

NEWSLETTER | PACER | January 2021

President's Message



Dear Friends, warm and friendly wishes for a very Happy New Year 2021. New year always comes with, new hopes and determinations. Last year 2020, especially up to Quarter 3, we witnessed a challenging scenario due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The industrial activities of the country almost came to a grinding halt, with prolonged lock downs and restrictions on movements of people as well as on transport.

Year 2021 dawns with good hopes. The vaccination for Covid-19 has been administrated to people in many countries across the world. Let us pray and hope that, the worst is over and we have learnt appropriate lessons.

Coming to the activities of APCRE, I would like to give a brief overview of some relevant APCRE activities in 2020:

APCRE compiled a start-up check-list for the MSMEs with details of necessary precautions to be taken to ensure safety of personnel, equipment and the overall enterprise, in the startup operations after nearly three months of lock down. The feedback we received was that the checklist was found to be very useful.

APCRE conducted three webinars on pertinent topics for partner industry associations 1) Revival or survival, the need of the hour, 2) Techniques for growth and global competitiveness, and 3) Safe work environment to boost productivity.

APCRE conducted three training programmes online and the topics of training were 1) Effective Shop Floor Management (2 trainings), and 2) Work Study, Method Study and Work Measurement, handled by APCRE experts. These programmes were well-received and there was constructive feedback from the participants.

APCRE has been bringing out a regular newsletter, "PACER", which gives a brief snapshot of the various activities of APCRE.

APCRE has been regularly interacting with fraternal organizations, industrial bodies and relevant Government departments and exploring ways to serve the MSMEs better. Let us rededicate ourselves to this noble cause.

Raghavan Kadambi
President, APCRE

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A brief summary of APCRE's Webinar on Safe Work Environment to boost Productivity"

A webinar on "Safe Work Environment to Boost Productivity" was organized by APCRE, on November 5, 2020 and it was very well attended.

The President APCRE welcomed the participants and introduced the Chief guest Mr. Saravanan Ramalingam, Team Leader - EHS, Saint Gobain India Private Limited Chennai unit and a renowned Safety and EHS expert.

Inaugurating the proceedings, Mr. Saravanan, shared his experiences as the Head of Safety in his unit and the efforts taken to provide a safe work environment, to its employees, by carrying out "walk the talk" and appropriate "Risk Assessment", and videos and displays. In conclusion, he underlined and illustrated that "safe work environment" really "boosts productivity".

Delivering his key-note, presentation, Dr. S.M. Jagadish, TQM and Lean expert, APCRE, explained in detail through his PPTs, Frank Bird's theory, Heinrich theory, Unsafe acts, Unsafe places and the correlation between them towards causing accidents and the importance of training in creating awareness and the necessity of adopting safety practices to enhance productivity, especially in MSMEs.

Mr. B. Palaniappan, Sr. Technical Consultant, APCRE, handled the Question-and-Answer session and, as a way forward, briefed the expertise available with APCRE and its readiness to conduct safety audits and share case studies where good safety practices have helped to boost productivity.



Photo (from left to right): Dr. S.M. Jagadish & Mr. B. Palaniappan

Delegate to Elevate

Mr. Rajeev Moothedath
Director
Niche Learning Services Pvt. Ltd.,
Bangalore



I attended an online talk on 7th October 2020 organized by Mr. Prakash Sharma, Founder Director, Bija Training. The speaker was Mr. Rohit Toshniwal, Managing Director of the Toshniwal Group, high quality instruments manufacturers'. He spoke on the topic "Delegate to Elevate".

At the outset, the speaker for the day observed that times have changed and that shift is happening in the approach of management from traditional theory of heroic leadership to post-heroic leadership theories. Today, the workforce is a lot more flexible and agile. They expect to be trusted. The new environment requires a different approach from the "carrot and stick" style of leadership.

As we look at a post-leadership scenario, the topic of "Delegate to Elevate" becomes very relevant and important. In this regard, some of the questions that may come up are: What are the things that can be delegated? To whom and to what extent can it be done? A person may ideally wish to have a number of his clones in various departments who would work and act exactly like him/her. But, in reality this is not possible. It may not even be in the best interests of the organization if divergent views are not expressed.

Mr. Toshniwal said that we need to first look at what exactly "we want to achieve." Having a tangible vision will provide direction on the matter

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of delegation. In this regard, two-way communication is very important as it enables exchange of ideas between people. Delegation should evolve gradually, as you develop the team. After defining the task, you can start out by giving incremental opportunities and responsibilities, increasing it as the delegated person rises to the requirements and expectations. A question that was put to the speaker at this stage was "How does one handle the insecurity involved, at times, while delegating?" Often the boss or the one wielding the power is reluctant to let go. Here, one has to develop maturity to accept the situation, step back and consciously look at the larger goal of the organization to be able to delegate. The team also should be aware of the big picture.

