Traveling “LEAN”:
A Road Map to Streamlining Business Processes
At the University of California, Riverside

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Traveling “LEAN”: A Road Map to Streamlining Business Processes at UCR

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What’s the Point? Why UCR is Pursuing “Lean Thinking” in its Business Processes

The University of California, Riverside is known as an “institution of higher education.” As with many institutions, UCR has a Mission that describes its purpose, and a Vision that describes where it is going and how it plans to get there. Our Mission, stated broadly, is to serve the people of California by (1) the expansion of knowledge; (2) the development of future leaders; and (3) the discovery of solutions to problems facing the State. Our Vision has been titled “The Path to Preeminence”. Taken together, the Mission and Vision of UCR indicate that we are on a journey toward organizational excellence, doing our best at making the University the best it can be.

The idea of being and doing the best at UCR for the people whom we serve can and should be applied across the service spectrum – including how we help and support each other through our business processes. A business process can be defined as “a collection of related, structured activities or tasks that deliver a specific product or service to a specific customer or customers.”

“Lean Thinking” is a term that is applied to a unique approach to improving business processes; it is one that has been around for a while. Its emphasis on a few basic concepts and principles makes it easy to understand, and its implementation provides benefits for both providers and customers of a product or service. Portions of “Lean” already have been applied to a number of processes at UCR, and specific process improvements have been identified and implemented. The mutual benefits that “Lean Thinking” provides enable it to be implemented as a partnership among all involved – in support of UCR’s “Principles of Community” – and worthy of pursuing.

Just as UCR is on a journey to its vision, the path to “Lean” business processes also is a journey. What follows is presented in the form of a journey – a “road trip” if you will - with Mileposts to mark progress toward a destination that once reached, also can be a point of departure. You already may have experience with “Lean”, or you may have heard the term but not seen what it involves. Our intent is that this “road map” can meet you where you are, and be worth your time in its “unfolding”. Wherever you may be on the “Lean” journey, welcome!
Milepost 1

Learning About LEAN: A Synopsis of “Lean Thinking” – And How to Become a LEAN “Mudi”

“Lean Thinking” allows you, as a provider of products and/or services, to deliver the most value, from the viewpoint of your customers, while consuming the fewest resources. You focus on giving your customers as much as you can of what they want, while wasting as little as you can of what you have... time, money, materials, etc. There are several key words and concepts that underlie “Lean Thinking”:

| Customer | Value | Waste |

It originated in Japan in the 1980’s at the Toyota Motor Company, but has been implemented in many large universities in the United States in recent years - because these concepts have broad application.

“Muda” is the Japanese word for “waste”. Waste refers to human activity that absorbs resources, but creates no “value” for the “customer” (beneficiary) of the activity. Think of a “Mudi” as a “Lean” Jedi: someone who is on a mission to minimize Waste and maximize Customer Value in business processes.

How does one become a “Mudi”? By following the steps below, as outlined at the related Mileposts.

1. Identify a process’ end customers, and view the process from their perspectives. (Milepost 2.)
2. Identify the steps in the process, especially those that create waste (Milepost 3.)
3. Create a “map” of the process in its “current state” from beginning to end. (See Mileposts 4-7.)
4. Give everyone involved a clear view of the Value and the Waste in the process as it exists currently (Milepost 8) and as it could be (Milepost 9).
5. Continuously improve the process (See Mileposts 10 to 12) based on customer feedback, with the goal of achieving “perfection” in both the value of the process, and in the way that it is able to “flow”, without waste, at the request (“pull”) of the customer.

Whether you are a customer of a business process, or one responsible for its execution... You can be a “Mudi”... help apply LEAN to that process... and help put UCR on the “road” to process perfection!
**Milepost 2**

*Whose Car Are You Driving? Identifying Those Whom Your Processes Must Satisfy*

“Lean Thinking” expects that the processes that you are charged to carry out will provide value to your customers, as well as satisfying stakeholders and regulatory requirements. However, in order to be able to correctly identify the various customers, stakeholders and regulatory groups that a process must satisfy, there has to be an understanding of the products and services being offered by the University. These services may include human resources, accounting, travel, purchasing, student advising, contracts and grants, dining, and maintenance and repairs, among others. In the context of these services, groups of customers, stakeholders and regulators have been identified below:

**Customers**

- Students: Travel, purchasing, payroll and advising services are provided to this group.
- Faculty: Travel, Purchasing, accounting, payroll, contracts and grants, etc. services are provided.
- Staff: Travel, Purchasing, accounting, payroll, staffing, HR services are provided.
- Public: Services such as dining, theater performances, patient care, lectures, etc.

