the LEAN methods used in their new process. Just like Beethoven, Shakespeare and the ancient Greeks did with their musical and theatrical creations, you follow a process design in which the success you want is already imbedded. That way you guarantee success because it's already in the process. Simply ask any LRS Consultant how the Plant Wellness Way puts the secret of LEAN success into your company.

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