In order to remove insecurity on the part of the person to whom delegation is made, chatting and providing reassurances will go a long way in removing doubts or fears. Mr. Toshniwal gave an instance when delegation did not happen effectively. The communication with overseas principals was being handled only by the middle and senior level management. It was decided to open up the activity to young engineers. However, the youngsters got a little carried-away and there was a mismatch of culture resulting in the overseas customers labelling an engineer as rude and non-cooperative. The engineers who had been excited about the opportunity also became frustrated and unhappy. However, in the area of marketing, particularly in digital marketing, the delegation was found to be very successful.

Effective delegation is about hand- holding while at the same time articulating what you want. Lack of time is no excuse for not delegating. It is also possible to be complacent with thoughts like "Everything is going on well presently. Why upset the apple cart?" What you need to do is to take people out of their comfort zones and encourage them to deliver and they will. Delegation can be used as an important tool for preparing people as part of succession planning. Mr. Toshniwal signed

off by stating that making the organization inclusive is very important. The failure of Blackberry as a company was on account of its rigid structure. 'Trust' is the key for success!

Brief Profile of Rajeev Moothedath

M. N. Rajeev a.k.a. Rajeev Moothedath is a former corporate executive and also a writer and poet. Rajeev retired from Hyundai Motor India Ltd from the position of AGM (HR) and is presently engaged in his twin passions of corporate training and writing articles/ poetry. He writes three blogs containing prose and poetry. His maiden book "Straight from the Heart- Thoughts and Experiences of an HR professional" was published in 2015 followed by "Corporate Poems- Straight & Simple" in 2019.

Creativity among Associates in MSME's

Mr. Manoharan

Senior Consultant, Manufacturing Excellence
Head of Quality & Head - Mission Gemba, Ashok
Leyland, Chennai Plant (Retd.,)



Normally, every industry expects targeted production and a handsome profit achieved through appropriate management strategies, innovations, operational excellence, financial support, strong customer bases, dependable supply chain, adoption of lean manufacturing principles, reputed quality, affordable costs, and skilled human associates.

One may wonder why I prefer to mention "Creativity" as a priority focal point in this context. I recall my interactions with Mr. James P. Womack, the Guru of lean manufacturing principles, while attending one of his conferences. During the tea break, I wanted to know from him, as to what actions could lead to retain a customer

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forever. Mr. Womack, very politely answered, "If you are confident of bringing your customers to "Gemba" and allow them to get a hands-on exposure through interaction with shop floor personnel, i.e., the associates, who could explain about the company's activities, operational procedures, product performances, customer delight, brand and their place in ensuring all these are done appropriately through his skill. If you could do so, the same customer will rope in several others in your stream of business assuming every resource is capitalized. Skilled associates are the best resources of an organization. If they are creative as well, it is still better. But the big question is "how to capitalize-by ensuring creativity among associates?"

Managements have to exhibit a good level of commitment and create a cohesive environment for promoting creativity among all associates. In today's business, the organization with the best creative associates wins its place of pride. Almost every big idea that has ever helped any company was the result of creative thinking, coming from their own personnel at the Gemba. One of the definitions of creativity is "the ability to produce ideas that are both novel and valuable". In fact, we are all creative every day because we are constantly changing ourselves with the ideas we create. When we change ourselves, by being more creative, the environment around us also changes with us.

Creativity can be used to make products, processes and services better in the first place, so that we compete well in the market place. It has been observed that increasing creativity will help the personnel at Gemba to perform better which leads to increase in customer satisfaction levels.

Creativity is the result of integration of our logical left brain with our intuitive right brain. Creativity is more than spontaneity since it involves deliberation as well. It is more than divergent thinking as it converges on some solution.

Management's focus on tapping creativity ideas from its associates by including Kaizens, either small or leap is bound to certainly improve their morale which will fetch improving attendance, enhanced safety levels and participating mechanisms. The money and energy spent on encouraging this creativity is bound to produce amazing results in company's turnover.

Sunrise meetings could be the starting point for this encouragement, during which we have pep-talks, exchange birthday / wedding day greetings, health talks, company, way forwards, competitor details etc. At a certain stage, ideas will emanate from them in many forefronts which can be capitalized as appropriate through suggestion boxes, awarding reward points, gifts for the same etc.

In conclusion, I wish to state, that, challenges lead to change, change leads to rethinking, thinking leads to Creativity and Creativity certainly leads to Success.

Wishing every one of you a Happy New Year 2021 as well as COVID-19 free year ahead with vaccination reaching masses.

KAIZEN - AS IT IS

Mr. Ashok Tyagi

Founder Director
LEAN Horizons India Pvt. Ltd.,



During the World War II Americans, faced acute shortage of trained manpower, to work in the industry for meeting the increased demand of armaments and allied equipment required for warfare. To train new employees in shortest time and still get high

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output, they devised a methodology “Training within Industry” which was also called “Small Step Work Improvement approach”. Instead of encouraging large, radical changes to achieve desired goals, these methods recommended that organizations introduce small improvements, preferably ones that could be implemented on the same day, since in WW II times, there was neither time nor resources for large changes in the production of war equipment. The essence of the approach came down to improving the use of the existing workforce and technologies. After the WWII, Americans virtually gave up these techniques but Japanese adopted them to improve their industrial culture.