**Stakeholders**

- Taxpayers: Interested in efficient use of their dollars.
- Legislators: State and Federal legislators have expectations re: the use of public money.
- Private companies / Industry partners: Providers of donations and grants for research.
- Alumni: Who provide a vital source of revenue.
- Advisory committees (made up of business and industry personnel).

**Regulators**

- Granting agencies: e.g. NSF (National Science Foundation), NIH (National Institute of Health).
- Federal regulators like the OFCCP (Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs).
- Accrediting Bodies, e.g. ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology).

There needs to be a conscious effort by a Mudi to balance competing interests while identifying and eliminating waste. There are many cases in which this can occur. A typical example - one that will be used in subsequent Mileposts - is the balancing of the timeliness and efficiency of a travel expense reimbursement process with the degree of documentation and review required by fund sponsors and university personnel. (Indeed, UCR has dealt recently to some degree with this specific instance of balancing competing interests in a business process, by raising to a more practical amount the dollar threshold for travel expenses that require provision of a receipt by the traveler.)
Milepost 3

What a Waste! (Not Really): The Endless Quest of a “Mudi”

“Muda” (waste) is inherent in any process, business or otherwise. “Muda” can be of two types:

- Type 1: A step in a process that is of no value to the end customer of a process, but is of value to someone else such as a regulator or stakeholder. Such waste is not eliminated easily, if at all.
- Type 2: A step in a process that is both non-essential and of no value. Such waste should be eliminated as quickly and fully as possible, as it makes more resources available to the providers of the related product or service, so as to provide more satisfaction to more “end customers”.

The chart below depicts the 8 major categories of waste that a business process may contain. The focus of a “Mudi” is to ask questions (Who, What, When, Why, How) about a process that permit the identification and quantification of the waste-producing activities in the process. Typical questions could focus on areas of a process such as (1) the necessity, completeness, accuracy or duplication of information collected; (2) the necessity, degree, and timing of action required of others who are involved; (3) the skill sets and capabilities of those involved; and (4) the necessity and degree of physical movement of information involved. Collecting information about the steps in a process, and identifying whether, what type of, and how much waste is included in each step, enables a “Mudi” to prioritize the actions that need to be taken in order to eliminate as much “Type 2” Muda as possible.
Milepost 4

Anybody Bring a Map? Ways to Diagram a Business Process

What is Process “Mapping”? It’s a graphical representation of work shown in a sequence of steps.

Why Should a “Mudi” Create a Process Map?
- To break down complex processes, making them easier to understand
- To clarify roles and responsibilities
- To help identify inefficiencies and/or redundancies
- To help identify improvement opportunities
- To help identify customer needs
- Providing visual representations of work makes areas needing improvement easier to see
- It is a useful tool for kaikaku (radical) and kaizen (continuous) improvement activities

What Type of Process Map Should Be Used?

The process map you should utilize depends on how much detail you need and what your goal is. Things you may want to consider when selecting which map to use include:
- Who is your audience?
- What are you trying to do? Improve a process, educate those involved, identify and eliminate waste?

There are several common types of process maps, including:

A **SIPOC** (Suppliers, Inputs, Process, Outputs, and Customers) process map: It is a high level view of a process that summarizes these five elements using a table. It is a great first step when mapping a process, since you can quickly capture the current state and factor in the voice of the customer.

A **Top Down** process map: It is a view of a process that shows the major areas of activity and the sub-steps of those areas. A Top Down map only contains those steps that are essential to the process.

A **Cross Functional** or “Swim Lane” process map: It shows the relationship between a process and the departments responsible for it. It shows the process steps and the handoffs between departments.

A **Value Stream** process map: It shows all process steps required to complete a product or service from beginning to end. It is used to document, analyze and improve the flow of information and/or materials required for the process and focuses on customer requirements.

