
Preface

I wanted to write an exciting book and having read it back on completion I believe I managed to achieve this objective at least. I can only hope my reader will have the same feeling once reaching the end. I have stuffed into it a critical investigation into our current theories and into the management practice of some of the world's most important businesses, so in this sense the reader holds, for better or worse, a management thriller in their hands. It has a vein, too, in the still little developed discipline of the philosophy of management, centring around the most salient management philosophy of our time, the Toyota Way. And of course, the book is also an introduction to a leadership practice of continuous improvement and cultural transformation aspiring to point beyond Lean and help a few businesses redesign their CI practice for the better. I did not want this to be a lengthy book either but rather a representation of a way of thinking which might give food for further thought while also conclusive and helpful in key points. I fleshed the new framework out with just enough details to be comprehensible and inspiring at the same time. Again, I can only hope I did well. I wish my reader for an enjoyable time with this book.

Technically speaking, this book was designed to be usable by the academia and by practitioners at the same time. Its critical chapters taking up the most of the book written with the academic community in mind, but within each chapter, an executive summary and several inserts (shaded in grey) help quick and easy digestion by more practice-oriented readers. They are meant to establish that the available leadership and continuous improvement frameworks do not properly support a practical transformation process; therefore, they are hardly irrelevant to the business community, on the contrary. They help clarify why the current practice of operational improvement is broken (underperforming) and they lock in a number of key considerations I would find very hard to spare in building my own improvement strategy. Yet, you have those grey boxes to help you navigate through the chapters with less immediate reference to practice, highlighting the meat of the argument.

The exposition of my own doctrine in the last couple of chapters is rather more practical and a reader with a vein of either the academia or business may find interest in it. Indeed, I hope they will.

London, UK

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Beyond Lean

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Improvement

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