Mr. Massaki Imai virtually took this concept and named it “KAIZEN” and taught the world its simplicity and importance. Kaizen implementation doesn’t need high degree of science and technology but it is common sense; therefore, it is easy for workers to understand and implement. Quick wins encourage people at all levels which also results in a healthy and conducive work environment.

KAIZEN - WHAT IT IS?

1. Process Improvement
2. Observation
3. Short Time
4. Zero Investment
5. Use Of New Paradigm
6. Human Development & Empowerment.
7. Profits & Savings

KAIZEN MIND

It is a positive attitude through:

1. The existing operation always has a lot of room for improvement.
2. The existing facilities and methods can always be improved by efforts.

3. The accumulation of improvements makes a big difference

Kaizen primarily works on 3 Principles and 7 Concepts.

Kaizen Principles

1. Process oriented and not result oriented. If we have processes in place, results will show up consistently.
2. It is system oriented. The organization must be system driven and not people driven.
3. No blaming of people. People should be non-judgmental.

Kaizen Concepts

1. PDCA to SDCA.
2. NEXT PROCESS is CUSTOMER.
3. QUALITY FIRST.
4. MARKET IN.
5. UPSTREAM MANAGEMENT.
6. SPEAK WITH DATA.
7. VARIABILITY CONTROL.

Obviously, it is a common sense approach but to tread the path of Kaizen, the organization has to learn the appropriate methodology. It is also true that no implementation or improper implementation will not cause any significant harm to current status.

It is very important that organization trains its people in Kaizen process methodology and implements it to reap good benefits of this easy to adopt and apply approach.

Brief Profile of Mr. Ashok Tyagi

Mr. Ashok Tyagi, is presently a freelance Lean and operational excellence Consultant and Trainer. He was the Former founder partner & Director LEAN INDIA CONSULTING GROUP and also Founder Director of LEAN HORIZONS INDIA PVT. LTD. (in collaboration with Lean Horizons Consulting USA.)

Converting Movement into Motion for Indian MSMEs - Part II (of IV)

Mr. Venkata Subramanian,
Senior Consultant, APCRE



Dear Readers, I welcome you back for continuing our discussion from the last issue of PACER, our e-newsletter, wherein we have discussed about the importance of two Ts, viz., **Technology** and **Training**, against the back drop of Covid-19, and its impact on the world of business and in particular, how it has impacted the MSME in India, a sector which is the largest employment provider for a decent living of millions, and how we need solutions with a modified approach and perspective. In this issue, we are going to discuss the **2Rs**, of business, viz., **Re-Scale** and **Re-Skill**, which are very necessary and relevant especially for the MSMEs. Let us discuss....

Cost management, which comprises of Fixed Costs and Variable Costs, is an important factor for any business to be profitable and for survival. Fixed cost is the most important component of this package. Lesser the fixed cost, better the survival chances. Fixed costs could be controlled by effectively using the resources and leveraging them with better processes and balancing the scale of operations. So far, we have been seeing increase in scale resulting in increasing profits due to increase in volume. But in the changed (present) scenario we may not have the same business volumes going forward. Hence the first topic for this discussion is **RE-SCALE**. Here re-scale means, utilization of resources without going for downsizing of business. This is done by retaining the core activities of the present business to be done by you or your people, while trying to shift all other work to the best person who can do it efficiently, i.e. some sort of outsourcing. The scale of the work, resources, people, and fixed cost will

reduce by **Re-scaling**. This will also ensure that we can still maintain the same volumes, or if there is a reduction in volume or it will not adversely affect the chances of continuing with our business. My suggestion at this point will be - have your business as compact as possible, with lesser fixed costs and exploring different work options, like grouping similar work in one place and doing it with best cost methods available. To sum-up, each business should re-scale itself for smaller fixed cost mode and increased survival chances.

Rescale cannot happen overnight, or by chance. It will be determined by how people adapt to the smaller scale where a single person has to do multiple tasks. These tasks can be of wide spectrum with a combination of technical, administrative, communication and logistics etc. A person working in MSME, even the owner cannot be expected to be comfortable with this range of work. So it needs the next topic **RE-SKILL**. Each one of us has to reskill ourselves with the changing needs in order to handle multiple tasks. This task is ever-evolving and presents challenges. Hence, these skills will prepare each one of us to face it. This implies that we have to un-skill ourselves from the burden of previous practices and prepare ourselves on various aspects of business in an integrated way and test those skills and constantly improve. In other words Reskill ourselves constantly to Rescale the business.

(This article by Mr. Venkata Subramanian, Senior Consultant, APCRE, is in four parts and will continue in the next two issues of e-newsletter "PACER.")

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