

# Leading Your Organization Through Change

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The number of companies successfully instilling the concept of defect elimination in their workforce using The Manufacturing Game® has been growing significantly over the past year. Following our own advice about learning from our successes, we have tried to study how these companies were able to achieve such exceptional results. While the approaches varied widely, they did have a few things in common that we feel were keys to their success.

The Manufacturing Game® workshops are designed to educate the workforce about defect elimination and to motivate them - particularly the front line workers - to take action to eliminate defects immediately. What the workshop does not directly address are the leadership roles necessary to organize such a large change effort. The companies that have been extremely successful in using The Manufacturing Game® to move their facilities to proactive manufacturing have worked very diligently to determine and develop the necessary leadership roles and skills.

Each company had their own unique approach to developing leadership but what they had in common was that they each developed three different types of leadership. They recognized the need for leadership from the top of the organization that would create the receptivity to new ideas. They fostered leadership from the front line that would help to generate effective Action Teams. Finally they had thought leaders who searched out and championed the right ideas that would translate the goals of executive leadership to the efforts of the front line leaders. These three types of leadership are well articulated in an article by Peter M. Senge of the MIT's Center for Organizational Learning in the February, 1996, issue of The Systems Thinker titled "Rethinking Leadership in the Learning Organization". Senge refers to these distinct types of leaders as Executive Leaders, Local Line Leaders and Internal Networkers. In implementing, the principles of defect elimination, the leaders accomplished the following things.

## **Executive Leaders**

The Executive Leaders set the business context for the change effort. They provide the business imperative for the change. At a large mining client, the business leader explains that they are at a significant cost disadvantage to other mines because of geology and that only through manufacturing excellence can they hope to compete long term. At an automobile manufacturing client, the executive leaders point out that their sales could have been much higher had they not had production constraints. The CEO of a large tire manufacturer described the key strategic initiatives of the business and then linked all but two of them toward their move to proactive manufacturing. Clients, who have no clear business need or who communicate the need poorly, typically get very little traction because the front-line perceives the change (perhaps justifiably) as "flavor of the month."

Executive leaders also control resources, budgets and people. Moving resources around is not enough to get proactive manufacturing started, but failure to move the right resources can kill a bottom-up effort. One chemical processing company saw their efforts stopped cold when an Action Team could not get \$5,000 to rework some valves that had been a nagging reliability problem.

All of the big successes that we have seen have included celebrations of success that were sponsored and endorsed by the Executive Leadership. These clients provided a forum where success was recognized. At one plant, this took the form of a monthly meeting of all the key plant managers where teams would report back on defects eliminated and savings realized.

## **Local Line Leaders**

Local Line Leaders know where the defects are and they know who will get excited about working on those defects. By far, the most important element of a successful workshop is getting the right people there. Not only do Local Line Leaders know who the right people are, they typically have either direct control or influence over who will attend a workshop. One client refers to this process of finding and recruiting the right mechanics, operators and support people as "herding the cats." Local Line Leaders also can help gather information, bring in skills training and communicate roadblocks to the Executive Leaders.

Local Line Leaders are not just supervisors either. At one client, the union leadership plays this role. They actually push management to stay on course with defect elimination. Front-line workers can play this role when they get fired up. At times, engineers or managers who have a tight tie to the front-line can also be these sorts of leaders.

### **Internal Networkers**

Internal Networkers are the people who are excited about the ideas involved in the change and want to see them implemented. Their role is to make the ideas clear to the people who have to implement them. This involves getting the ideas into a form and language where they become "common sense" in the specific company's environment. Sometimes it requires developing new ideas to help people see the connection to other things in their environment. The idea of "stable domains" is a good example. Creation of this way of looking at reactive, planned, and TPM types of maintenance was very necessary at DuPont to see the relevance of all of the benchmark data. The idea of defect elimination didn't become clear within DuPont until the stable domains were articulated. Sometimes the right idea needs to be modified so that it applies within a particular company, industry or culture. The best language for communicating ideas is the sharing of success stories within a company. Nothing makes more "common sense" than a successful implementation within your own site.

One activity that helps Internal Networkers perform their role is interacting with people from other places. Benchmarking is one way to do this. However, a good benchmark should do more than just pick up best practices. It should also dig deep enough to understand the ideas behind the best practices. Another way for Network Leaders to interact with others is to invite people from other sites within your company or from other companies to join you in Manufacturing Game® workshops. This cross-fertilization has been particularly helpful to some of our clients. They find that seeing their company through a "fresh pair of eyes" really helps workshop participants to open up to other paradigms. Many of our clients have also found networking with other certified Manufacturing Game® facilitators from different companies to be an excellent way to share ideas about "what works" when trying to spread the message of defect elimination and improved reliability.

Network leaders perform their role in the world of ideas; places like professional societies or corporate initiatives like the Corporate Maintenance Leadership Team at DuPont. The work here is part of the informal "shadow" network (see Dec. 5, 1997 issue of TMG news) that exists in all organizations and is the fertile place to try new ideas. From this experimenting in the shadows comes the really well formulated ideas that can cause the change effort to be successful.

While we still advocate a "bottoms up" approach to defect elimination, it is clear that the companies that have ALSO developed leadership at the executive, local line and network levels have been more successful at realizing the full value of defect elimination. In 1996, we developed a workshop to help companies address some of the leadership issues associated with changing to proactive manufacturing called Leadership of Change. In 1999, we have incorporated what we learned about the leadership requirements into our Table Facilitator training course. Providing this additional information to Manufacturing Game® facilitators helps them to better facilitate the change process in their plants.

Chances are, if you are reading this newsletter, you are an Internal Networker or perhaps a Local Line Leader. Your first challenge is to identify your Executive Leadership. Who understands the business context? Who can articulate the opportunities in a way that connects to the front-line? How can you get them to play that role? Just as importantly Internal Networkers have to recruit the Local Line Leaders to make sure that the right problems are tackled and the right people are involved. To find these leaders, you need to look for who has influence with the front-line and is open to new ideas. Finally, you have to play your role. Promote the concept of proactive manufacturing as a solution to the Executive Leadership's business needs. Encourage the Local Line Leaders to get involved and sell them on the benefits that they will realize from the process. Continue to network both inside and outside of your organization to find best practices, to promote your successes and to keep the momentum going.