



July 2016 - Issue #125

Welcome from Lisa

July has been a whirlwind, getting back to clients, marketing, trade organizations and the like. I also went to AZ twice to help my mom with a few tests and to go to a mass in memory of my dad.

I just finished the month on a long weekend trip with my brothers and nephew. You'll see us below, riding Jurassic Park at Universal Studios. I've already received a lot of flack about wearing a poncho but I was protecting my hair!

We also had the opportunity to get together with some relatives from my dad's side that we haven't seen in 20+ years. That was great to have a mini family reunion of sorts.

Unfortunately, now I'm sitting in the 24 hour emergency vet hospital with my cat, Smokey. I think he might have ate a hydrangea which is definitely not on the ideal cat's menu. Thus, I hope they can resolve this issue. On to more positive topics...



IN THE NEWS

Please check out my latest speeches, articles & quotes:

- Published an article, "[ERP Project Success: How to be Part of the 20%](#)" in *Project Times*.
- I enjoyed speaking to the International Business group of [ProVisors](#) on "Global Supply Chain Partners: Associations, Networks & Resources" and to the Distributors and Manufacturers group of [ProVisors](#) on the "Amazon Effect".

Enjoy,
Lisa

[Email](#)
[LMA Consulting Group, Inc.](#)

P.S. Check out our rapid inventory assessment offer below (see The Strongest Link section)

Much of our success in consulting comes from seeing what others cannot. For example, assisting clients by helping them create better plans (that follow the quickest, most effective path to success), avoid costly and delay-ridden pitfalls that few realize exist, and successfully navigate through stormy waters.....all quite important in making high impact decisions, implementing significant change initiatives and for growing the business.



In my past, this "blessing" was also a curse. For example, early in my career I brought up what I thought would cause an issue down-the-line that could result in a negative impact on our key customers. Do you think I was received with a BIG thank you for finding this potential bottleneck? Heck NO!

Instead, management thought I was part of the problem because they saw my concern about future issues as worrying about things that aren't important. From their perspective, if you look at just the next step and the related impact, it wasn't a big deal - certainly nothing to get worked up about. The issue didn't arise until a few steps beyond that, and no one was thinking that far down-the-line (or couldn't see it). Or perhaps things would change. And, if they did respond to my concern, it would divert attention from the current priorities and make some folks uncomfortable. Totally understandable. Yet the key customer issues did occur. Thus, I had to get better at communicating these down-the-line impacts in a more powerful way!

Luckily, I did improve my communication over time (and it is a never-ending process) but I also was fortunate that a new CEO came along at just the right time in my career who focused on results - and listened to these concerns. Without him, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today. Thanks Mike!

Even today, these types of issues arise from time to time; however, I've been quite fortunate to find a career that benefits from seeing these down-the-line impacts as I can incorporate them into client go-forward plans. Seeing what others cannot can be an amazing advantage. Wouldn't it be great to see trends quicker than your competition? How about picking out the best time to address a topic with an employee because you can pick up on factors that will affect the conversation's success? Or, wouldn't it be great to be able to account for future people, process and system impacts stemming from decisions made today so you can avoid the inevitable potholes in your journey?

Sound interesting? So how do we develop this ability? I think it's worth-while starting with a few simple premises and build from there.

1. **Observe** - there is power in observation. Pay attention to those things that matter.
2. **Look for trends** - if you look at all the details (and get overwhelmed in detail) or if you look at just the isolated details related to your topic (and have too little background), you will make the wrong decision. Instead look for the trend and meaning within your data and your observations.
3. **Ask questions** - think about impacts. Almost every action or decision will have multiple impacts. What could they be? Be curious. Don't accept actions at face value. Dig deeper. Learn about a broad spectrum of topics so you are aware of the possibilities.

Start with these simple premises, and you might start seeing what others cannot. The great news is that we can surpass the masses and the status quo by flexing these muscles. Don't put too much pressure on yourself. Continually build on this ability - start by doing more listening and thinking than talking. As my consulting mentor says, "improve by 1% a day, and in 70 days you are twice as good".

Undoubtedly, if you can see things others cannot, you'll have the opportunity to leapfrog the competition.

Did you like this article? [Continue reading on this topic:](#)
[***What is Eagle Eye Strategic Focus?***](#)

The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain

Who Cares About Process Disciplines?

Who cares about process disciplines? All executives say they care but few are willing to focus the efforts on instilling process disciplines. It seems like a less important topic than creating a new product, expanding into new markets or increasing margins; however, it is at the crux of success! No improvements can be made in inventory, service, efficiencies and the like without starting here.



When we see a client with excellent process disciplines, we typically see the following:

1. Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
2. Clear understanding of the process steps and related system transactions that support the business.
3. Clear understanding of the timing, sequencing and interaction among process steps and functional departments.

