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Lean Workplace=Better Value

*-- Hixson Knowledge Sharing Forum shows how Lean
isn't just for manufacturing anymore.--*

(CINCINNATI; September 16, 2011) – First introduced in the mid-1990s, Lean methodology has been widely adopted by the manufacturing sector, with companies such as Toyota achieving highly publicized successes. However, at the latest Hixson Knowledge Sharing Forum, “Lean Workplace=Better Value,” sponsored by Hixson Architecture, Engineering, Interiors, Guy Parsons, a founding member of the Lean Enterprise Institute and currently a principal partner at Boston-based Value Stream Solutions, LLC, and Beth Robinson, Hixson’s Director of Continuous Improvement, challenged businesses in other sectors to consider how the concepts of Lean can be used to transform today’s workplace into true workplaces of the future.

“Lean can bring both tangible and intangible results for businesses that choose to apply the methodology to their work processes,” said Robinson. “These results may include making work easier, improving coordination between departments, freeing time and capacity for more creative work, helping build client loyalty, and allowing employees to shape their work life for professional and personal growth.”

According to Parsons, the Lean transformation challenge is about five core principles:

- Specify Value By Product
- Identify The Value Stream
- Make The Product Flow
- At The Pull Of The Customer
- In Pursuit Of Perfection

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When looking to apply Lean to the workplace, Parsons suggests re-designing work and work processes that are focused on the customer. “With Lean, you want to focus on each product/service family and its value stream rather than the organization, its assets, technologies and career paths,” said Parsons. “Ask which activities are wastes and which create value, then enhance those with value and eliminate the waste points to optimize the whole.”

Waste, in fact, is a critical point to be addressed. Parsons cautions companies looking to adopt Lean that unless waste in the process is addressed, simply throwing more resources at a problem will not fix the problem; it will just increase the amount of waste. In addition said Parsons, companies are not necessarily better off with large gains versus small. “If you make 50% improvement in one step versus 5% in 10 steps, you will not be that much better off,” explained Parsons. “The system of steps that you take is key.”

To learn more about how Lean thinking can apply to your workplace, contact John Hudson, Hixson Director of Client Development, at 513-241-1230 or email John at jhudson@hixson-inc.com.

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