**Toyota SOP and “Kaizen” as Continuous Improvement, Lessons for Ad Agencies**

Ad Agencies say the client is king and that is a good thing but that is where good practices stop. From there on, it is a hierarchy of upstream consideration and “shit rolling downhill” subordinates, using coordination practices of emails, chasing supply lines of devalued internal staff and supply lines.

There is a better way for ad agencies to work, utilizing talent in a network, encouraging discretionary added value and intervention. Ad Agency work practices have worked and still do but without a competitive advantage of added value their margins are being squeezed by competition beauty contests, that in turn leads to vesting out of innovation and efficiency. This is not good for their advertising brand clients in the long run.

The alternative to the hierarchical coordination managements of coordinators, is a framework of standardization that project manages flow and put employees in a sensation of flow as being in the zone, giving up voluntary discretionary added value and team commitment.

Platform and framework management as standard operating, distinguished from manual coordination of the digital advertising workflow, enables staff as highly skilled talent, distinguished from functional operative, to continuously add value and improvements. In the Japanese culture of Toyota automotive manufacturing this is known as “Kaizen” directly translated as “continuous improvement” or “change for the better”.

The human involvement is a critical value point in the standardized production and workflow process, as the innovative intervention for resolution of down time and protracted lead times for “Kaizen” as continuous improvement. Earlier management attempts to utilise standard operating procedures (SOP) focused on staff cutting exercises as crude attempts at lean management to cut the cost of production, just as previously production was once outsourced to cheap labor markets. Today manufacturing is returning to North America for car assembly for the American market. Skills are being transposed to Asia production for local manufacturing for Asia in-markets consumption.

Standardized process, not as devaluing human input but a way to identify the point of opportunity to insert human added value and high skill intervention. Lean, just-
in-time and continuous improvement of and sticking to, the exciting process but with the ability to be critical of existing process, by involving the highly skilled talent.

Kaizen does not designate “Time as money, but time as respect for colleagues, employer and consumer. Saving time is not about saving on employees contribution but the opportunity for employees to work as high-value talent, on quality control and adding value as a discretionary act.

**Examples by industry:**

**Toyota** is the most successful car manufacturer in the world. Its largest assembly plant is in Georgetown Kentucky, USA, where it produces half a million cars a year for the US domestic market. In the car body shop factory, articulated robot arms weld car components in a fully automated production line where the human involvement is seen as a strength not a weakness.

The key point is that employees as team members are involvement in standardized work, to identify what is normal and what is abnormal as a quality issue, tardiness as time slip or the simply unexpected. The section supervisor can stop the section and the team leader will respond to assess the position, to stop the whole line or make a fix and restart the line section, and keep the whole line running.

“Tach time” as the pace of production, is the number of cars requiring assembly, to match the rate at which cars are sold and ordered, this becomes the KPI. In the case of the Georgetown Kentucky Toyota assembly plant, one car is sold every 52 seconds and so on the manufacturing and assembly line the tach rate (pace) is also one car per 52 seconds. This means that every assembly point in the production line must run at the tach pace of 52 cars per second, cars doors must be hung at a tach rate of 52 seconds, seats installed at a tach rate of 52 seconds...

With so many moving parts in the process there is the potential for chaos and down time with each link in the chain drawing from the previous and contributing to the next. Staff as skilled talent team members make their investment in the process as key to quality, time and continuous improvement, the workforce is no longer the beast of burden of early industrialization but is at the center of value.
Health sector is attempting to import “Kaizen”, the Toyota process continuous improvements in the search for greater efficiency as value flow and reduction of waste. Public sector had not only low hanging fruit but windfall rotten fruit that could be cut by reduction of bureaucratic duplication, this simplification of administration lead to easy cost savings in back-office job reductions. Then came the point that post administrative cost savings did not lead to improvement in patient services when the saving were reinvested at the point of patient care. The problem was that management consultants focused on lean and not flow.

Lean had been about cutting staff, not about patient flow through health intervention services. Flow is where the stages of the Toyota car assembly plant can be applied to health care delivery. In the assembly plant the scale of flow spans the whole factory and supply chain, to minimize delays, to ensure materials arrive as needed and are assembled to a tach time or pace.

“Without standardized health care procedures, there can not be continuous improvement, no Kaizen”.

