A3 Coaching Strategies

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Oil Change A3 exercise

• You own a car dealership
• I will be the service manager
• I am going to present an A3 to you focused on reducing the time to do an oil change

• With the post-it notes at your table, please write down three questions you would ask me

• Wait until I complete presenting the A3 to write your questions; take notes directly on your copy of the A3
Theme: Reduce Oil Change Time

Background: Oil change times are too long, leading to customer dissatisfaction.

Current Situation: Current change time @ 45 min
- 2 techs
- Each has own dedicated service bay
- Oil changes are performed w/ cars lifted

Goal: Reduce oil change time from 45 min
Implement a new employee selection & training process

Analysis:
- Tech-A
  - Almost @ goal
  - Needs to focus
- Tech-B
  - Slow, not near goal
  - Needs to learn from Tech-A
  - Sent to corporate dealer tech training

Recommendations:
1. Watch breaks & lunchtime
   - Provides focus to Tech-A
   - Reduces Tech-B times
2. Have tech-B observe & learn from Tech-A
3. If tech-B’s performance doesn’t improve in 6 weeks, interview, hire & replace Tech-B

Plan:
- Service man monitors Tech-B
- Tech-B observation & improvement
- Check Tech-B performance
- Begin interviews, hire new

Follow-up:
- Service man to continue to monitor throughput & get feedback from writers
What can we achieve in 2 hours

• Why use & what is the A3?
• Mentoring dynamics
• Coaching strategies
• Monday morning
WHY & WHAT– THE A3
What is the A3: Common Knowledge

• The Tool:
  – A3 is just a paper size
  – Began in the auto industry as the Quality Circle problem solving format
  – Tells a story which anyone can understand
    • UNDERSTAND means follow the logic all of the way through
  – All on one sheet of paper
What is the A3: Uncommon Knowledge

• The Process & Thinking behind the tool
  – Engages the organization, creating alignment
  – Develops people while doing the work
    • A3 owners
    • Leaders / coaches
  – More effectively “solves” problems
  – Limited space = respect for stakeholders
    • 5S for information
A3: The business case

• We are going to learn why organization should utilize the A3 process by considering:
  – A definition of lean & it’s relationship to problems
  – Project failure
  – The role of leadership
What is Lean?

Maximizing the value for the customer with the minimal amount of resources while in a constant state of learning

Anything that gets in the way is a PROBLEM
Problems are everywhere

The gap between....

...where you are....

....and where you want to be....

...is a problem
I have news for you, **Lean** is going to make you see MORE problems

- With standardization at its foundation and making those standards visual, **lean** makes even more problems visible – to you, and everyone else
  - Not bad: they were always there
  - You just couldn’t see them
  - Now you can

- And since you are here I think your organization is committing to **lean**
Enough problem solvers?

• If lean reveals more of the problems that already exist in your organization,
• Do you have a process to develop more problem solvers?

The A3 is that process
When your organization began its lean journey, what processes were focused on first?

Why?
  • Easy to see the work
When you solve a problem, where is the actual work happening?

• In your brain

So, if improvement is fostered by making the work easy to see, do you have a process that makes THINKING easy to see, helping you to develop people while they do their work?

The A3 is that process
Where are we?

• We need MORE problem solvers
• We need to be able to see their thinking to better develop them

• What could make your problem solvers even more effective? Let’s consider why projects fail.
Why do projects fail?

• Success =
  • On-time
  • Within budget
  • Addressed the issue

Take 2 minutes to write down three reasons individually

As groups, take 5 minutes to discuss what you wrote down and reach a consensus on the one most significant cause.
Why?

Lack of follow-up
Scope creep
New “fire” erupts
Lack of support from top management
Wrong team members
Lack of resources
No buy-in
Leaders change
Varying interpretations
Agreement
Not enough time
Poor planning
Target poorly defined
Do you have a process

• That gains alignment & agreement?

The A3 is that process
Tool vs. Process

• Think of the A3 as less of a tool
• And more of a process that:
  – Gains alignment & agreement within the organization
  – Develops thinking & effective problem solvers while getting the work done
  – Solves problems
  – And enables quick sharing of lessons learned
MENTORING DYNAMICS
Let’s look at what is meant by each of these
The “Dictator”: What happens when we tell people what to do?

1. We deprive them of the opportunity to think.
2. You take the responsibility away.
3. They might do it (and you might be wrong!).
The “Empowerer”: What happens when we provide results targets and get out of the way?

1. Sub-optimization
2. Waste resources (positive harm)
3. Short-term benefits if any
4. Loss of direction and control
The A3 style and achieving organizational goals

• I will help you find the way
• But you are still going to have to do the work

Follow me and we will figure this out together
The Leader’s challenge

• Too specific
  – Dictator
  – No ownership

• Too vague
  – Empowerment
  – No direction
The Lean Leader’s Challenge

• Make assignments clear enough that the subordinate can approach the task with confidence.

• Yet, open enough that responsibility is not taken away.

• So the subordinate has clear responsibility to propose solutions with a sense of entrepreneurial ownership.

Clear direction with clear ownership
A3 dynamics

Our focus

Coach

Author

Peer
A3 Coaching Strategies

• Practice humble inquiry
  – Pure inquiry
  – Diagnostic inquiry
  – Prompting inquiry
  – Coaching process inquiry

• Keep a diary (PDCA)

• Become a better writer
  – The clear logical thread
  – Learn how to share

• Practice, Practice, Practice – all of the above
PRACTICE HUMBLE INQUIRY
What would Edgar do?

