


# progressing business



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# progressing business

I N S T I T U T E

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# progressing business

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# Government is embracing Lean and Lean Six Sigma

Stephen Grech, Doing Business Better Pty Ltd.



*Government Departments continuously strive to be more innovative and efficient in their operations. Despite sustained efforts, they do not have a consistent approach to process improvement and making better use of public funds to deliver more 'frontline' services to communities'.*

Increasingly, local, state and federal government agencies across Australia are now embracing the multi-facet benefits of adopting a Lean Thinking approach to process improvement and process waste minimisation.

## **LEAN THINKING AND SIX SIGMA**

Lean Thinking is a philosophy, a way of thinking, a mindset where everyone in an organisation learns to see process waste and knows how to fix business process problems or at least knows who to speak to about addressing a problem.

Lean Thinking uses a range of tools, techniques and methods to improve process flow by eliminating or reducing duplication of effort, cutting waste and non-value adding activity, simplifying processes, minimising delays, preventing re-work, error proofing processes, and preventing errors from becoming defects.

Implementing Lean Thinking techniques is not capital intensive and often leads to quick wins which can be easily implemented at little or no cost. Lean Thinking principles, tools and techniques including workplace organisation methodology 5S and Value Stream Mapping are highly engaging methods to harvest savings, achieve significant productivity improvement, contain costs and improve workplace safety.

5S in the office is a 5 step process aimed at reducing waste and optimising productivity through maintaining an orderly workplace and using visual cues to achieve more consistent operational results.

Value Stream Mapping is a visual representation of the end-to-end process charting the flows of information, processes and physical goods. It exposes sources of process waste in order to eliminate or minimise it.

Six Sigma is a structured management process using

statistical measures of how well your process is satisfying your client. Six Sigma is a more robust project based improvement methodology with a set of structured techniques and tools for solving significant business problems.

The effort and training required to implement Six Sigma business process improvement projects can be inhibiting both in terms of the time and resources required to invest and learn the techniques, and the time taken to deliver a performance improvement.

**IS GOVERNMENT READY?**

Lean Thinking is relatively easy to understand and quick to deploy and implement. Six Sigma is a significant commitment with longer lead times. However it has the potential to deliver the highest returns for the long term.

Whether an individual government or government agency is ready for Lean or Six Sigma is determined by a combination of factors including senior executive buy-in, the severity of their business problems, their capacity to invest time and effort for a longer term outcome, their commitment to process excellence, their internal culture, their existing business process maturity; and their financial capacity to fund training over the longer term.

For a government agency contemplating introducing a single, systematic way of approaching business process improvement in their organisation, then Lean Thinking based on a “Learning to See” process waste and Value Adding activity, should be their first port of call.

**CHALLENGES AHEAD**

To effectively deploy Lean Thinking across government is a challenge. It may seem difficult, but it is not insurmountable. Taking bite sized steps is the most effective way to ensure progress.

Start by gaining leadership buy-in and commitment. For this to occur, leaders must understand what Lean Thinking really is, what Lean Thinking can do to improve and transform organisational performance both from within and to the external customers they service. Leaders must see

business process wastes for themselves and “walk the talk” during their deployment program.

Build internal capacity by developing internal capability. Train the workforce to “Learn to See” process wastes and understand the difference between Value Adding and Non Value Adding activity.

There must be something in it for all stakeholders. For government, it is about valuing every dollar spent, improving performance and productivity, containing cost growth, minimising exposure to unnecessary risk and doing more with less. Government also has a desire to retain a quality and high performing workforce. Engaging the workforce, capturing their ideas for improvement and improving the way they work will contribute to higher levels of retention, morale and productivity.

For the workforce, employees gain respect and empowerment to have a say in the way they do business. The workforce receives personal and professional development and a greater

commitment and enjoyment in the work they perform. Customers receive improved, more reliable, consistent and higher quality services.