We've seen some clients with books of process documentation yet very little success with process disciplines. Of course, having a documented process is a good idea; however, that alone will get you nowhere. Instead, think about and communicate the importance of process disciplines. Support the documentation of "what makes sense". And results will follow.

After 11 years of consulting and 15 years before that in organizational life, I can communicate with absolute certainty that those who emphasize process disciplines will be more successful in growing the business and increasing margins than those who don't. If you'd like to talk over how process disciplines could be strengthened in your business, [contact us](#).

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[***Bedrock Topic: Inventory Accuracy***](#)

The Systems Pragmatist

Resurrecting a Struggling System Implementation

We received a call this week from another frustrated CEO who is struggling with a system implementation. What we hear frequently from executives is the following: "It took more time and more money than I ever imagined!". And, worse, sometimes we hear that customers are being lost or are in danger of slipping away. Enough said as we can't imagine anything worse!



Over the years, we have helped several clients with these types of situations. We are not experts in any particular software (although we know most of the popular ones) yet we are able to help clients with these issues. Little has to do with being an expert in the particular system.

Instead, based on our experience with these types of projects, several of the pitfalls to avoid include:

- 1. Lack of process understanding** - just understanding system steps is not enough. What if those

system steps don't add up with the daily processes? What if we know all the system steps but have no idea how to perform our job function? This is one of the most common causes of mass frustration and ERP system issues.

2. Thinking in a silo - almost everything "works" if you are in a silo. If you are thinking about what you need the system to do and not aware of impacts on anyone else, it can appear that the system is functioning just fine when it isn't. For example, if you enter production and are able to move the inventory to the next step in the production process, all seems good. However, we've seen that two steps further in the process, the last production step cannot be performed or the item cannot be shipped if certain fields were not checked or steps followed. Unfortunately it creates havoc later on, and it might not be caught until it is too late. Unscrambling this mess can be tricky.

3. Lack of education - notice I did NOT say lack of training. 99% of my clients start by telling me the issue is a lack of training. Although additional training might be required, it is rarely the issue. Instead the lack of education can be a problem. Education includes training on specific steps and functions but it is a broader topic. Do you understand WHY you are performing these steps and what they mean?

Upgrading or implementing a new system can be a significant undertaking that will greatly impact your business and your resources - in a positive or a negative way. It is your choice. Don't underestimate the importance and complexity of this process. Dedicate the appropriate resources and focus to the undertaking, and success will follow.

Did you like this article? [Continue reading on this topic: Common Pitfalls to ERP Project Success](#)

Profit through People

Congratulations to Kash Gokli

We are thrilled to announce that ***Kash Gokli***, professor of manufacturing and engineering management, and the Director of Engineering Clinic in the Harvey Mudd College Department of Engineering, has been recognized with the 2016 ***LMA Advocate award!***

We would not be successful if it wasn't for the support and expertise of our LMA Advocates. These folks have gone over and beyond and contributed significantly to LMA Consulting's success - and, more importantly the significant positive impact we've been able to make with our clients.

Kash and I have partnered together over the last few years to create and host the ***Harvey Mudd executive roundtables***. Together, we have created a valuable community of top notch CEOs and senior leaders that meet to learn, discuss and debate timely topics for business success. Kash also gives freely of his time supporting our APICS-IE supply chain, manufacturing and distribution association chapter with presentations and serving as a valuable resource for members. Kash and I also have the opportunity to collaborate on client success since part of his focus at Harvey Mudd is to partner with students and manufacturers to help develop new products and design machinery and process improvements.

Did you like this article? Continue reading on this topic:

[Thanks to my LMA Advocate Awardees](#)



Connections

- Our next APICS Inland Empire executive panel & networking symposium will be held on Oct 29th - do you know a compelling panelist on the topic of Navigating the Global Supply Chain? If so, please **contact me**.
- My Ontario **ProVisors** group of trusted advisors is looking for a top notch commercial real estate broker and real estate attorney in the Inland Empire. **Email me** with referrals.
- Hard to believe with the skills gap alive and well but I know two outstanding supply chain leaders looking for a job -one in Wichita and one in New York. **Email me** with referrals.
- There is an excellent inventory, purchasing, and systems expert looking for a new opportunity in the Temecula area. **Email me** with referrals.



Refer anyone interested in advancing their supply chain and manufacturing skills to take a look at the best **education and certifications** available.

NOTE: To submit an item for this section, please send me an email with a short description of your needs and an email address. Please note that NOT all requests will be published as it must fit the guidelines and align with the Profit through People brand.

What is Profit through People?

I've used the Profit through People brand since my newsletter's inception in 2006 as it resonated with me. Although I consult on topics within each of my service lines--Eagle Eye Strategic Focus, The Strongest Link in Your Supply Chain, the Systems Pragmatist & Profit through People--I find that people are key to success in every situation. If you are interested in elevating your business performance, please **contact us**.

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