(The “SIPOC” and “Top-Down” mapping processes will be discussed in more detail at Milepost 5; the “Cross-Functional” mapping process at Milepost 6; and the “Value Stream” process at Milepost 7. Each will be applied to a generic travel reimbursement process, to allow for comparison among the maps.)
Driving with the “Top Down”: Higher-Level Process Maps

“SIPOC” and “Top-Down” process maps let you see the “big picture” without getting mired in the details.

The SIPOC Process Map

A SIPOC process map gives you a high level view of a process, summarizing the inputs and outputs, using a table, before the work of map drawing begins. “SIPOC” stands for ...

S - The Supplier(s) to a process
I - The Input(s) provided by suppliers to a process
P - The high-level Process steps within the overall project; normally, five to seven steps
O - The Output(s) of the process
C - The Customer(s) of the process

Why use a SIPOC process map?

- It gives a structured way to discuss what will be involved before drawing process maps
- It identifies boundaries of what will be worked on before the process maps are drawn
- It identifies start and end points of the process
- It helps departments/ team members agree on a process for continuous improvement
- It is useful in defining new processes
- It defines the scope for process improvement activities

How to Create a SIPOC Process Map

SIPOC diagrams are very easy to complete. Here are the steps you should follow:

1. Start with a work area that allows for a template that can be expanded and added to from the team members. This could include a blank wall with Post-Its for the headings, or flip charts with headings written on each.
2. Describe the Process you want to map; what it includes and how much time it takes.
3. Identify the Outputs. What are the products and services that the process produces?
4. Define the Customers of the outputs and their requirements. What do they expect?
5. Define the Inputs to the process; what is required to produce the identified outputs.
6. Identify the Sources/ Suppliers of the inputs.

Below is a basic SIPOC process overview of our sample travel reimbursement process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suppliers</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager Travel Desk</td>
<td>Expense Report</td>
<td>Traveler completes expense report</td>
<td>A check payable to the</td>
<td>Those who travel on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td>Traveler submits report and receipts for approval</td>
<td>traveler</td>
<td>University business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manager approves expense report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel Desk and Accounting process expense report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Traveler receives payment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Top-Down Process Map

A Top-Down process map is a macro level view of a process that shows the major areas of activity and the sub-steps of those areas. A Top Down map only contains those steps that are essential to the process. Top Down process maps are used for planning new processes and examining existing ones.

Why use a Top-Down process map?

- Easy way to break down a high-level process into steps without getting into too much detail
- Identifies the major clusters of activity that are essential to the total process
- Provides visuals for customers to help them understand the process
- Top-Down process maps focus on essential, value added steps

How to Create a Top-Down Process Map

1. Team members agree on the steps of a process and their order including start and stop points. Steps should be limited to no more than five or six.
2. Write the major steps from left to right in order that they occur.
3. List the sub-steps under each major step in order from top to bottom.
4. Identify the duplicated effort and other non-value-added steps that might be hiding in a process.
5. Identify/clarify working relationships between people and organizations.
6. Target specific steps in which improvements in the process are required.

Below is a Top-Down process map/flowchart of our sample travel reimbursement process.
Milepost 6

All Over the Road: The Multi-Lane “Cross-Functional” Map

What is a Cross-Functional Process Map?
A Cross-Functional or “Swim Lane” process map is a way to diagram a business process that involves more than one functional unit (such as departments). It organizes process steps into separate visual categories to illustrate different functional capabilities and organizational roles, and to show how work is done (“as-is” map) or could be done (“to-be” map) between different functional units within an organization. It gives the details of the sequence of steps and defines handoffs between functional units. Parallel lines are labeled to divide the map into lanes, with one lane for each functional unit.

Why Use a Cross-Functional Process Map?
When a process involves a number of people or functional units, it is sometimes difficult to clearly describe who is responsible for each step and the interaction between steps. A Cross-Functional Process Map provides a useful technique for solving these issues:

- It shows the relationship among the functional units involved in the process.
- It displays the sequence of process steps.
- It identifies the party responsible for each step and shows the handoffs between each.
- It helps to discover potential process improvements and eliminate waste.
- It provides a baseline to develop a “standard operating procedure” for the process.

