

IMPLEMENTING LEAN

A structured, step-by-step approach that builds from foundational understanding to measurable improvements.



BUILD LEAN AWARENESS AND LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Objective: Ensure everyone understands why Lean is important.

Actions:

- Train leadership and key staff in Lean principles (e.g., waste elimination, continuous improvement).
- Communicate a clear vision of Lean warehousing and gain top-down commitment.

Tools: Introductory Lean training, Gemba walks, executive workshops.

Ideas: Store.LeanMH.com



MAP THE CURRENT STATE

Actions:

- Perform a warehouse walkthrough.
- Create a value stream map of order fulfillment or material flow.
- Identify non-value-added activities (the 8 wastes: defects, overproduction, waiting, etc.).

Tools: Value Stream Mapping, spaghetti diagrams, process observation.

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ESTABLISH 5S AND VISUAL MANAGEMENT

Objective: Create an organized, safe, and efficient environment.

Actions:

- Implement 5S (Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain).
- Use visual cues for inventory levels, bin locations, and workflow status.
- Tools: Shadow boards, floor markings, labeling systems, audits.

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STANDARDIZE WORK AND PROCESSES

Objective: Reduce variation and improve predictability.

Actions:

- Document best practices for picking, packing, receiving, and putaway.
- Train teams to follow and improve standard work.

Tools: SOPs, work instructions, time studies.



INTRODUCE PULL SYSTEMS AND KANBAN

Objective: Align inventory levels with actual demand.

Actions:

- Implement Kanban systems for inventory replenishment.
- Reduce overstocking and stockouts by controlling flow through signals.

Tools: Kanban cards, reorder point analysis, demand-driven replenishment.



OPTIMIZE LAYOUT AND FLOW

Objective: Minimize travel time and improve throughput.

Actions:

- Reconfigure storage zones based on velocity (ABC analysis).
- Streamline picking paths and eliminate unnecessary handling.

Tools: Slotting analysis, ABC classification, U-shaped layouts.



ENGAGE IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (KAIZEN)

Objective: Sustain progress and empower workers to solve problems.

Actions:

- Run regular Kaizen events focused on process improvement.
- Encourage bottom-up suggestions and PDCA cycles.

Tools: Kaizen boards, suggestion programs, daily huddles.



USE METRICS AND LEAN KPIS

Objective: Measure progress and make data-driven decisions.

Actions:

- Track warehouse KPIs like order accuracy, lines picked/hour, and inventory turns.
- Use dashboards to visually monitor performance trends.

Tools: KPI dashboards, A3 reports, problem-solving templates.



EXTEND LEAN BEYOND THE WAREHOUSE

Objective: Connect the warehouse to suppliers, customers, and internal teams.

Actions:

- Collaborate with upstream and downstream partners to streamline end-to-end flow.
- Integrate Lean with ERP and WMS systems for real-time visibility.

Tools: Supplier scorecards, cross-functional teams, Lean supply chain analysis.

Contact us:



info@LeanMH.com



1-888-310-0008

