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If You Don't Enjoy Learning, Don't Try Lean Management

*Caution from Michael Ballé, co-author of *The Lean Manager*, published by the Lean Enterprise Institute (LEI).*

11.12.2009 – “I don’t believe everybody should start lean,” declared Michael Ballé, co-author of *The Lean Manager*, the new business novel about a lean transformation, published by the nonprofit Lean Enterprise Institute.

“Lean is a method to make you more effective than your competitors,” Balled continued during the latest [Business901 podcast interview](#) (Use the podcast Resource Link in the lower right-side column). “So lean is not something you have to do. Lean is something you want to do to beat competitors, and it’s going to take extra work, especially at first. Lean is targeted to a certain kind of person who enjoys learning and is committed to self-development as opposed to just running things as they are.”

Ballé explained that this commitment to learning and self-development is a central theme of the book and its characters. The characters who wind up working together more productively, despite differences in attitudes or personalities, are those who are equally committed to self-development through lean techniques.

Ballé said during the podcast that he used the novel format because it allowed characters to have conversations that reveal and teach lean concepts better than the standard business book format.

Leading a Lean Transformation

The *Lean Manager* follows the actions and interactions of a CEO who is leading the lean transformation of a large company and one of his key plant managers who struggles to implement a lean management system with other managers and associates in order to save the plant. The book is the sequel to *The Gold Mine*, which showed managers how to comprehensively introduce lean tools as a system. The *Lean Manager* shows business leaders how to sustain the tools and system by transforming their attitudes and relationships with workers to create a lean culture.

The Lean Manager

By Freddy and Michael Ballé

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471 pages

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What is Lean?

The terms lean manufacturing, lean production, or lean management refer to a complete business system for organizing and managing product development, operations, suppliers, customer relations, and the overall enterprise that requires less capital, material, space, time, or human effort to produce products and services with fewer defects to precise customer desires, compared with traditional modern management.

Lean Enterprise Institute

Lean Enterprise Institute, Inc., was founded in 1997 by management expert [James P. Womack](#), Ph.D., as a nonprofit research, education, publishing, and conference 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 support other lean initiatives such as the [Lean Education Academic Network](#), the [Lean Global Network](#) and the [Healthcare Value Leaders Network](#). Visit LEI at <http://www.lean.org> for more information. Lean Enterprise Institute and the leaper image are registered trademarks of Lean Enterprise Institute, Inc.