In health care there are many professional worlds that a patient flows through: GP surgery, referral to diagnostic consultant, operating theater and after care in outpatients. Detractors of the Toyota car assembly suggest patients are not the inanimate objects of an assembly line to be processed. Their is one hospital that has made the Toyota way work. The UCLA Hospital, Harbour Medical Center in Torrance, California. The same town as Toyota headquarters in the US.
Susan Black runs the hospitals “Kaizen” support center at Harbor Medical Center: “It was an act of desperation really, our patient populations was poor and under-served and we were very chaotic in our work places, we did the best we can but there was a lot of inefficiencies and room for improvement. Patients were held waiting for everything, in A&E up to eighteen hours just to see a physician, fours hours from check in to check out, for the eye clinic and then a year for surgery. People could go blind waiting to be seen.”

Toyota advisers were also concerned that the car assembly line could not be applied to healthcare, so they went back to basics, they came up with a management triangle for a “Kaizen” overview methodology. With the guiding principle of “management and responsibilities” on the base, “tools and technical process” on one side, “Visualization” as in transparency of information on the other and “human development” at the centre.

In the eye clinic, could see that more space and more doctors might bring about improvements in waiting times but that was more resources thrown at a broken system. So management resolved to reduce patient waiting time, that had no health care value, from 4 hours to 1 hour by making the most of what we had.

The A&E is a level one trauma centre with 100,000 visits a year from a catchment area of 14 million people including trauma gunshot wounds, stabbings and car accidents. The medical supply room was cited as a dysfunctional resource that wasted the nurses time, attempting to locating medicine and medical devices in preparation for a doctor’s consultation, time wasted that left patient waiting.

Registered nurse took over management of the supply room, where previously urgently need supplies could not be located fast. Medical devices had been dumped on delivery by auxiliary staff, with no stock accounting and reorder process. Today, medical staffs have arranged items by use colour code, so anyone one on a first visit can find items fast. Saving time, saving lives and moving patients faster from waiting room to care.

The care flow visualization made transparent first by whiteboards, then touch screen and handhelds, networked to admissions and sector waiting room reception, administration and doctors desktops for referral management to reduce patient home and hospital waiting times.

Staff can be monitored for observing all standard process or missed steps. Flagging up the opportunity for revaluate process and refresh awareness of standard process.
This is not staff judgment but standard process adoption guidance. Not regulated as to dumbing down human involvement but create more time for staff added value and patient engagement.

Digital Advertising, the contemporary workflow process is coordination and coordination management of a campaign life cycle, through multiple decision and production sectors involving remote professionals from disparate companies. The failings of today’s ad agency practices has similarities with the car assembly lines with extend time line shifts and unresolved and unrecognized quality services issues and limited opportunity for added value by skilled talent. The similarity with health care is the number of professionals a campaign advances through to go live: The GP is replaced with Ad Agency client briefing, consultation with media planning, surgery with ad operations and outpatients with post campaign reporting.

Migrating from periodic campaign coordination and execution, to Kaizen “always improving a better way of working” style of holistic always on campaign management, the focus moves to added value innovation of creative messaging and consumer targeting optimization.
Using Kaizen flow practices developed by Toyota assembly lines process and adapted for faster health care, the digital advertising flow can focus on client advertiser strategy, ad agency deployment of media platforms, publisher and ad network content and consumer reach, frequency targeting and optimization.

**Kaizen triangles for the Health Care and Advertising industries adapting to the Digital Smart Interconnected Age.**

“Kaizen” can be used as a cultural work ethic and a way for staff as talent, to visualize a standard operating procedure that is not a threat to employees but an enabler of ownership of production engagement that will be at the heart of Industry 4.0 (IIOT and smart connected devices and smart data analysis) as the advertising industry becomes 100% Digital by 2020.
Further Online Resources:

Search result for BBC World Service Medicine and Toyota
https://www.google.com.sg/search?q=BBC+World+Service+Medicine+and+Toyota&gws_rd=cr,ssl&ei=7YyWV4jHLoPnvDT4ioHICg

The Truth about...
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p040bbq9

Going Lean: Health and the Toyota Way
The Truth About ..., Success and Failure in Medicine Episode 3 of 4
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p041svjg

How Toyota produces one vehicle every fifty-two seconds
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0427kf9

“Faster, Better, Cheaper” The Truth About ..., Success and Failure in Medicine Episode 2 of 4
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04128t6

The Truth About ..., Success and Failure in Medicine Episode 4 of 4
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p042gtbf

Some organisations do the craziest things for no reason
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0427lx

How we stopped patients going blind while they wait
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0427l2d

Success and Failure in Medicine, Going Lean: Health and the Toyota Way
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p041svjg/clips

UCLA Hospital, Harbour Medical Center in Torrance California (Google Search Results)
https://www.google.co.th/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=3L-SU-qtCoyHrAf85oDgBg&gws_rd=cr#q=UCLA+Hospital%2C+Harbour+Medical+Center+in+Torrance+California