Chasing the Rabbit: Leading World Class Organizations

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Now...

• Your business...

• Key processes...

• Top competitor...

• Improvement imperative...
Success
Toyota

Relentless Pursuit of Perfection

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1: System design
2: Problem solving
3: Knowledge sharing
4: Leadership

Performance

1965  1985  1995  2005

Few Functions Limited Depth

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Process from Chaos

Flow vs. job shop

Synchronized vs. chaotic

Standard vs. Improvise

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From workarounds to Continuous Improvement

1: System design
   - Drill
   - Polish

2: Problem solving

3: Knowledge sharing

4: Leadership
   - Ship
   - Deliveries

Requests

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Alcoa’s Pursuit of Perfect Workplace Safety

Workplace Safety at Alcoa

1: Manage work to see problems
2: Solve problems as seen
3: Share what is learned
4: Develop people for 1-3

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US Navy: Nuclear Propulsion

• See Problems

• Solve Problems

• Share Learnings

• Lead

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Next...

- Key process...
- Impediments and problems...
- Causes...
- Treatments...
- Learnings...
- Development...

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Health care: Good News Bad News

Chance of Successful Outcome

Potential

Actual: Great

Actual: Poor

Surgery

Post-Op

Time

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The Leadership Imperative

- The more senior people are, the more capable they are at designing work, improving work, sharing knowledge, and developing the capabilities of those for whom they are responsible.

- New knowledge is shared systematically by collaborative problem solving.

- Problems are solved as fast-paced, low-cost experiments.

**HIGHLY SPECIFIED:**

**Output:** What product or service is being provided to whom.

**Pathway responsibility:** Who does what task in what sequence.

**Connections/Handoffs:** How information (including requests for something), products, and services are exchanged.

**Methods:** Work content, sequence, timing, location, and output of a task.

- Imbedded tests refute assumptions implicit in the designs.


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Selected Publications

• Chasing the Rabbit: Why the World’s Greatest Organizations Outrace Their Competition, McGraw Hill, (Fall 2008)
• “Better Care for More People at Less Cost,” with Don Berwick Boston Globe op-ed (October 2007)
• “Ambiguity and Workarounds as Contributors to Medical Error,” with Mark Schmidhofer, Annals of Internal Medicine (2005).

(*): Shingo Prize winning articles.

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Speaker Profile

Steven Spear has written extensively about how exceptional organizations create competitive advantage through the strength of their internal operations, managing complex design, production, and administrative processes for unmatched performance. His first book, Chasing the Rabbit, will be published by McGraw Hill in Fall 2008.

As for his articles, Spear's “Fixing Healthcare from the Inside, Today,” won a McKinsey Award as one of the best Harvard Business Review articles in 2005 and his fourth Shingo Prize for Excellence in Manufacturing Research. He has published in Annals of Internal Medicine and other medical journals as well.

Spear works actively with a variety of organizations. He played an integral role in developing the Alcoa Business System, which has been credited with saving hundreds of millions of dollars in Alcoa's annual report, and the Perfecting Patient Care program of the Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Initiative, which helped raise quality and safety of care in area hospitals. He has worked with organizations such as Lockheed Martin, John Deere, Intel, Intuit, Brigham Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He consulted for the MacArthur Foundation, and supports Toyota’s efforts to develop its suppliers. At MIT, he teaches a course about lean manufacturing and six sigma in the Leaders for Manufacturing Program.

Spear’s academic degrees include a doctorate from Harvard Business School, masters degrees – in management and mechanical engineering – from MIT, and a bachelors degree in economics from Princeton. He worked for the investment bank Prudential-Bache, the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment, and the University of Tokyo, and he taught at Harvard Business School for six years. He and his wife, Miriam, an architect, live in Brookline MA with their three children.

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