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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**John Shook, author of *Managing to Learn*, Explains Lean Management Advantages**

*John Shook, author of *Managing to Learn*, winner of a 2009 Shingo Research Prize, explained how lean management helps companies fight the recession on two fronts -- strategically and operationally -- during a recent conference keynote presentation.*

Cambridge, Mass., April 30, 2009 -- In economic booms or busts, lean management provides the key to sustainable profitability, according to John Shook, business book author and lean management expert.

Shook, a senior advisor to the nonprofit Lean Enterprise Institute (LEI), summarized key lean management lessons for today. Drawing parallels between the current **economic crisis** and the crisis Toyota faced in its formative period around 1950, Shook suggested that “Toyota had developed a system to enable companies to thrive in periods of economic downturns as well as boom times.” But, recently:

“In the rush to meet the demand of some extraordinary boom periods of the past decade and a half -- the dot com boom, the China phenomenon, the loose credit of the subprime mortgage debacle -- basic principles of lean thinking have been overlooked. Even Toyota seems to have forgotten them.”

Shook gave advice to companies facing today’s crisis:

**Return to the Basics of Lean Production**

“Companies today need to fight the current economic battle on two fronts: operational and strategic. Strategically, this is not the time to try to hunker down, simply cut costs, and wait out the storm! Times such as these are when markets will realign -- smart companies will try to control their destinies by seeking ways to increase market share.

“On the operational front, companies need to return to the basics of lean production -- smart companies will stop overproducing while improving responsiveness and flexibility by reducing lead times,” Shook said.

Shook was Toyota's first non-Japanese manager at the company's headquarters in Japan. He worked for Toyota for 11 years, helping the company spread its management and production system around the world.

To learn more about lean management and the role of lean leadership, view the archived webinar by John Shook and LEI Founder James P. Womack, Ph.D. at:

[http://www.lean.org/images/october\\_webinar\\_project\\_slides.PDF](http://www.lean.org/images/october_webinar_project_slides.PDF)

Shook made his remarks during the keynote presentation at IndustryWeek's annual Best Plants Conference, April 28, 2009, at the Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, TN.

### **The Birth of Lean Production**

**John Shook** is co-author of the popular *Learning to See* workbook that introduced value-stream mapping as a tool for identifying nonvalue-adding waste in work processes. He is the author of *Managing to Learn*, which won a 2009 Shingo Research Prize for its description of how A3 reports support lean management and lean leadership.

Shook helped to translate into English two new LEI books. *The Birth of Lean* is a compilation of first person accounts by the Toyota executives who created the Toyota Production System (TPS), the first lean business system. *Kaizen Express* is a simple but comprehensive primer on the major elements of TPS and how to implement them.

### **Lean Workshops**

The Lean Enterprise Institute (LEI) runs monthly regional training in North America on basic and more advanced lean tools. These practical how-to courses address such issues as A3 reports, 5S, value-stream management, continuous flow, material handling, pull systems, and value-stream mapping for office, service, healthcare, or manufacturing environments.

Specialized workshops address how to apply lean principles in high-mix, low-volume environments, warehouses, and logistics. LEI also offers an expanded curriculum of seminars on leadership, culture change, and **lean management**. Details: <http://www.lean.org/Workshops/>

### **About the Lean Enterprise Institute**

The Lean Enterprise Institute, Inc. was founded in 1997 by management expert **James P. Womack**, Ph.D., as a nonprofit research, education, publishing, and conferencing company with a mission to advance lean thinking around the world. We teach courses, hold management seminars, write and publish books and workbooks, and organize public and private conferences. We use the surplus revenues from these activities to conduct research projects and to support other lean initiatives such as the Lean Education Academic Network ([www.teachinglean.org](http://www.teachinglean.org)) and the Lean Global Network ([www.leanglobal.org](http://www.leanglobal.org)). For more information visit LEI at <http://www.lean.org>. Lean Enterprise Institute and the leaper image are registered trademarks of Lean Enterprise Institute, Inc.