Basic Charting Conventions

In order to create a Cross Functional process map, you will need to utilize the basic charting symbols. It is helpful to use the following mapping conventions to improve the legibility of your process map.
Some helpful technical suggestions:

- If possible, label the inputs and outputs so you can see the transformation or value of each step.
- As best as possible, keep the flow or sequence of steps moving from left to right.
- Avoid confusing intersections of flow lines by using over/under lines.
- Be sure to label the decision and the decision outcomes from the Decision Point.
- Draw horizontal bands (a/k/a “swim lanes”) to represent the different functional units that participate in the process. Label each band; show the customer in the top most band.
- If several functional units jointly perform the same step, draw the Process Step box so that it includes (i.e. crosses over) all the functional units involved.

**How to Create a Cross Functional Process Map**

A cross-functional process map can be presented either vertically or horizontally. A vertical map layout emphasizes the functional units while a horizontal map layout emphasizes the process. There is no strict requirement or guideline re: the orientation option. To create such a map, follow these procedures.

- Place a large piece of paper on a wall or flat surface. Write the name of the process at the top.
- Identify all functional units involved in the process and draw a “swim lane” for each. The swim lanes also may be used to represent different roles in a process or a software application.
- Using Post-its, write the name of each unit involved in the process on the left vertical axis.
- Put the customer of the process in the topmost band.
- Write on two Post-it notes, the start and stop points, and place them on the topmost band.
- Write on a Post-it note each process step for each unit and place it on the map. Move them around until you are satisfied that all the steps are identified and are in the correct order.
- Add labels, flow arrows, input and output descriptors, and decisions to complete the map.
- Identify baseline “metrics” such as time factors and numbers of personnel involved.

Below is a Cross-Functional Flowchart for our sample Travel Reimbursement process.
**Getting Under the Hood: Mapping the “Value Stream”**

**What is a Value Stream Process Map?**
A Value Stream Map is a step-by-step pictorial representation of the steps in a process – whether or not they create “value” for the customer. It is used to document, analyze and improve the flow of information and / or materials required for the process, and focuses on customer requirements.

**Why Use a Value Stream Process Map?**
A Value Stream Map (VSM) helps you to:

- Understand how a process works now, and how well it’s working.
- Expose waste and problems with “flow” in the value “stream” of the process.
- Reach agreements as to what changes need to be made to improve the process.
- Reach agreements on how to ensure that those changes are made.

Below is the basic layout of a VSM, which includes information flowing from the customer and the processing of that information by the service provider.

Below are the symbols typically used in creating a Value Stream Map.
The “Data Table” symbol above is used for collecting “metrics” about a process. “Metrics” may include:

- Process Time (P/T): the actual uninterrupted “touch time” for one work item.
- Delay Time (D/T): the time that a single work item sits delayed or untouched.
- Lead Time (L/T): the sum of P/T and D/T, or total time to complete one work item.
- Percent Complete and Accurate (% C/A): the percentage of all work items that are processed completely and accurately.

**How to Map /“Walk” the Value Stream for a Process**

1. Identify the Suppliers, Customers and Process Steps involved. (Preparation of the SIPOC or Top-Down process maps first will help with this step.)
2. Identify the Metrics that will be used to evaluate each step in the process.
3. Identify the steps in the process, distinguishing those that represent “control points” at which information provided by the customer is being approved by another person or system.
4. Draw boxes in pencil on a large sheet of paper, or electronically, to show the beginning and the end of the process, as well as each major step in the process. Use the appropriate charting symbol boxes to distinguish people from processes, and “control points” from other processes. Use the “flow” diagram above to place the boxes in sequence from upper right to upper left and from lower left to lower right. Add directional arrows for information and document flow.
5. Add inventory symbols for information and document queues; and notes in the margins regarding steps in the process as appropriate.
6. Add Data Tables (process metrics boxes) under each process step.
7. Calculate metrics and enter in Data Tables, and validate your process map, by “walking” the process from beginning to end with all parties involved in it.

Below are diagrams that depict the development of a Value Stream Map for the sample travel reimbursement process that has been used in preceding Mileposts.

In the following diagram, steps 1-4 above have been completed, as well as some notes as per step 5.
In this next diagram, additional lines for electronic information flow have been added (per step 4), as well as inventory symbols per step 5, and data tables containing process metrics - per steps 6 and 7.

