

Kaizen Webinar Q&A

January 13, 2015

- 1. Who uses Kaizen, and in what sectors is it used?**
 - a. Kaizen has been used in public health and private sectors on projects for making widgets or developing processes. It is difficult to think of an area where Kaizen has not been used.
- 2. When is it appropriate to use Kaizen?**
 - a. The problem is definable; it cannot be a theoretical or abstract issue.
 - b. The problem is measurable. Baseline data are important to show change.
 - c. The leadership team is committed to providing event resources and logistics.
 - d. The team has the authority, knowledge, and skills to make the needed decisions.
 - e. The process can be observed within the event time frame.
 - f. The core team can commit to 5 consecutive days or approximately 40 hours within 3 weeks.
 - g. It is feasible to test and install solutions within the week of the Kaizen event.
 - h. Solving this problem supports the team's strategic plans and annual improvement plans.
- 3. Can you give some examples of the process?**
 - a. [Search](#) for more detailed examples on PHQIX using "Kaizen" as a keyword.
 - b. Purchasing Process Efficiencies (Seminole County, FL): Developed a survey to understand which internal services were not meeting employees' needs. The team discovered that the purchasing process needed to be reviewed, reduced processing time from 2 weeks to 1 week, and saved \$12,000.
 - c. Food inspection process (Tazewell County, IL): Decreased inspection administration time from 7 hours to 30 minutes per inspection.
 - d. Issuing death certifications (DeKalb County, GA): Decreased labor time from 22 to 9 minutes per certification.
 - e. Supply ordering process (Johnson County, KS): Decreased labor time from 93 to 16.5 minutes per order.
- 4. Can you say more about the time commitment, how the event is scheduled for the team, and preparation for those managing the event, please?**
 - a. It will depend on where the organization is in terms of the information available. If you have identified an annual plan or areas of development, it is pretty straightforward and should take only about 1 or 2 hours. You will bring the goal statement for the Kaizen event and obtain leadership support.
 - b. If you have not decided on areas of improvement, the Kaizen event will take longer because you need to identify those areas. It may take 1 or 2 days for the Kaizen event leader to prepare. The event leader needs to finalize the event goal, determine who the team leaders will be, and coordinate logistics. Data availability is also important because you may need to collect baseline data.
- 5. Are any training events available for the team to learn how to lead this process?**
 - a. One training event for Public Health Accreditation Board-accredited sites was made available January 13, 2015. QI Leaders Academy Request for Proposal was sent to accredited sites the morning of January 13, 2015, and 12 sites will be selected. Please

contact Chris Bujak (chris.bujak@continualimpact.com) and Pam Vecellio (pam.vecellio@continualimpact.com) for more information.

6. Could you explain in more detail how Days 4 and 5 (the testing phase) were conducted?

Walking through and testing the proposed improvement(s) seems to be difficult.

- a. If you have gone through the plan phase and collected data, found waste, and identified critical issues and root causes, then you have some potential solutions. In a Kaizen event, you will develop those solutions.
- b. You need to ask yourself what you are going to test, determine what would be considered a success, develop the forms, and conduct the test.
- c. You can also test a redesign of phone trees or calling processes. Test whether these processes enable you to respond to customers more quickly.

7. What if the improvements identified involve creating a new database, which could take months? Is that a good Kaizen event?

- a. If you know what the solution to a project is, that is a project plan, not a QI project. If it is a project plan, it is a matter of putting the actions together and completing it.
- b. You do not go into a Kaizen event with a solution determined. If you do that, you are not using the value of the team to create improvements.

8. If you start an event, then realize that the process cannot be tested or improved within the time frame, do you abandon the Kaizen approach and try a traditional Plan, Do, Study, Act approach?

- a. You can do Kaizen for 5 consecutive days, 3 days and 2 days, or all half-days. So if you know you will need a bit more time for testing, do Kaizen for 3 days, take a break and perform tests offline, then bring the team back together for the remaining 2 days.
- b. We would advise not to wait too long to bring the team back together. Take 2–3 weeks for testing but no more. We recommend that you do the entire Kaizen event within 2–3 weeks and no longer.
- c. You can run into surprises along the way during a Kaizen event. It may be a challenge to complete the event in the desired time frame, or you can finish much more quickly than expected.

9. Do you have tips for generating enthusiasm among employees to change a process?

- a. A really cool way to generate enthusiasm is to get employees involved in a Kaizen event and get them into teams to improve what they do together as a team. Running a Kaizen event is one of the best ways to create enthusiasm.
- b. In Seminole County, the team had positive outcomes because there was rapid improvement. There was also a lot of interaction with users, and the team was reaching out to users for feedback. Having increased communication definitely created a positive environment.
- c. Address “what’s in it for me.” If you can identify how the change will make someone’s work process or workstation easier and better, people will often be receptive to that.