



November 2015 - Issue #117

## Welcome from Lisa

I hope you had a Happy Thanksgiving! I went to AZ the week before Thanksgiving and was able to drop by a California classic over Thanksgiving weekend - the Hotel del Coronado. It was truly amazing vision to put this grand hotel in the middle of nowhere in 1888! Now, it has amazing lights, skating on the beach (what could be more exciting?), a grand Christmas tree and a fabulous Thanksgiving feast. Take a look below of the skating rink and back of the hotel.



It reminded me of outdoor skating rinks in IL growing up. I was a competitive ice skater when I was young, and so I spent much time in ice rinks at early hours (no idea what I was thinking!?) yet there was always something attractive about skating outside. Of course that weather doesn't hold a candle to California!

November seemed to whiz by in a blur, and I have no doubt December will do the same. I want to THANK my readers, clients, family, friends and colleagues for your enormous support with my dad's passing. It was very comforting to know I had so much support.

Speaking of taking time for yourself, I also went to a strategy session in November. It is a great idea to set aside time every now and then to make sure you are racing in the right direction. Everyone I know is crunched for time; the last thing any of us want to do is waste it going down wrong-way streets.

### **IN THE NEWS**

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- Quoted in an article "[Free Trade Agreements with Heavy Baggage](#)" in *SAC*.
- Published an article "[How to Increase Teamwork to Ensure Project Success](#)" in *Project Times*.
- Spoke at the *APICS International Conference* and at *ISM Orange County* about the Amazon Effect and Supply Chain Trends.

Hope you enjoy the holiday season and are able to take time for yourself and to value those around you.

Enjoy,  
Lisa

Email

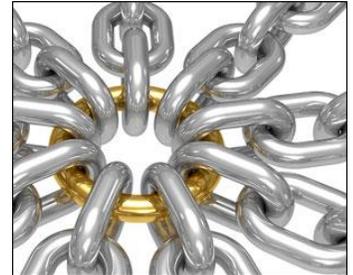
LMA Consulting Group, Inc.

P.S. Please think of me if you should know anyone who would like to elevate their business performance.

The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain

## What's Hot in Driving HUGE Results in Manufacturing & Distribution

As the year winds down, it seems like a great time to "take stock" - what is "hot"? I am not a fan of fads - although many fads such as lean manufacturing are right "on the money" from many respects, there is no magic pill in going down the lean path. That's true with most other touted manufacturing programs - Six Sigma, Theory of Constraints, SIOP, and the like. Instead, what really works?



If I look across my clients which span \$5 million dollar family owned companies to \$50 million multi-generation companies to \$100 million dollar private equity backed companies to \$25-250 million dollar facilities of multi-billion dollar companies, what's "hot" has much in common. As my mentor from early in my career used to say, he paid attention when I said "HUGE". I never realized I used that word until he pointed it out to me. Thus, here are those that consistently drive HUGE results:

1. **Blocking & tackling** - Seems quite boring; however, it is consistently the most overlooked secret to success. Interestingly, one of my speeches this past year was requested solely for this reason - inventory accuracy never goes out of style! What are you doing to make sure your basics are in place?
2. **Planning** - It is surprising how often I am brought in for this topic. Lucky for me, it is a definite strength - and often desperately needed across-the-board. Whether planning relates to demand planning (customer forecasts), master scheduling, detailed planning, kanban systems, planning the constraint, project planning, cross-functional planning, or just referred to as "make sure the right items are in the right places at the right time with minimal inventory, maximum efficiencies, excellent service levels and shortened lead times", it is hot!
3. **Leverage systems & data** - Systems help to automate, reduce errors, improve efficiency, grow the business without adding hard-to-find and expensive resources and better support customer needs. As supply chains have become more complex, it is a "must" to properly leverage systems if you want to grow profitably. Also don't forget your data. Your system collects more data than imaginable. How can you analyze or utilize this data for success?
4. **Top talent** - I'd be remiss if I didn't mention one of the tenets ALL of my clients have in common - the need for top talent. As supply chains have become more complex, global, surrounded by risk, tied down in rules and regulations, and the like, it has become even more important to retain, find, train and develop top talent. I mention them in this order because I cannot tell you how many clients I've run across that have a superstar employee that is overlooked. Perhaps they need a tool, or to be turned loose (empowered), given permission to focus on a particular project, or provided training or mentoring in enhanced communication skills or use of language. Provide it, and suddenly your profits skyrocket. Why not take a look around you or hire someone who can help you find these stars in your midst?
5. **Metrics** - I've also found that my best clients put the "right few" metrics in place. Are you tracking responsiveness, reliability, performance, agility and cost (return on your assets)? Which are important for your business? It is easy to get caught up in measuring useless metrics because we've always done it that way or because the boss requested it. But why? Metrics should provide us with a guide of how we are performing vs. what is important to success. Success is not the same across companies - or even industries. What does it mean for you? And can you tell whether you are making progress?

Although this list doesn't sound sexy, it can be extremely sexy to investors, Boards of Directors and employees on a bonus plan tied to performance.

**Did you like this article?** [Continue reading on this topic:](#)  
[\*\*Leverage Supply Chain Trends for Success\*\*](#)

The Systems Pragmatist  
**Go-Live**

Since one of my clients is going live tomorrow on a new ERP system, I've been thinking about go-live. Every software supplier has their "go-live" process and typically touts it as "best"; however, what really matters is the fundamentals.

In the last few years, I've been supporting many clients select the "right" ERP system to best support their business needs, and I've been sticking with them to ensure success with the design and to support the process from an expertise standpoint. A few of the keys include:

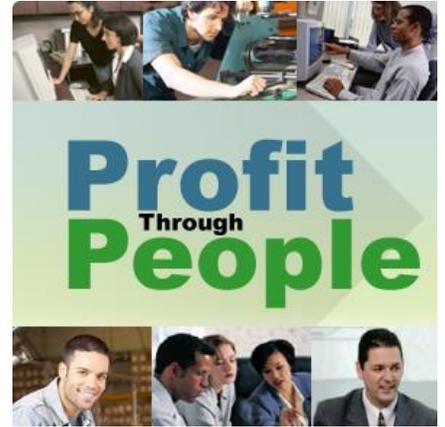


1. **Checklists:** Remember the blocking and tackling steps. Having a checklist of items that have to be complete is cornerstone to success. It is easy to get side-tracked without a checklist.
2. **Cut-over:** The cut-over process has to be planned well. Are you stopping all movement during the process? Certainly this is the easy way to success; however, it is not possible during most go-lives as customers will not wait. Make sure to have clean cut-off points. Reconcile. Balance. An accounting mindset can be a definite advantage.
3. **Support:** Whether you think you'll need it or not, make sure you have plenty of support on hand. Ask employees to be flexible during go-live. Have extra experts available to run ideas by and to answer questions. Worst case - you'll have paid for insurance. As someone who had her house burn down, I highly recommend it!
4. **Training:** Make sure to accompany go-live with plenty of training. No matter how much you think you know the process steps, you'll realize you don't know how to back out of mistakes or you'll forget a critical step. Training at go-live can accelerate your progress.
5. **Communication:** This almost goes without saying but it is ridiculous how often communication can be forgotten as you get into the nitty gritty of go-live tasks. Assign someone to keep the communication flowing.

**Did you like this article?** [Continue reading on this topic:](#)  
[\*\*ERP Implementation: Secrets to Success\*\*](#)

Have you ever heard the saying, "you'll learn more by teaching" than most other options? I can vouch for this first hand. I am President of the APICS Inland Empire Chapter (#1 trade association for supply chain and operations management professionals), and we offer highly respected and sought after certifications in the industry. Thus, we have several instructors teach courses on the fundamentals of manufacturing and distribution - and on advanced topics such as lean manufacturing. I have team-taught our CSCP (certified supply chain professional) classes, and I guarantee you learn more by teaching! Teaching can be hard work - the best instructors make the sessions interactive, provide real-world examples, engage the audience etc.