While you are “walking” the “value stream”, you can be asking questions about the process that identify clearly where value exists for the customer, as well as where waste exists for the service provider. You can highlight on the VSM your concerns about, or discoveries of opportunities for improvements in, the process – as in the diagram below. Now, you are ready to recap your findings and recommendations.
What is an A3 Template?
“A3” refers to a paper size that is roughly equivalent to an American 11x17 tabloid-sized paper. The A3 template has been used as the standard format at Toyota for proposals, status reports, and problem solving. The A3’s foundation is built around the core of the quality system “PDCA” (Plan, Do, Check, and Act), cycling through these steps until the desired result is achieved.

The process behind an A3 is more important than its format. An A3 lays out an entire plan concisely on a single page of paper, in a columnar format that is visually straightforward and easy to understand.

When you want to simplify or clarify a complicated issue, an A3 template provides:

- a quality system-based problem solving approach
- a way for structuring thinking
- a concise summary of a problem and its solution
- a communication tool to report problems and recommendations for improvement
- a method for management to organize and implement continuous improvement activities
- a means for creating an efficient working environment.

The A3 Method
The structured A3 problem solving template takes you through the following steps:

- Identify the problem, symptoms, impact or need
- Understand the background and current state
- Develop the goal statement – the target/future state
- Perform root cause analysis
- Determine countermeasures/improvements to close the gap
- Create an implementation plan and associated cost, benefit, potential problems and schedule
- Study the results to confirm the effect and follow up to ensure continuous improvement.
Basic Elements of an A3 Template

1. **Owner:** The unit that understands and/or is affected by the problem/issue.
2. **Project Title:** Name of the process under review.
3. **Problem Statement:** Brief description of the problem, what is affected and where it is occurring.
4. **Background:** Describe why the problem is important and why the reader should care about it.
5. **Current Condition:** Describe how the process works today, the problem and baseline metrics.
6. **Goal (Target Condition):** Describe expected outcomes and reasons, and changes in metrics.
7. **Root Cause Analysis:** Describe the root cause(s) of the problem and analysis to show cause and effect relationships.
8. **Countermeasures:** Propose countermeasure(s) to address each root cause. This should be through a series of experiments (e.g. survey). Predict results for each countermeasure.
9. **Confirmation (Results):** Describe actual result of each countermeasure, and how the system/process should behave with the countermeasures that are being proposed.
10. **Follow up (Actions):** Describe what has been learned, whether the problem has been solved, the work to be adjusted, and what to do next.

Below is a sample of an A3 report, from a 2015 study of the UCR process for non-travel reimbursements.
Milepost 9

Seeing the Future: Mapping a LEAN Process Vision

In the preceding mileposts, we have discussed:

1. The basics of “Lean Thinking” as it relates to business processes. (See Mileposts 1 to 3.)
2. How to describe what your business process looks like currently, using methods of varying complexity (see Mileposts 4 to 8), with a focus on its benefits (Value) to the Customers thereof and the forms of Waste that are inherent in it.

The next step is to paint a picture of what you want your process to look like – to move it from its “current state” to a “future state” in which your process provides greater value to its customers and consumes fewer human, financial, tangible and time resources in its execution. Follow these steps:

- Describe the desired “future state” of your process using the same tools you used for its “current state”. Update or redraw the Top-Down, Cross-Functional, and Value Stream maps of your process, depending upon how much it needs to be streamlined.
- Ask questions, such as “What if...” or “Why couldn’t we...” in mapping the “current state” of your process – as well as answering the “Why?” questions that help you understand it. These questions allow you to view and map a process in a different, “leaner” way.
- Test your ideas for the “future state” of the process, as discussed in the A3 (see Milepost 8).
Above is a Value Stream map of a “future state” for our sample travel reimbursement process. Compare this “future state” map with the “current state” map of the same process from Milepost 7 – which appears below. In this example, Process Time was cut in half; Lead Time and “Number of Touches” were reduced by two-thirds; and the percentage of Complete and Accurate transactions more than doubled.

