

DM9742 – CONGREGATIONAL ANALYSIS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The Kaizen Event Planner

Karen Martin & Mike Osterling

Introduction

The Kaizen Event Planner is a resource designed to assist in improving office process. The book is a manual on how to lead and “offer an effective way to train organizations to break unproductive habits.”¹ Every service offered is made up of a process, or series of steps. Therefore, the authors would hold even Church related ministries and the supporting operations will benefit from a Kaizen Event. Like the Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) process a strong feature of a “Kaizen Event” is it places the work of learning and improvement on the actual organization. The work belongs to the leaders and members of the congregation.

The authors note, “With each Kaizen Event, the pool of ambassadors grows, fueling a cultural shift that begins to place improvement as the organization’s top priority and increasingly authorizes the workers themselves to design and implement tactical level improvements.”² The authors encourage the Kaizen team members to be selected from cross-functional areas, very much in the same way a Transitional Task Force is formed by a congregation in the intentional interim ministry. They note, “Rarely is only one department represented on a Kaizen Team and occasionally more than five functional areas are represented.”³ Typically the team members are not in current executive or managerial leadership positions, and the authors recommend they are: “process stakeholders, subject matter experts, and outside eyes.”⁴

The event itself consists six steps:

1. Event Kickoff
2. Current State Analysis
3. Future State Design
4. Improvement Testing
5. Improvement Implementation
6. Event Wrap-up

Since prior papers in this course have reviewed the current state analysis and future state design this paper will focus primarily on the Event Kickoff, Improvement Testing and Improvement Implementation. The event wrap-up will not be addressed.

I. Event Kickoff

¹ Karen Martin & Mike Osterling, *The Kaizen Event Planner*, (McGraw-Hill Education, 2007.), vii.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

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The authors recommend the event to begin with an overview of: the Lean Principals and tools event structure, roles and responsibilities, the “Kaizen Commandments.”⁵ One of the keys to the Kaizen Event is staying in touch with the leadership. The authors refer to these planned communications as “Interim Briefings.” They suggest, “Interim briefings are progress reports held at the end of every day or two during the Kaizen Event with the Kaizen Team and relevant leadership.”⁶ For the purposes of the Transition Task Force team it would be staying in touch with the congregational members, lay leaders and staff. This can be accomplished in both the cottage meetings and town-hall meetings. These meetings will allow the teams to update the congregation “about key current state findings as well as future state design considerations.”⁷ Also, the members will be able to confirm the process is moving in the right direction, challenge the TTF member’s thinking, and help provide ownership and endorsement of proposed improvements.⁸

II. Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Tools

The authors lump their resources on improvement testing and implementation all under the umbrella of root cause analysis. A root cause is defined as, “the fundamental reason for the breakdown or failure of a process which, when properly resolved, prevents recurrence of the problem.”⁹ The tools presented by the authors for root cause analysis are:

- The Five Whys
- Cause-and-Effect Diagrams
- Check Sheets
- Pareto Charts

The **five whys** is a simple method used by asking the question why several times “until you have determined the ultimate reason for the problem.”¹⁰ Teams are encourage to get beneath the surface of the problems. The **cause-and effect diagram** is a simple way to thoroughly explore possible root causes. It considers six categories: man, material, machine, method, measurement, and mother-nature. **Check sheets** are easy to use and provide some level of objectivity with factual data. The authors describe check sheets, “is a simple analytical tool that is used to collect and record process data in an organized way, for a short period of time.”¹¹ Finally, a **Pareto chart**, named after Vilfredo Pareto, is a type of chart that contains both bars and a line graph, where individual values are represented in descending order by bars, and the cumulative total is represented by the line.¹² The authors note, “The chart helps

⁵ Ibid., 110.

⁶ Ibid., 102.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 140.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 143.

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improvement teams focus on the “vital few” reasons for an issue rather than the “trivial many.”¹³

III. Theological and Pastoral Reflections

The Kaizen Event concept plays nicely with the development and work of the IIM Transition Task Force team. There are obvious similarities: forming the group from a cross-section of the congregation and from those who are not currently in leadership positions; assuming a research posture asking many questions; and checking back in with leadership and members through cottage meetings and town-hall meetings to affirm the team’s recommendations are on track.

From a theological stand point there is room to consider the congregation’s ability to listen to God’s counsel as He speaks through the entire body of believers. Jesus says, “He who has ears let him hear.” Imagine a congregation with corporate ears. In a way, that is what the TTF members are – the ears of the congregation.

¹² Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_chart . (April 2, 2016)

¹³ Ibid., 144.