

OUR LEAN JOURNEY

We are well into our Lean journey at Beckenhauer Construction! Anyone who has been involved with any lean initiatives will have heard it described as a journey and not a destination, at the heart of Lean is the concept of continuous improvement. We have recognized that “going lean” is as much about changing the culture as it is using many of the processes. Every Lean initiative has to address adding value and eliminating waste, if it is not going to provide greater value to customers, eliminate waste (reduce costs) and improve everyone’s experience, the initiative will not be pursued.

At Beckenhauer Construction we utilize a number of tools the Lean Construction Institute (LCI) recommends. Many are tools, processes and concepts that are used in other industries, such as the 5 S’s, 5 Whys, A7’s, Kanban (visual triggers), Kaizen (take apart and make better), and Muda (the seven wastes identified by Toyota manufacturing plus one added – people!). There is really too much involved in a full lean implementation to cover in an article such as this, but hopefully you will at least have enough information to investigate further.

One of our first steps when we committed to Lean was to establish a Lean committee with team members from a cross section of our business - from field to office. This group is working to master various concepts of Lean which allows them to serve as “Lean Champions” in our organization and help coach our other team members with implementation of the practices and Lean thinking. Several waste reduction implementations have come from this team working through process mapping exercises to identify was to eliminate waste.



The LCI (Lean Construction Institute) created “Last Planner System” and “Pull Planning” is one of the strongest tools for managing construction project work flow. When implemented on a project it greatly enhances communication on the project between the various trades, leading to more in-depth conversations and better planning by the various trades. The traditional approach on projects is to “Push” plan, someone in an office puts together the overall schedule and tells everyone downstream to follow the plan. The biggest differentiator in pull planning is that the “Last Planner” (the trade

One liners!

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

If you drink, don't park; accidents cause people.

Timing has an awful lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.

Duct tape is like the Force. It has a light side and a dark side, and it holds the universe together.

There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

Never test the depth of the water with both feet.

He who laughs last, thinks slowest.

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some don't have film.

A day without sunshine is like, well, night.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

When the chips are down, the buffalo is empty.

Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say will be misquoted, then used against you.

Nothing is fool-proof to a sufficiently talented fool.

If the world didn't suck, we'd all fall off.

The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.

The things that come to those that wait may be the things left by those who got there first.

The Shin is a device for finding furniture.

If you give a man a fish and he will eat for a day.
If you teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat drinking beer forever.



ECO-FRIENDLY TIPS & FACTS

Make sure that the products you buy have packages that can be easily recycled.

Buy food that's grown in your area. It takes much less fuel to get to you and it supports local farmers.

Use reusable bags when you go shopping. If you forget to bring your canvas bag then reuse the plastic bags for trash bags or donate them to your local Salvation Army or Goodwill.




Seal leaks around windows, doors and floors, especially in the attic or basement to lower your summer electricity bills.

It takes around 20 to 1,000 (I presume that's a guess) years for plastic bags to degrade, depending on sunlight and air exposure.

Use dishtowels instead of paper towels when cleaning up messes and spills.

Recycle your cell phone.

 Turn off lights when you aren't in a room to lower energy costs and save electricity.

When mowing your grass, cut it longer, try to do it less often and mow it in the coolest part of the day.

Fuel your car in the morning or at the coolest part of the day.

Microwave foods in glass containers, plastic wraps and containers can emit harmful chemicals into your food.

Use VOC-free paint when painting the interior of a new home or renovating an older home.

Clean your lint filter in your dryer often, a dirty filter causes 30% more energy to be used.
tips & facts from houseplansandmore.com

Children in Church

A little child in church for the first time watched as the ushers passed the offering plates. When they neared the pew where he sat, the youngster piped up so that everyone could hear: "Don't pay for me Daddy, I'm under five."

A little boy was attending his first wedding. After the service, his cousin asked him, "How many women can a man marry?" "Sixteen," the boy responded. His cousin was amazed that he had an answer so quickly. "How do you know that?" "Easy," the little boy said. "All you have to do is add it up, like the Bishop said: 4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer."

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up." The mother replied, "That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?" "Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked. "Why, God tells me." "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"

A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

Pastor Dave Charlton tells us, "After a worship service at First Baptist Church in Newcastle, Kentucky, a mother with a fidgety seven-year old boy told me how she finally got her son to sit still and be quiet. About half way through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, 'If you don't be quiet, Pastor Charlton is going to lose his place and will have to start his sermon all over again!' It worked."

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek, then his again. Finally she spoke up, "Grandpa, did God make you?" "Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago." "Oh," she paused... "Grandpa, did God make me too?" "Yes, indeed, honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago." Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

Wrong Footed

When 3 year old Jason first put his shoes on by himself his mother immediately noticed that something was wrong.

"Jason, your shoes are on the wrong feet."

Looking up with a raised brow Jason replied "Don't kid me Mom, I KNOW they're my feet!"

Zipped Up

A mother was showing her son how to zip up his coat. "The secret," she said, "is to get the left part of the zipper to fit in the other side before you try to zip it up."



The boy looked at her quizzically...
"Why does it have to be a secret?"

You Know You Are Having a Bad Day

...when you call your voice mail for messages and they're from your doctor, your mechanic, and the IRS!

You're Only Young Once

It's true you're only young once - but you can stay immature indefinitely.

Write The Wrongs

"Write the wrongs done to you in sand, but write the good things on marble. Let go of all emotions such as resentment and retaliation, which diminish you, but hold onto emotions such as gratitude and joy, which increase you."

Arabic Proverb



foremen), who are most intimately familiar with what really needs to be done, work together to plan backwards from milestones. Determining what needs to be done prior to the last activity to meet the milestone, each trade indicates a commitment to complete every activity and identify what needs to be done before they can begin. Activities are broken down into smaller areas (durations of 3 to 5 days) in a micro planning process, that creates numerous hand off opportunities to assure the flow of work remains uninterrupted. This creates very interactive weekly foremen/pull planning meetings and helps assure the requirements for each activity to proceed are identified and in place. A constraint board is updated during pull planning sessions to define any barriers to completing tasks (information needed, material stocked in the way, etc.) and who is responsible to resolve the issue so things can proceed as planned. This is a process that can help to prevent “fires” so the team does not have to fight “fires” later!

When we are involved early on projects either as a CM/GC or as a Design Builder we enjoy having an opportunity to work through design with an eye towards constructability to help facilitate improved flow of the work. We often will bring in major subcontractors early in the process to leverage their expertise in their specialties as well, this is more than a typical value engineering approach and really results more in an added value process, which is what Lean construction is all about!

All of this leads to creating more reliable work flow, reducing waste for everyone on the project and improves schedule performance, resulting in the Owners we work with getting into their finished facility sooner.