Current-State – Travel and Expense Reimbursement Process
Start: Traveler fills out and submits expense report
End: Traveler is reimbursed
Date: 6/9/2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Stream Metrics</th>
<th>Control Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Time = 44 minutes</td>
<td>Approver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Time = 19 days 44 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Complete &amp; Accurate = 37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Touches = 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an example only, of course. A process that you may want to streamline likely will have different elements to it. However, the steps in analyzing, understanding and redrawing your process so that it can maximize value to its customers, and minimize resources consumed in its execution, are the same:

1. Define your customer’s current requirements.
2. Determine the changes you envision making in your process. These changes could result in radical (in Japanese: kaikaku) or incremental (in Japanese: kaizen) improvements.
3. Estimate your results, looking for improvements in quality and process metrics such as Process and Lead Time, and Percent Complete and Accurate.
4. Ensure that the steps involved in the process flow smoothly from beginning to end, optimizing value-creating steps.
5. Improve work quality and reliability; control variations in, and standardize, your process.
6. Monitor the performance of the process, using milestones, regular process checks, and internal reflection/external feedback loops.
**Milepost 10**

*Interstate Travel: Making Your LEAN Vision a Reality*

OK, let’s assume that you’ve identified a business process in which you are involved that does not deliver the level of value desired by its customers, and/or that wastes resources. You’ve analyzed / mapped the process in its “current state”, asked the questions necessary to develop and “lab test” a desired “future state”, and summarized all of your work to date in an A3 template.

What do you need to do to *implement* successfully the changes that you’ve identified?

1. First, realize that your thinking about your process may be way ahead of that of many of the people who may be impacted by any change that you wish to make. Others may admit that they don’t like the status quo, but change involves moving from the known to the unknown. You are not looking to change a process; you are looking to change what people do or have done for them. So share information and ideas with those who would be affected by your proposed changes. Seek their input - and their agreement with, or suggestions about, your ideas.

2. You may be looking at changing a process in which you are involved that may have been assessed and changed in another part of the University, or of the UC system, by another group of “Mudi”. You may find that the process change work that has been done to date by others can represent a “best practice” for you to follow, rather than you having to take the lead and initiating change from scratch. Communicate with others who are responsible for the same or similar business processes regarding your ideas, and solicit their input and advice.

3. If the changes that you have in mind are extensive, consider the possibility of implementing them in stages. For example, some of the changes could be implemented across the board initially. Alternatively, the entire set of proposed changes could be “pilot-tested” with a smaller group of customers and/or service providers. Under either approach, feedback as to the effectiveness of these changes could be solicited and analyzed before applying them universally.

4. It can be helpful to build support for implementing all of the changes by identifying and implementing initially the changes that would be of the greatest benefit to the customers of the process. These customers might become ambassadors for you in implementing the remainder of the changes that may be necessary, but that might not be of significant benefit.

5. Ensure that those in higher levels of your organization are aware of what you are proposing to change, why the changes are necessary, and the expected impacts of the change. Show them that you have done the research and analysis required to support the change. Seek their support regarding the method and timing of implementing the proposed changes – including commitments of resources by them, where you foresee this as a prerequisite to success.

6. Communicate continuously and visibly throughout the change process with customers, service providers, and your “up-line”. Maintain a mechanism for tracking and providing public visibility to the change process, including implementation dates, results achieved, lessons learned, and those adjustments to the original plan that inevitably occur.
Milepost 11

Are We There Yet? Dealing with Delays, Doubts and Defeats Along the Road to the “Future State”

It has been said that “Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.” You, as a Mudi “waste warrior,” may have put a great deal of thought into what is wrong with an existing process, and what could be done to make it better. You may have shared your ideas with, and solicited feedback from, people who might be affected by changes in the process, or who might make it easier for you to implement change. You may have developed what you believed to be an effective and practical plan for implementing proposed changes to the process in a measurable and acceptable time frame. You didn’t fail to plan; and you didn’t plan to fail.

Yet a University environment is one in which a journey of a hundred steps sometimes can feel like a journey of a thousand miles. You may have a clear vision of where you want to get to in terms of making valuable improvements to a process; but as a service provider you tend to be called to respond to the immediate before you are allowed to shape the future. Everyone’s voice is valued; but some voices are heard before or above others. A goal that seems readily achievable to you by a preset future date is met only in part, if not at all, by that date. “If only I had more time!” is a thought that may cross the minds of those responsible for University business processes. Yet all of us have all the time there is.

So what can you do to deal with the diversions, the delays, the doubts, and the real or perceived defeats that might stand between you and the implementation of the process changes that actually might not only make your customers happier, but help you enjoy your job more?