Support is being provided to a number of Local, State and Federal Government agencies in leading the way in adopting a Lean Thinking mind-set and internal capability by redesigning processes focusing on flow and value from the customers perspective. One Federal agency has benefited greatly from a recently completed Value Stream Mapping project which identified significant productivity improvements, cost and labour input savings. This agency is now developing and training seven internal Lean Thinking Champions to drive, extend and sustain future process improvement activity in other processes across the organisation. Other government agencies have also taken steps towards Lean Thinking implementation and are now enjoying the benefits of multi-million dollars in harvestable productivity and cost saving improvements.

Lean Thinking philosophy and approach to business

process improvement is easy to understand and simple to use. Lean Thinking training and implementation costs are not onerous. However the deployment of Six Sigma across any organisation is a significant investment of time, effort and resources.

Government agencies must crawl before they walk, and walk before they run. Start by learning to see business process waste and then progress to fixing process problems before embarking on Six Sigma deployment. Start small by deploying Lean Thinking and build on your success.

In the past twelve months, many government agencies have embraced Lean Thinking and are beginning to implement a new mind-set and business process improvement projects. Many more are ready to embark on the journey. Few are now progressing and evolving into developing Lean Six Sigma internal capabilities. Although the emergence of Lean Six Sigma capability in government is still in its infancy, progress is evident and growing at a steady rate. As the uptake continues to escalate, it will be increasingly important that the momentum is sustain and outcomes are positive for both staff and the clients they serve.

More information request Grech 1211 to [progbus@pb institute.net](mailto:progbus@pb institute.net)

*Taking bite sized steps is the most effective way to ensure progress.*

*Lean Thinking is easy to understand and simple to use.*

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# Avoiding unfair dismissal claims...

Dominique Lamb, McKays Solicitors



*This is the first in a short series to help employers to minimise the risk of a time consuming, frustrating and (possibly) expensive unfair dismissal claim.*

## **STEP 1 IS UNDERSTANDING HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS**

The majority of unfair dismissal claims come about simply as a result of employers not knowing how to correctly terminate staff.

To know how to do it correctly, you have to have a basic understanding of the Fair Work Act 2009. This article sets out the basics and it is worth reading and keeping on file as a guide.

When has an employee been unfairly dismissed as opposed to just being dismissed.

It is a common misconception that an employee has to have been dismissed in order to claim for unfair dismissal. An employee can also make a claim against a business if they feel that they have no choice but to resign from their position.

The word “dismissed” is defined by the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) to include the termination of a person’s employment and also where a person has been forced to resign due to the conduct or because of the course of conduct engaged in by the employer.

An employee is deemed to be unfairly dismissed if they have:

- been dismissed by their employer;
- the dismissal was harsh, unjust and unreasonable; or
- the dismissal was not consistent with the Small Business Dismissal Code; and
- the dismissal was not a case of “genuine redundancy”.

## **WHAT DOES “HARSH, UNJUST AND UNREASONABLE” MEAN?**

To determine whether a dismissal is “harsh, unjust and unreasonable” you need to look at the following factors:

- whether there was a valid reason for the dismissal by the employer based on the individual’s capacity or conduct (including the effect on the safety and welfare on other

- employees);
- whether the person was notified of that reason;
- whether the employee was given an opportunity to respond to any reason for termination given by the employer, relating to the capacity or conduct of the employee;
- any unreasonable refusal by the employer to allow the person to have a “support person” present to assist at any discussion relating to the employee’s dismissal;
- if the dismissal related to unsatisfactory performance by the employee, whether the employee was warned about their unsatisfactory performance;
- the degree to which the size of the employer’s enterprise would impact on the procedures followed in effecting the dismissal;
- the degree to which the absence of a dedicated human resource specialist or expert in the enterprise would be likely to impact on the procedures followed in effecting the dismissal; and
- other matters that Fair Work Australia considers relevant.

#### **UNFAIR DISMISSAL FOR SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYERS**

Small businesses have special protections, which we will outline in our next article.

