

Foreword

Lean thinkers have many tools available today. Indeed, the Lean Enterprise Institute has provided a number of these. Value-stream maps. Guides to cell design. Instructions for pull systems. Advice on handling materials and information. Even guidance on looking at value streams and information and material flow between firms with shared value streams.

However, it is widely noted that the sum is less than the parts. With so many good tools available, we should have made much greater progress in creating lean enterprises. The problem is management. Specifically it's the tenacious hold of traditional mass production management with its top-down, manage-by-results mindset that never examines the process for deploying policy.

There have been policy management tools designed to counteract this bias, of course. Dozens of books on hoshin kanri (also called policy deployment) are available. And many of these contain valuable advice, in particular on selecting organizational objectives and getting alignment.

But again, the sum is less than the parts. Many organizations with elaborate policy deployment mechanisms in place never seem to actually deploy policy. They bog down selecting the right things to do and never get the right things done.

Years ago we observed that this does not seem to be a problem at Toyota. This firm is not only highly effective at selecting the right things to do—witness the brilliant decision to pursue hybrid technology when other companies were paralyzed—but is highly effective in getting the right things done once selected.

As we thought about creating a leader's guide for getting the right things done we naturally looked for someone familiar with the Toyota system. Indeed, we wanted someone who had not just studied it but actually used the Toyota method.

Fortunately, Pascal Dennis stepped forward. He was a manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada at a time of rapid expansion when many things needed to be done quickly and correctly. He learned firsthand how to apply Toyota's strategy deployment method in this continually changing environment. Since leaving Toyota he has learned how to teach the method by coaching senior managers in a wide range of industries from manufacturing to healthcare to construction.

In the pages ahead, Pascal will illustrate the method by telling the story of the imaginary (but very real) Atlas Industries as it switches from traditional planning methods to rigorous strategy deployment. He will explain in detail how you and your organization can get the right things done by applying the method consistently.

We are aware that few readers of this guide will be leading organizations exactly like Atlas. And many readers will be involved in operations far from traditional manufacturing, ranging from financial services to healthcare to maintenance. Other readers are likely to be concerned foremost with functional areas of their organizations: product development, purchasing, marketing, sales, finance, and so on. Toyota's planning and execution method applies to all industries and functions. It provides the same advantages in every application.

To help readers make the transition from Atlas to their reality, we have created a web page for this book at the LEI website (www.lean.org/gtrd). It provides examples of strategy deployment in a range of environments. It also provides many of the forms described in this leader's guide along with answers by the author to reader questions.

While the method described in these pages is simple, applying it will be a considerable leap for most organizations. Given the nature and magnitude of your challenge, we are eager to hear about your successes as well as

your difficulties and to connect you with others in the Lean Community tackling similar problems. Please contact us and the author by sending your comments and question to grtd@lean.org. With a bit of practice and through wide sharing of experience, all of us can move steadily ahead in getting the right things done.

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