Here are some other “d” words that might help you with this.

1. **Document**: Many of us make “To-Do” lists; but how many of us make “Done” lists? If your “Done” list is always shorter than your “To-Do” list, take a look at what it is on them and why.
2. **Delegate**: If you have no one reporting to you who can be trained to take on at least some of the recurring work you are doing, then it is difficult to focus on business process changes.
3. **Defer**: The person who said “never put off to tomorrow what can be done today” needs to have more delegated to them. There always will be something for you to do; put first things first.
4. **Decline**: Knowing that sometimes it is OK to say “no” is healthy—and the world keeps turning.
5. **Deliver**: Begin each week with things to do that are non-negotiable; make sure they move from your “To-Do” to your “Done” list no matter what.
6. **Dare**: Challenge yourself to take risks in carrying out your job; being afraid that something new may not succeed tends to guarantee that it won’t.
7. **Discern**: Maintain a clear view of all of the work that you do; separate the essential from the rest. Don’t ignore work assignments; rather, communicate about and meet realistic deadlines.
8. **Demand**: “Me” time for you and your family. Be careful not to let your job take over your life.
9. **Dialogue**: Spend at least some time each day just talking with people where you work. You never know what you might learn—and it can help keep you both balanced and appreciated.
10. **Diplomacy**: Be the model for others as to how you would like to be treated, regardless of how you actually may be treated. You never know how it might change possible outcomes.
The Never-Ending Journey: Maximizing the LEAN “Mudi Message”

Whether you are new to “Lean”, or have been involved in its implementation at UCR, hopefully you have found some “value”, and not much “waste”, in the information that has been shared in these Mileposts. There are many ways to make business processes “better” in a University or any other work environment. Many books have been published, and no doubt will continue to be published, on this topic. “Lean Thinking” – written in 1996 and updated in 2003 by James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones, and the basis of much of the materials in these Mileposts - is just one of those books; however, its concepts are ones that can be understood readily, and applied repeatedly and consistently.

Application of “Lean Thinking” at UCR began in the first half of 2015, as part of the “Organizational Excellence” (OE) initiative championed by Vice Chancellors Ron Coley and Maria Anguiano, and supported by Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost Paul D’Anieri and Chancellor Kim Wilcox. First, the entire campus was invited to participate in an OE “Speaker Series”, led by invitees from other UC campuses and institutions of public higher education, as well as from the City of Houston, Texas. Next, volunteers were invited to learn and embrace the concepts of “Lean Thinking” - and to apply them, as part of “Kaizen Groups”, to actual business processes in place at UCR at the time. Their goal: to document, and publicly discuss, issues with these processes – so as to facilitate incremental or radical improvement thereof as the analysis dictated. An “Organizational Excellence” web site was established as a means to provide a history of the work performed by these groups, as well as for documents such as this – which is one of three created by OE “work groups” that were formed to address the areas perceived as of greatest concern to participants in the “Speaker Series”. That Fall, UCR helped coordinate, and hosted, the 2015 “California Public Higher Education Collaborative Business Conference”. This gathering, with a theme of “New Opportunities – Common Challenges”, was designed to facilitate the coming together of leaders and professionals from the California State University, the University of California, and the California Community College systems to share ideas and information about improving administrative performance, service, and outcomes. Improvements already have been implemented in some of the UCR business processes studied by the first wave of “Kaizen” Groups, with additional groups continuing to be formed across campus and setting off on their own “Lean” journeys.

Improving a business process can be likened to standing a distance from a wall, with the wall representing the “Lean Thinking” concept of “Perfection” of the process. Each time we review and analyze a process, we may move the process closer to the “wall” of process Perfection. There always will be imperfections in a process, and choices to be made as to where to devote one’s energies in improving, or replacing, the processes that exist. However, it is in our business processes that all constituents of the University intersect in one way or another. It is in our business processes that the goal always is how best to do things for others – knowing that not all will be equally satisfied, but all may be equally considered.

Our business processes, and the process for their review and enhancement, can serve as models for how we interact as a community of principles and of knowledge expansion. Achieving perfection in that interaction is a goal that, just as the achievement of perfection in any given business process, always will be a little ways away. However, our pursuit of each should never be one in which we should settle for less than the best we can do or be.