Lean Operations: A Literature Overview

This document offers a literature review of Lean Operations with an eye toward application in the arts. We've divided the review into three sections. The first part offers an overview on lean thinking. The second part offers some (limited) perspective on Lean as applied in not-for-profit/arts contexts. The third part offers an overview of Agile Management as an alternative or complement to Lean.

In general, the thinking goes that Lean applies to making stable, repeatable processes more efficient (e.g., putting on a production, managing Development activities) and Agile focuses on improving speed and outcome of innovation. In contrast to Lean management, Agile is more about replacing top-down management hierarchies, a concept arts organizations are also exploring within the context of DE&I activities.

To be embraced broadly, either approach requires significant adjustment in organizational mindsets and approach to work, so neither should be adopted lightly. That said, it's possible to adopt either approach in parts of the organization or to achieve certain objectives, which may be the best way to get started.

AN OVERVIEW OF LEAN

What is Lean?
Definition and Framework

"Lean is a way of thinking about creating needed value with fewer resources and less waste. And lean is a practice consisting of continuous experimentation to achieve perfect value with zero waste. Lean thinking and practice occur together."

Source: Lean Enterprise Institute
Author: Lean Enterprise Institute
Date: NA
Link here

Getting Started with Lean Thinking and Practice
Definition and Framework (Video)

"To help leaders and managers begin their lean journey, LEI founder Jim Womack explains the fundamentals of lean thinking and practice and offers practical advice in this animated video."

Source: Lean Enterprise Institute
Author: Jim Womack
Date: July 25 2018
Link here

Setting the Record Straight on Lean

Lean Management (Article)

"Shook said lean/TPS is more accurately categorized as a way of thinking, rather than just a technical system for operating an organization. 'It will go with you as far as you want to go', he said. 'It will go as deep as you want. If you want to cut it off at some fairly mechanical level of making some operational improvements, fine. That's what it will be for you. If you want to see it as a holistic, all-encompassing culture and philosophy and way of working, it will be that and there's no end to the learning that it will take you to.'"

Source: MIT Management Sloan School
Author: Tom Relihan
Date: April 10, 2019
Link here

Lean Strategy

Lean Strategy Process (Article)

"Strategy and entrepreneurship are often seen as polar opposites. Strategy means rigorously defining and pursuing one clear path, while entrepreneurship involves continually changing direction to take advantage of new opportunities. Yet the two desperately need each other: Strategy without entrepreneurship is central planning; entrepreneurship without strategy leads to chaos. There is a way to reconcile the two, through the lean strategy process."

Source: Harvard Business Review
Author: David J. Collis
Date: March 2016
Link here

LEAN IN NOT-FOR-PROFIT ENVIRONMENTS

Adapting Lean Six Sigma for a Non-Profit Organization

Lean for non-profits (Article)

·Pages 5-6: What is Lean Six Sigma?

"Lean Six Sigma originally came from manufacturing industries and has now found its way to services. "Lean Six Sigma: A Literature Review" mentions that in addition to manufacturing Lean Six Sigma has also become very common in healthcare, since defects and errors are even less tolerable in this industry. Lean Six Sigma is not only in healthcare and manufacturing but is also seen in government, the military, and financial services."

·Pages 6-8: Nonprofit Case Studies.

A literature review.

·Pages 11-28 DMAIC Methodology:

"The DMAIC method stands for Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control. DMAIC is the main method for Lean Six Sigma implementation. It is used to identify problem areas, define root causes and constraints to an issue, measures current state processes, analyze the data and observations collected, make recommendations to improve the current state process, and then propose ways to control and monitor improvement changes."

Source: California Polytechnic State University
Author: Jocelyn De Leon
Date: June 2016
Link here

10 Ways Nonprofits Can Develop A 'Lean Startup' Mentality
Lean for non-profits (Article)

"The term "lean startup" relies on scientific principles to help get a business's product into the consumer's hands in as short a time as possible. It's basically a roadmap to help startups know what to do next. By strategically planning out what the startup should be looking at, there's less trial and error involved in moving the business from one stage of development to another. This approach could be a game-changer for nonprofits. However, since a nonprofit isn't a startup, some things will need to change. To help, 10 professionals from Forbes Nonprofit Council share a few ways that nonprofits can seek to develop a "lean startup" mentality and access their audience more efficiently."

