

'The Lean Mean Killing Machine'

Concerns as production methods from failing car manufacturers are applied to the NHS

From our medical correspondent Monty Cobra

Mr Creek's wife has cancer and he drives an Iota car and he is not happy about either. His SwampCruiser was recalled for suspension problems. His wife's Yarfish had its airbags replaced. When they go to the hospital the results of her blood test are often missing, they have to wait a long time and they never see the same doctor. At her last check-up she was told that things would improve as the hospital would be as 'Lean as Iota' soon. Mr Creek is scared. Very scared: "We're all gonna die! I know this phrase seems to be used a lot due to Bird Flu, Global Warming, MRSA and the Hadron super-collider but those deaths, other than the latter involving an instant black hole, will generally occur over the course of many years and may not even happen." Creek continued. "But that isn't true in this case, if the NHS uses Lean as their only process for treating patients then they're going to have to come up with a story to explain the large and mounting pile of bodies in their hospitals."

Lean is based on the way Iota produces cars. One of its key points is eliminating waste. The fact is that Iota has been recalling a lot of cars. From 2005 to 2007 they sold nearly 15 million new cars in the US and Japan and had to recall 7.5 million. In 2005 Iota had to do a Total Recall in the US and recalled the same number of cars as it had sold that year. That would seem to be generating an awful lot of waste!

Each year the NHS admits over 10 million people to hospital. Could it cope with having to recall 5 million people each year? Can you recall a patient anyway? An NHS spokesman had this to say: "This is ludicrous! If Lean's only fault is its vast amount of recalls then we're not affected at all, everyone knows we can't recall patients, therefore, we don't have a problem!"

Mr. Karionda, the Marketing Director for Iota UK, was amused when we explained the story, "Oh you English so funny! You use car system in hospitals. This good joke! My sides they split!"

Mr Creek claims that the recalls are just the start of the problems that the NHS will face with Lean. He believes that "Life can't fit neatly into boxes, illnesses are only predictable to a point and each person's case is different so you can't possibly run through every possible eventuality until you can't get anything wrong," he explained, commenting of Lean's key point of eliminating waste, "so some situations will be left uncovered and when those occur, the doctors and nurses will find themselves up a certain creek, without a certain paddle. And a certain boat will have holes in it, large holes in it."

Harrison, the American car manufacturing giant and founder of 'Lean', seems to be up this creek already, having to sell their premium Austin Power, Leopard and Swamp Tramp brands.

"So basically," continued Creek, "We have the violent mother, Iota, the gambling father, Harrison, and now they've had a son, the Lean NHS, and what will that combination make? Genocide and a hell of a lot of it. Just think about it, the only way Lean will work is if everything goes according to plan! But as we know people, conscious or otherwise, have the wonderful tendency of doing just what you're praying they won't do. However I would probably get some amusement from seeing them trying to reason with my wife's cancer "Would you mind not spreading to the brain this week, it would make it terribly inconvenient as it's not what you're down on the list for, you see."

Mr Creek's final comment refers to the point that 50% of Iota's cars sold in the last 3 years have been recalled: "Applying this same logic to the 10 million NHS hospital patients treated per year, results in around 10% of the country's total population dying every year as a direct result of Lean thinking. "The lean mean killing machine" he laughed, "Use lean and decrease the surplus population!"

All names of people, brands and products mentioned in this article are fictitious and are for representative purposes only.

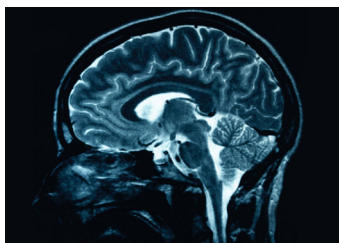
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Insights & Research

Value Innovation
People Brand Politics
Finance Change
Processes Technology
Vision Organisation
Enablers Tools
Platform Strategy
New product development
Communication
Organisational Complexity



The human brain

The article on the front page is obviously a spoof (we hope you noticed), but contains a serious message. Most organisations can only cope with the one 'Big Thing'; one initiative for improvement be it improving operational efficiency using Lean or 6 Sigma, or implementing a new ERP system or staff development. Undoubtedly these will have some impact but sooner or later something unexpected happens: a competitor launches a superior product or services at a much lower price, or the cost of raw materials increases rapidly due to changes in the exchange rate. The organisation is not able to deal with this effectively because they are too focussed on the one initiative.

This fact has been confirmed by our research in collaboration with WMG at the University of Warwick. 63% of organisations select management tools based on what someone has read in a book or on recommendations

from others. None of the companies was able to choose the appropriate tools based on an in-depth analysis of the whole organisation and a clear vision for the future. In fact we found evidence of a total disconnect between the challenges an organisation is facing and the tools it chooses to use.

The inability to deal with complex issues and only being able to cope with the one big thing is human nature. Or is it because we do not have ways of thinking to help us dealing with complexity?

David Bovis, principal of Concrete Heads, worked on many improvement and change programmes. He found that people resist change because they are not able to appreciate the bigger picture and understand how they fit in. After an intensive study of Behavioural and Organisational Psychology he developed the BTFA model –

Believe – Think – Feel – Act. He believes that improvement tools and techniques such as Leans and PDCA (Plan - Do - Check - Act) focus only on left brain thinking. Engaging the left side only explains why applying improvement tools in isolation ultimately fails; in an unexpected crisis people are not able to engage the other side of their brain to work through the situation.

