

Engagemang efterfrågas

Hur tre tillverkande företag söker medverkan
från sina medarbetare när de inför Lean

Richard Berglund

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

För avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arbetsvetenskap,
som med vederbörligt tillstånd av utbildningsvetenskapliga fakulteten
vid Göteborgs universitet framläggs till offentlig granskning.

Fredagen den 18 juni klockan 14.15
Sal 10 i universitetsbyggnaden, Vasaparken

Fakultetsopponent:
Professor Jörgen Eklund, KTH, avdelningen för ergonomi

Dessförinnan, klockan 13.15 i samma lokal,
presenterar respondenten sitt arbete i populär form.

Abstract

Title: Commitment wanted – How three manufacturing companies seek their workers' contribution when implementing lean production

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Keywords: Commitment, participation, involvement, change, improvement, management, lean, production, manufacturing, case study

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Organizations and their management want committed and engaged co-workers. Involvement, participation and active contribution from workers are particularly sought when lean production is introduced. Researchers and external stakeholders often question the motives behind these aspirations from managers and question whether they deserve to be regarded as sincere. Thus, it is of interest to investigate the balance between speech, action and effect.

Three manufacturing companies have been followed during a four-year period via interviews, observations and workplace investigations. These companies work with the lean concept and their managements have explicitly declared the importance of their workers' participation. The thesis investigates the intentions and actions within these companies and seeks to understand the reasoning behind their actions, and the effect of these actions.

The guiding question for the research is: **How does management seek to elicit commitment within the organization, and what practical steps does it take to achieve this aim?**

Ten themes are derived from the vision and guiding principles for the organizational development in the industrial environment, mainly but not wholly related to the lean concept:

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|---|---------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Vision and strategy | 6 | Responsibility and authority in teams |
| 2 | Mutual trust | 7 | Influence |
| 3 | Top management's active participation | 8 | Challenge |
| 4 | Long-term thinking | 9 | Learning |
| 5 | Individual adaptation | 10 | Sharing the benefits |

Within each of the themes previous research and thinking are reviewed, core observations and other data are discussed and conclusions are reached for that theme.

The companies are active in all theme areas, but to a different extent. There are also large differences between and within the companies and during the time span of the project. At some occasions, shortcomings have been observed when it comes to putting intentions into practice, not least due to the influence of external factors. At other times, substantial progress in implementation has been recorded.

The themes must not only be taken separately, but are also interdependent. Progress, in terms of high commitment and involvement in the company's development, is associated with a consistent line of action within management and key personnel over a long time period, and covering a large part of the theme areas. On the other hand, a single significant departure from such a line may give rise to negative effects very rapidly.

The situation within the companies is very complex. Their history needs to be acknowledged, as does the impact of current events in the external environment, as well as the challenges anticipated in the future. The market, the customers, the owners, the technological system and the organization's social structure are all in constant change. Accordingly, one of the important factors for success lies in the way in which management are able to minimize harmful disturbances, and handle external events in a way that is acceptable for the organization. All in all, commitment and sustainable change requires a reasonable degree of stability of aim and of direction.