Source: Forbes
Author: Forbes Nonprofit Council
Date: Sep 21, 2020
Link here

The Influence of Lean Management Practices on Process Effectiveness: A Quantitative Study in a Public Institution

Lean for public institutions (Case study)

"The results of the study allow us to conclude that the factors 'Continuous improvement,' 'Long-term thinking,' 'Leadership support,' and 'Focus on the final user' have a direct impact on the process effectiveness, according to the survey respondents. Therefore, this study goes beyond demonstrating how the process management approach and the Lean system overlap or differ (Maldonado et al., 2020), and shows that Lean practices and values influence and help improve the effectiveness of processes."

"Moreover, in practical terms, the postulates of this research can be taken as the initial step of a more comprehensive management project for public organizations, which is the adoption of basic principles and precepts of Lean management. This involves a long-term change in the way people think and work. The practices of Lean philosophy are intrinsically related to the effectiveness of processes, and thus, decision-making process, leadership style, and people's involvement are seen in another way."

Source: Sage Journals
Author: Leander Luiz Klein, Kelmara Mendes Vieira and Luciano Dibi Ercolani
Date: March 28, 2022
Link here

Applying a LEAN methodology to Arts operations with Tim Kraft

Lean for the Arts (Interview)

What are the key concepts of Lean operations that social enterprises can take away and instantly implement?

"There is a beta test mentality to Lean that I think can be very valuable for social entrepreneurs. For example, there is a concept in lean called a Kaizen Event in which a cross functional team does a deep dive into a portion of an operation for a week (for example) in an attempt to make it run more smoothly. The purpose of the Kaizen Event is not for the team to spend all week designing the new process to be rolled out at the end of the week. Instead, the expectation is that multiple iterations and tests of the new design will be run throughout the week, with the team learning from the iterations – seeing what worked and what didn't and then iterating on a new design. Through this testing process we gain valuable knowledge about our process that allows us to shape it as we iterate."

Source: Global Leaders Institute
Author: NA
Date: NA
Link here

The Limits of the Lean Startup Method

Limits of Lean (Article)

"Advocates of the <u>lean startup method</u> for creating a business advise entrepreneurs, as well as corporate intrapreneurs, to document, test, and refine their assumptions about a new venture's business model via customer conversations and experiments. My recent research on 250 teams that participated in an American cleantech accelerator program during the last 10 years found that while the lean approach can be effective, having a strong strategy is more important than conducting a tremendous number of market tests."

Source: Harvard Business Review
Author: Ted Ladd
Date: March 07, 2016
Link here

AN OVERVIEW OF AGILE

What Is Agile?

Overview of Agile (Article)

"Instead of a corporation being conceived as an efficient steady-state machine aimed at exploiting its existing business model, the Agile organization is a growing, learning, adapting living organism that is in constant flux to exploit new opportunities and add new value for customers."

"Instead of power trickling down from the top, Agile recognizes that the future of a firm depends on inspiring those doing the work to accelerate innovation and add genuine value to customers. It recognizes that enhancing the capacity of those doing the work depends on giving autonomy to self-organizing teams within broad parameters of control. It values transparency and continuous improvement ahead of predictability and efficiency. It recognizes that open interactive conversations are more valuable than top-down directives. It stops doing anything that is not adding value to the ultimate customers. It realizes that the key to success is not to do

more work faster. The key is to be smarter by generating more value from less work and delivering it sooner."

Source: Forbes
Author: Steve Denning
Date: August 13, 2016
Link here

Lean Management or Agile? The Right Answer May Be Both
Discussion of Lean vs. Agile Approaches (Article)

"Lean management is for routine, repeatable operations, this thinking goes, while agile only applies to projects or creative tasks. Therefore organizations, departments or functions need to pick one and focus on it exclusively."

"However, that argument reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of both lean management and agile. In reality, both systems have been successful across a range of environments, and both share a similar set of foundational objectives: to deliver value efficiently for a customer; discover better ways of working to continuously learn and improve; transparently connect strategy and goals to give teams meaningful purpose; and enable people to contribute and lead to their fullest potential."

Source: McKinsey & Company
Author: Stefan de Raedemaecker, Christopher Handscomb, Sören Jautelat, Christopher Handscomb, Soren Jautelat Miguel Rodriguez, and Lucas Wienke.
Date: August 13, 2016
Link here