The need to engage the whole brain applies to individuals and to the whole organisation. Other tools need to be used to develop the left—right brain interaction at personal and organisational levels.

www.concreteheads.co.uk

Case Study



Company X is a global engineering company that produces a range of complex products such as power generators and trains. The Director of Technology of one of their divisions recognised that his company was experiencing a number of complex challenges and realised they needed help. The Managing Director had a paternalistic style of leadership without real teamwork between the other members of the Board. The company was only able to deliver less than 10% of their products on time causing delays to clients' projects. They were not familiar with the concept of product platforms throughout the organisation, which meant that each of their products was customised with little common parts and systems.

After experiencing the InterQB-it® methodology on the Masters programme at the University of Warwick the Director of Technology was convinced that we could help him. Together we planned a series of three workshops for the whole management team. The first one went really well and provided the Board members with an opportunity to share information and experience. The results were fast and significant: they were able to develop and agree a comprehensive vision for the business; after initial resistance the MD was quickly able to embrace a totally different style of leadership; the other functions in the company began to understand the importance of using product platforms; the team was able to indentify the

root cause of the late deliveries in ambiguous contracts with suppliers, which were quickly revised.

The next workshops focused on developing a comprehensive plan of actions and the management of risk. In the meantime we trained a team of internal facilitators that implemented the InterQB-it® methodology. The impact of the programme was a rapid increase of deliveries on time to 40% within 6 months and much more effective decision making and teamwork throughout the organisation.

InterQB-it®: breakthrough in Leadership

Insights

The challenges of the global economy necessitate that organisations, big and small, reduce their costs and maximise their effectiveness by working cohesively, as a team, with a shared objective. But how?

Much has been written about leadership. Academic literature distinguishes styles of leadership such as: visionary and transformational; behavioural and situational, each with their own models and followers. There are also many words associated with leadership: vision, strategy, communication, innovation and motivation to list but a few. Together all this has led to confusion; in practice people are not clear about leadership and therefore not able to use it properly.

Benefits

InterQB-it® is a joined-up way of thinking that enables people to see the big picture and align their actions and efforts accordingly. You will realise a shared vision through setting common goals and developing effective communication. Your organisation will transform and innovate. InterQB-it® will maximise your competitive advantage.

InterQB-It® demonstrates key leadership and organisational management concepts in an accessible and tangible way. It is a holistic framework for total organisational alignment that combines vision with action, strategies with processes, people with technologies and inputs with outcomes in a practical way.

InterQB-It® is extensively proven in a range of organisations and backed up by leading Universities in the UK and abroad. It has delivered breakthrough results in business, education, healthcare and disaster management. Lasting effects include: doubling of deliveries-on-time; successful diversification into new sectors and faster time-to-market. InterQB-It® is protected through international patents, trademark and copyrights.

You too can benefit from this powerful competitive advantage. It is guaranteed to work for you.



What do business leaders say:

"The powerful InterQB-It® enabled us to reach a shared company vision in less than a day.

Now with a clear direction and with the InterQB-It® framework embedded into the routines across the enterprise, we are aligned for a more productive and profitable future."

ALSTOM

"InterQB-It® is an excellent concept"

AMS

"Brilliant learning with InterQB-It®"

Land Rover

"InterQB-It® should be used to drive the commitment as an organisation for innovation. A good taster workshop, which must be progressed throughout the Trust"

University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire

"InterQB-It® is a very powerful tool that allows people affected to manage crisis situations and deserves support to be used on a much larger scale"

Sunil Handa

Eklavya Education Foundation

**Very advanced
technique for
strategic planning**

Dr Susan Smith

www.InterQB-it.com

Events

We are planning a series of half-day seminars and practical workshops in January 2009 with our partners at the Business School of Birmingham City University and Nottingham Business School. These events will be highly interactive and informative. Sessions combine hands-on activities with sharing of academic background material and will cover topics such as:

- Complexity and inter relationships between strategy and operations
- Leadership and developing a holistic vision
- Principles of InterQB-It® and its facilitation
- Action planning and implementation
- Follow-up and support

Case studies and examples will cover a range of public sector and industry applications. More details and invitations will be included in the next Joined-up News.

Future newsletters

In the future issues of Joined-up News we plan to cover topics such as Leadership, Complexity and Innovation. We will include interviews with our partners and users. David Bovis – Concrete Heads- is next on the list.

The next issue will introduce the What IF section where we will explore how BA could have avoided the Terminal 5 crisis.

We also welcome your ideas and contributions for case studies and examples.

About InterAlign

At InterAlign we develop leadership and management frameworks for consultancies and training organisations. InterQB-It© is a fast and effective methodology for joined-up-leadership, enabling organisations to map their complex challenges and plan their actions and develop effective implementation strategies. Academic and empirical research has demonstrated that InterQB-It® is the most advanced and practical leadership system. The methodology has been successfully applied in a range of sectors. Our clients work in business, education, healthcare and disaster management.

The InterAlign team consists of highly qualified, skilled and passionate people. Each is a leader in their area of expertise: complexity management, innovation, business consultancy and education. We are experienced at developing and delivering a whole range of programmes and interventions; we have worked with large organisations and SMEs in the UK, Europe, US and the Far East. Contact us to discuss your needs.



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