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# Lean Six Sigma 2012

## 7th Annual Conference

Melbourne 23-24 April, 2012

### Theme

*Strategic Insights from Research and Practice in Lean Six Sigma  
Streams: Deployment and Project Delivery*

### Call for Papers

(Close 28 February 2012)

### Keynote Speakers

**Elizabeth Keim**

Master Black Belt, Past Chair ASQ

**Professor George Cairns**

Head of School of Management, RMIT University

**Craig Fox**

Assistant Commissioner, ATO



More information and Early Bird Registration

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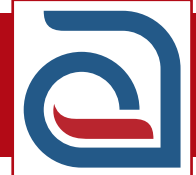
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#### 27 February Brisbane

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#### 27 February – 1 March Brisbane

Quality Management Systems Auditor. RABQSA Competency Units QM, AU and TL

#### 28-29 February Brisbane

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#### 27 February – 2 March Brisbane

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# Congratulations quality champions!



*Above: Federal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells (second from right) congratulates the University of Wollongong on-campus after their win. The Awards were presented by Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells who stood in for The Hon Santo Santoro, Patron of the Awards. The University members in attendance were Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton, Quality Assurance Assistant Jodie Crawford, UOW Quality Assurance Manager Samantha Domagala, and Vice-Principal of Administration Chris Grange.*

# Congratulations quality champions!



*Peter Greenham (AOQ-QLD President), Craig Sweatman (General Manager ELCO Solutions Pty Ltd and Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke.*

# Congratulations quality champions!

*The awards have been announced and we'd like to congratulate all the entrants and winners in the Gold Awards for Business Excellence. The 2011 awards saw outstanding public and private organisations thrilled to be recognised as quality champions.*

Don't just take our word for it though, here's what the two top scoring National Gold-level winners have to say about the Awards...

*"Preparing the application and the assessment was intense, but it was all worth it. I am very pleased with the outcome. Winning the State Gold Award was great, but also receiving the National Award was fantastic. It came as a complete surprise, but a great one! It is great to be acknowledged."*

Samantha Domagala  
Quality Assurance Manager (Quality Assurance Unit)  
University of Wollongong

*"Participating in the Gold Awards has provided ELCO Solutions with the opportunity to showcase to the Geosynthetic industry our commitment to quality and business excellence. Receiving the Gold Award is great recognition for the contributions our staff make towards continual improvement of our systems. Thank you to the AOQ and PBI for recognising and encouraging the innovation of ELCO Solutions."*

Kate Powell  
Systems Coordinator (HR, OHS & QMS)  
ELCO Solutions Pty Ltd

Gold Award recipients are organisations with an indisputable track record of success, and who have achieved

and demonstrated this by building on the implementation of Quality Management Systems. Specifically, successful awards recipients had to have in place an effective, accredited third-party certified Quality Management System, such as ISO 9001.

There are three levels of recognition, recognising organisations recognised as achieving 'gold', 'silver', or 'bronze' awards. To be recognised, organisations must achieve the stringent scoring benchmarks of at least 75% for bronze, 80% for silver, and a score of 85% or greater for gold.

There are eight Award categories with the most prestigious and hotly-contested simply called the 'Gold Award for Business Excellence'. This is the award that the University of Wollongong and ELCO Solutions entered into – both going on to achieve the 'gold' benchmark for their respective type/size of organisation.

Awards on-site assessments took place in October, with the Assessor, Len Mahon, visiting organisations across different states. Mr Mahon commented on the overall very high standard of this year's entrants and asked that all organisations who entered, be acknowledged and commended.

For the past 32 years, ELCO Solutions Pty Ltd has maintained a reputation for designing and manufacturing a selective range of the very highest quality, innovative and environmentally responsible geosynthetic products that meet world class standards and are used in a range of applications that include; Coastal Erosion, Golf & Sports fields, Mining & Landfills and Highways & Road applications.

*"Participating in the Gold Awards has provided ELCO Solutions with the opportunity to showcase to the Geosynthetic industry our dedication and commitment to quality and business excellence. Receiving the Gold Award is great recognition for the contributions our staff make towards continual improvement of our systems. Thank you to the AOQ and PBI for recognising and encouraging the innovation and practices of ELCO Solutions."*

The University of Wollongong (UOW) is recognised internationally for excellence and innovation. UOW has a diverse and enterprising culture, strong external partnerships and a lasting commitment to its regional communities.

