Networking

greatly favor the ultimate outcomes of lean management, they have not directly rewarded its use. This is another obstacle that often prevents the long-term success of lean implementations, and better lean management is not an exception. Reversing that tendency is the goal of lean practitioners in industry and academia.

Tonya Vinas is a freelance journalist and editor. She is former managing editor of IndustryWeek magazine and is a founder and editor-in-chief of the Lean Accounting News. Her background includes reporting and editing duties at The Times-Picayune (New Orleans), The News-Press (Fort Myers, FL.), and the North Hills News Record (Pittsburgh).

Footnotes
2. Rother, Mike and John Shook, Learning To See, 2003, Lean Enterprise Institute, p. 3.

Lean Transformation: Personal and Organizational Change

The lean journey will never end. This is not news for organizations already in the throes of a lean transformation. How can leadership and others throughout the organization move beyond the lean tools and move to a self-sustaining, continuously-improving performance improvement environment? In their book, The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Lean: Lessons from the Road (SME, Dearborn, MI, 2006), authors Jamie Flinchbaugh and Andy Carlino offer their perspective on what it takes to make it happen.

The basic principles of lean are covered here: 1) Directly observe work as activities, connections, and flows; 2) systematically eliminate waste; 3) agree what and how; 4) systematic problem solving; and create a learning organization. Moving beyond these basics, the authors counsel that people need leadership, not management, for lean success. Leaders are challenged to be teachers. They must also build a sense of urgency for change, not stress; eliminate fear as well as comfort; visibly support and participate in change rather than proclamation; and build lean into personal practice.

Practical advice includes discussion of common pitfalls to avoid (don’t confuse activity with productivity, for example, or confine lean to manufacturing). Lean accounting, lean operating system, lean service, and personal lean suggestions are provided. The personal lean chapter brings home the message of change for those who believe they do not have the power to make a difference. Focus on the customer, learn through plan/do/check/act, master what you can control, and learn to see more effectively (with your own eyes) for greater understanding. In turn, you can build personal effectiveness and potential for influencing others in the organization.