- Edgar Schein
- “Grandfather” of organizational development
- Professor Emeritus at the MIT Sloan School of Management
- Credited with creating the term “corporate culture”
- Author of the book, “Helping: How to offer, give and receive Help”
- We can learn a lot from him on this basic human act
- Four kinds of questions
The type and focus of questions should shift depending on where we are in the problem solving process.

Grasp the situation:

Recommendations:

Analysis:

Action Plans:

Follow-up:
Four kinds of questions: Edgar Schein

1. Pure Inquiry (framing the problem)
   - “What is happening”
     • Builds confidence and status in the learner
     • Creates a safe situation to share
     • Fosters ownership
   - SOME Examples:
     • Why is this important to talk about?
     • How will this help the business?
     • What is happening?
     • How does the process work?
     • Exactly what problem are you trying to solve?
     • What have you looked at or heard?
     • Is this the entire process?
     • What is your goal?
     • How are you going to measure that?
Four kinds of questions : Edgar Schein – contd’

2. Diagnostic Inquiry (digging for root cause)
   – “Why is it happening?”
     • Focuses attention on the elements
     • Builds new diagnostic skills
     • Causes the learner to think about new areas
   – SOME Examples:
     • How did you arrive at this?
     • Why did you select that approach?
     • How has this tool helped the analysis?
     • What makes you sure you have a cause / effect link?
     • How does this tie back to the goal?
Four kinds of questions: Edgar Schein

3. Prompting Inquiry (considering options)
   - “What would happen if….”
     • Produces new hypothesis options
     • Insures linkages
   - SOME Examples:
     • What have you looked at or heard?
     • What have you thought about trying?
     • How do these options tie back to the root cause?
     • What are the pro & cons of these options?
     • How did you select this option from the many?
     • What does the future state process look like?
     • What steps are needed for implementation?
     • Are things going according to plan? Why? Why not?
     • How long will you track your changes to insure effectiveness?
     • How will you sustain your gains?
Some helpful questions – not all inclusive

Grasp the situation:
• What is happening?
• How does the process work?
• Is this the entire process?
• Exactly what problem are you trying to solve?
• Tell me more?
• Have you told me everything?
• Can you describe what’s happening versus what should be?
• What have you looked at or heard?

Recommendations:
• What have you looked at or heard?
• What have you thought about trying?
• How do these options tie back to the root cause?
• What impact do you expect that countermeasure to have?
• What are the pros & cons of these options?
• How did you select this / these particular options from the many?
• What does the future state process look like?

Analysis:
• What makes you sure you have a cause / effect link?
• How did you arrive at this?
• How has this tool helped the analysis?
• Why did you select that approach?

Action Plans:
• How will that step impact the gap to the goal?
• Are things going according to plan? Why or why not?
• How will you track changes to insure effectiveness?
• What steps are needed for implementation?

Follow-up:
• Was the goal achieved? Why or why not?
• How are you going to insure ongoing success?
• Are there any open issues?
• Is there an opportunity to replicate / share?
Let’s look at the questions you “asked” about the Oil Change A3
A3 Coaching Strategies

• Practice humble inquiry
  – Pure inquiry
  – Diagnostic inquiry
  – Prompting inquiry
  – Coaching process inquiry

• Keep a diary (PDCA)

• Become a better writer
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  – Learn how to share

• Practice, Practice, Practice – all of the above
Four kinds of questions : Edgar Schein

4. Coaching Process Inquiry (reflecting)
   – “What is happening between us, right now?”
     • Focuses on how the learner / mentor process is working
   – SOME Examples:
     • Are my questions helping?
     • Are we getting anywhere?
     • How do you think the conversation is going so far?
Keep a “diary”

Plan

Adjust

Do

Check
A3 Coaching Strategies

• Practice humble inquiry
  – Pure inquiry
  – Diagnostic inquiry
  – Prompting inquiry
  – Coaching process inquiry
• Keep a diary (PDCA)
• Become a better writer
  – The clear logical thread
  – Learn how to share
• Practice, Practice, Practice – all of the above
Become a better writer: The clear logical thread

A3 Thinking

Stakeholders

Plan Gap Actual

X-ray by when

Causes

ABC

Ideas

Countermoves

Lessons Learned

Plan

Yes maybe

Lean Shift Consulting
Learn how to share

• 50% and go
• Share, don’t present
• Messy is okay
• Small lot works with A3’s too
• Captured dialogue = instant meeting minutes
50% and go

- **BACKGROUND**
- **CURRENT SITUATION**
- **TARGET**
- **ANALYSIS**
- **RECOMMENDATIONS**
- **ACTION PLAN**
- **FOLLOW UP**

50% and go
Share, don’t present

It’s your portable white board
Messy is okay
Small lot works with A3’s too
Captured dialogue = instant meeting minutes

Clarification points
Alignment with other initiatives

Would they do it again?
Do we need a routine cadence?

Lean Shift Consulting
A3 Coaching Strategies

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Some final thoughts on coaching

• Coaching implies the coach is regularly engaged. Just because someone knows the rules of football doesn’t mean they do not need regular coaching. Likewise, just because someone has been trained in the A3 process doesn’t mean they do not need regular coaching.

• If “clear direction with clear ownership” is taking place:
  – The mentee will be engaged on the problem
  – Closer to the problem than you
  – So respect their knowledge
    • Don’t use questions to guide them to YOUR answer
NEXT WEEK
So on Monday morning....

• Proclamation
  – Make a decision
• Process
  – The A3
• Practice
  – Practice
    • Practice
Doing this will help you and your organize move

Conversationally engage stakeholders (small lot) prior to consensus mtg

Engage stakeholders in meetings (large lot)

Use to report results

Write in solitude

Where is your team?

Did one for training

Do A3s only when asked

Use A3s to accomplish work daily

How I think

Application

Engagement

Maturity
QUESTIONS?

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