UOW's home campus is located under the spectacular Illawarra escarpment and minutes from renowned coastal beaches. Its bushland setting and impressive facilities are valued by students and graduates and admired by visitors. UOW's special, personalised style is a feature of its on-shore campuses and centres and off-shore at UOW Dubai.

The University's acknowledged quality and planning frameworks are supported by sound governance and business structures. UOW is in the top 2% of world research universities (ARWU ranking) and a sector leader in learning and teaching and graduate outcomes (Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), Australian Universities Quality Agency, Good Universities Guide).

The UOW Vision gives a focus for its creativity and expertise: it is about enriching people and the world they live in.

*More information request Gold Awards to  
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*Divisions operate nationally with committee members from various states*

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- recognise and to advance the status of the natural persons engaged in the Division's industry;
- disseminate knowledge of the science and practice of quality management and business improvement in the Division's industry;
- initiate, conduct, supervise, and assist in research and investigations into the science and practice of quality management and business improvement in the Division's industry;
- participate in and contribute to industry Benchmarking;
- foster integration between organisational interfaces.
- offer opportunities to professionals at any experience level to share knowledge and solutions through access to leading academics and practitioners in the Division's industry
- provide access to academic research on future directions and innovations in management and business process improvement.
- provide and promote networking sessions to other industry practitioners and academics
- provide access to leaders in the field for advice and training.
- access to ongoing professional development.
- access to the wider quality/business excellence movement.
- provide certification and professional registration to industry standard competency levels.
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- assist AOQ-QLD and the Progressing Business Institute in the fostering of mutually beneficial relationships with relevant quality assurance and quality management organisations

Each Division conducts member activities (details available at [www.pb institute.net](http://www.pb institute.net)).

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# Don't get led up the garden path

## What small business owners need to know about staffing

Karen Schmidt, Let's Grow.



*Running a small business requires a range of skills. Smart owners know that they should take advice from others in areas that are outside their expertise. The problem is that unless you are careful you can find yourself getting bad advice from well meaning people who may be operating from old paradigms.*

*This is particularly true when it comes to the topic of staff. The result can be that you waste time, money and sleep plus potentially damage your reputation with potential employees, customers and suppliers.*

So what are some of the staffing myths that lead small business owners up the garden path? Here are the top 7 I have come across.

### **USE FAMILY, IT'S CHEAPER**

It may be cheaper in terms of wage costs but employing family members can turn out to be far more expensive than you might imagine in the long run. Giving directions or correcting errors is hard enough with a paid employee but when it's your spouse/child/cousin it can be even more difficult. Plus, it all depends on whether that family member has the right skill set for the job. It is false economy to let someone perform a role when they don't really know what they are doing and other people have to compensate for their lack of skill.

### **STICK WITH CASUALS AND CONTRACTORS**

This is a great way to have flexibility and avoid unfair dismissal laws but it is not the best way to create a committed, engaged group of people who are passionate about helping your business to succeed. Sure, use short term hires for tasks and projects that really are short term but when it comes to ongoing work you are always better off with someone who has a greater level of commitment to the business. The only way you can get them to commit is if you commit to them by making them a permanent employee.

### **HIRE PEOPLE THAT ARE LIKE YOU**

In theory this sounds great but in practice it can limit the

growth of your business and lead to insular thinking. Unless your customers represent a very narrow, easily defined demographic having a range of people on your team can be an excellent way of customising your service offering. IBM learnt this one the hard way when they found that recruiting people who were identical just didn't work.

**USE YOUNG PEOPLE, THEY ARE CHEAPER**

I'm all for giving young people a start in their career but don't employ them simply because you perceive they cost less because you may find it costs you more money. If a more experienced person is required they are likely to be more cost effective in the long run as a young, inexperienced person will require greater training and more supervision to get them up to speed.

**DON'T USE YOUNG PEOPLE, THEY ARE TOO MUCH TROUBLE**

The wrong young people are too much trouble, just as the wrong people of any age can be. Avoid stereotyping someone simply because of their age. Yes, they will require a bit more guidance on the unwritten rules of work but think of the upside. You have the opportunity to train them to your requirements, rather than having to retrain a more experienced person who may have developed bad habits in past jobs.

