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Time: 14:30 - 15:00

Lean IT

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Abstract:

The question as to whether it is possible to adopt a lean philosophy in providing an IT support service is addressed using IT service parallels to factors that contribute to a lean approach in the manufacturing sector. "Lean" is considered as "Minimize Waste and Maximize Value" where "waste" and "value" are set in the context of an IT Service Desk. Experiences and lessons learned from the adoption of the "Six Sigma" technique alongside implementing aspects of ITIL forms the core of the paper. An IT Service Desk function is investigated using "Six Sigma", with findings associated with "management practices" and the importance of "well documented" business processes used to enhance service value.

Experience from adopting ITIL-like practices to provide a "lean" IT Service Desk is considered against Whitehouse's "Eight Elements of Waste in IT and four themes:

1. Operational Performance; quality, efficiency and agility of operation
2. Visibility (of Transactions); the "customer experience"
3. Relevance (to Business); requirements and relevance of services provided
4. Compliance; its benefits to efficiency and information security.

Customer experience, challenges of cultural changes to working practices, establishment of relevant performance metrics and the project's continuing strategic journey are discussed. In summary,

- Cultural change is challenging in the "soft" aspects of IT service delivery
- "Self help" facilities are valued, save time and widen access
- Traditional processes are not lean, however "Six Sigma" techniques can remove waste
- ITIL experience demonstrates benefits to the improvement of IT service delivery
- Customer service improves, but make further improvement.