The same is true with my clients. I have taught a session or one-on-one far more often to implement a particular best practice with a client than I have in a group setting like APICS classes. Either way, the class will ask questions and poke holes in your concepts. Thus, you have to be on your feet, experienced and able to think in the moment to be a successful teacher. It is well worth developing your skill set in teaching. You'll be surprised by what you learn. Try it out with your colleagues - pick your best topic and teach it. Ask your colleague to do the same. Ask for feedback. Adjust as it makes sense. Go to a class on communication and presentation skills. For example, in APICS we offer train-the-trainer courses and ask our instructors to re-take the class every few years. Ask for a mentor. Results will follow.



**Did you like this article?** [Continue reading on this topic: Never Stop Learning](#)

It is interesting how effective the powers of observation can be!

Take a step back and observe what is going on around you. The Japanese are experts at this in lean manufacturing - they simply watch what is going on around them and ideas emerge. I also asked an investment banker / turnaround expert for his top tips for success as he had a 99.9% hit ratio. He said, "Walk around the facility, observe, and the issues will pop out at you". Talk about a multi-million dollar walk!

To hone in on your powers of observation, consider the following tips:

- **Focus:** Distraction can be a deterrent to success. Stay focused on a topic or a work process until you've seen how it works. Eventually, ideas will emerge.
- **Pay attention to waste:** Similar to lean thinking, pay attention to waste of all sorts. Just ask yourself common-sense questions. Why are you performing this step? Why are you checking? Why is scrap piling up?
- **Look for the bottleneck:** What is the weakest link in your chain? If materials are moving through your facility, they cannot move faster than the slowest or weakest link. Identify it. How can you focus energies on just this step?
- **Watch trends:** If you watch often enough and/or look at key metrics, trends will form. What is out of sync with the prior trend? Did something change? Is it an outlier? I've found more million



dollar solutions by noticing trends earlier than the competition than any other method I can think of.

- **Ask:** Business is not a solo act. You can learn vast amounts by simply asking your employees, peers, manager/ Board, customers, suppliers, etc. Collaboration is cornerstone to success.

**Did you like this article?** Continue reading on this topic:

[\*The Hidden Benefit of Observation\*](#)

## Connections

Connections and relationships are the 80/20 of success!

### THIS MONTH'S REQUESTS:

- My APICS Inland Empire Chapter Board of Directors had another successful executive panel and networking symposium earlier this month, and so we are already planning for our April 30th event. **Email me** with ideas for engaging panelists and topics.
- My Ontario ProVisors group of trusted advisors is looking for a real estate attorney. Please **email me** with ideas.
- Looking for an exceptional Supply Chain Manager in the Wichita area? I have the perfect person for you! Please contact **her** with referrals and ideas.
- I know an Operations Leader who is interested in potential opportunities in Southern California or Arizona, if you have leads for him, please email **me**.



**NOTE:** To submit an item for this section, please send me an email with a short description of your needs and an email address. Please note that NOT all requests will be published as it must fit the guidelines and align with the Profit through People brand.

## What is Profit through People?

I've used the Profit through People brand since my newsletter's inception in 2006 as it resonated with me. Although I consult on topics within each of my service lines--Eagle Eye Strategic Focus, The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain, the Systems Pragmatist & Profit through People--I find that people are key to success in every situation. If you are interested in elevating your business performance, please [contact us](#).



**Email:** [landerson@lma-consultinggroup.com](mailto:landerson@lma-consultinggroup.com)

**Web:** [www.lma-consultinggroup.com](http://www.lma-consultinggroup.com)

**Phone:** 909-630-3943