**YOU CAN'T COMPETE WITH LARGER ORGANISATIONS FOR THE REAL TALENT**

There are just as many advantages and disadvantages working for a large corporation as there are working for a small business. Many people are making a calculated decision to regain their work life balance, to find employment in their local community and feel they are contributing something rather than simply making money for a faceless conglomerate. Good people are looking for good employers so if you can become one it doesn't matter how big or small you are.

**IF YOU PAY PEOPLE ENOUGH MONEY THE REST DOESN'T MATTER**

Oh yes it does. There has been study after study that proves, after a certain point, money ceases to motivate people. They need someone else, something less tangible to keep them working at their best, to get them caring about

what they do and how they do it. In fact one of the most valuable rewards is flexible working conditions for both parents and non-parents. This is something that small businesses are ideally placed to offer.

So, how many of these staffing myths have you been guilty of believing? How far up the wrong path have those beliefs taken you? If you want to get back on the path to an engaged workforce then start by examining the way you think and then developing some new beliefs. Before you know it you will be on the right track for staffing success.

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THEME

**Optimising Knowledge Transfer Through Effective Management Systems**

STREAMS

*Quality Management in Aged Care:  
Allied Health Services-Removing Road Blocks  
Responsibility of Aged Care Facility to the Consumer*

DATE  
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LOCATION  
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### LeanSixSigma2012

23-24 April 2012

*Theme:*

Strategic Insights from Research and  
Practice in Lean Six Sigma

*Streams:* Deployment, Project Delivery

*Type of Presentation:*

Research, Practice, Case Study

*Technology:*

Lean, Six Sigma, Lean Six Sigma

*Closing Date for Abstracts:*

31 January 2012

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### AgedCare2012

May 2012

*Theme:*

Optimising Knowledge Transfer Through  
Effective Management Systems

*Streams:*

Management Systems, Quality, Auditing,  
Management Training, Lean, Six Sigma

*Type of Presentation:*

Research, Practice, Case Study

*Closing Date for Abstracts:*

28 February 2012

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## Pharma2012

### Pharma2012

July 2012

*Theme:*

Improved Management Structures for  
Delivery of Bottom Line

*Streams:*

Management Systems, Quality, Auditing,  
Management Training, Lean, Six Sigma

*Type of Presentation:*

Research, Practice, Case Study

*Closing Date for Abstracts:*

30 April 2012

[www.pbinate.net/Pharma2012.htm](http://www.pbinate.net/Pharma2012.htm)



### EnergySummit2012

August 2012

*Streams:*

TBA

[www.pbinate.net/  
EnergySummit2012.htm](http://www.pbinate.net/EnergySummit2012.htm)

### BusImprove2012

September 2012

*Theme:*

Be Ready For Recovery

[www.pbinate.net/BusImprove2012.htm](http://www.pbinate.net/BusImprove2012.htm)



# Continuity Forum<sup>PTY LTD</sup>

*Sharing knowledge, experience and promoting best practice in business continuity and disaster recovery planning*



We are an active network of organisations that share an interest in seeing that their business continuity and disaster recovery plans are resilient and continually reviewed.

#### Our goals:

- Provide a forum for discussion on business continuity and disaster recovery
- Educate and inform members and the business continuity community
- Encourage development and implementation of business continuity plans

#### Our members:

*A variety of blue-chip companies from:*

**Banking and Finance**  
**Government**  
**Security**  
**Transport**  
**Utilities**  
**IT and Telecommunications**  
**Manufacturing**  
**Retail**

#### Member benefits:

- Member and specialist meetings in Australia and New Zealand
- Conferences and Training
- Surveys and Benchmarking
- Resources and Member Support

**EventsCalendar@[www.continuity.net.au](http://www.continuity.net.au)**

Visit our website [www.continuity.net.au](http://www.continuity.net.au) for more information or email [support@continuity.net.au](mailto:support@continuity.net.au) to be added to our email alert list.

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