

BRONZE PORTFOLIO SAMPLES

This file contains two (2) samples of **actual projects** submitted by a Lean Certification candidate. Both projects received perfect scores of 15 out of 15 possible points. The portfolio reflections contained within are **fictional examples** of a good reflection and a poor reflection. All company names and identifying information have been changed. Notice the significant use of "I" and "ME" -- lean is about teams, collaboration and involvement. The Lean Certification program certifies an individual based on their knowledge and capabilities, thus to have an effective portfolio, you need to focus on what "YOU" did during all of the projects you are reporting on, how you fit into the team activities, and your own learning/reflections.

SAMPLE BRONZE PROJECTS (2)

TACTICAL (LOCAL) PROJECT FORM

Project No.	1	Project Title:	Marketing Kaizen at the Medical Device Company
Industry/Organization Function Affected:	Indicate the industry in which the project occurred and the part of the organization that was affected by the project. Medical Devices used in surgical applications to measure degree to which patient is sedated.		
Problem Statement:	Describe the problem the project is addressing. Motion, time and effort required to perform marketing support and literature fulfillment functions in a marketing department		
Start Date:	Provide the project start date. If you are no longer involved in the project, also provide the date you transitioned off the project. Projects should show a progression in dates to reflect a history of lean experience. January, 2004, lasting 3 days		
Role in the Project and Team Selection:	Describe your specific role in the project and how the team members were selected Served as the outside trainer/facilitator for the team-based event.		
Reviewer Use ONLY Evaluation Criteria			
Plan: (4 possible points)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Selection <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Metrics <input type="checkbox"/> Planning methods Total Points _____	<p>1. How were you involved in project selection and definition? I had been serving as a lean trainer/facilitator for production areas at the Medical Device Company and they recognized the need to extend lean beyond the traditional operations areas. They chose this project based on some input from me to select an area where the employees had some "pain" and could benefit from some changes and help from a team to make their workspace and processes more efficient.</p> <p>2. How did you participate in the documentation of the current condition and target condition? The Medical Device Company employees had a standard template in place that guided them in collecting "before metrics" on the first day of the event and the team and I did things like measure travel distance and annualize it, measure time required to perform some routine tasks and annualize it, etc. The team also created spaghetti diagrams of some of the process flows on the first day. At the end of the event, the team captured the "after measures" and documented the new process flows.</p> <p>3. What metrics did you use in the project? Some of the metrics used during the project included annual time required to prepare sales binders, walking distance associated with preparing materials for tradeshow, time to prepare materials for tradeshow, dollars of literature inventory that could be returned to the distribution center.</p> <p>4. What planning methods did you use? The team used task lists to capture "to do" items, a standard kaizen presentation template to document before and after anecdotes and metrics and beginning/end of day meetings to go over progress and plans for the next day.</p>		
Do: (3 possible points)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution <input type="checkbox"/> Countermeasures & implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Lean principles & methods Total Points _____	<p>1. Describe your contribution to the project. As the outside trainer/facilitator, my role was to provide a brief up-front training on continuous improvement concepts such as process flow and 5S that needed to be considered in this type of a project. I also was a hands-on member of the team, working side by side with the group to develop current and future condition metrics and to identify, plan and implement many small improvements that were made in the course of the three days. My past experience in marketing and administrative departments allowed me to bring practical, credible ideas to the event and the workers in the marketing department looked to me for advice, help and real world examples of administrative improvements that they could relate to throughout the three day event.</p> <p>2. Describe proposed countermeasures/solutions and implementation. By moving to double-sided pages and implementing a color-coded filing system for loading different types of sales binders, the kaizen team calculated that 1800 minutes would be saved annually in sales binder production. The key person who prepares binders loathed the job of binder preparation at the start of the event and by the end of the event she was saying, "this will be so easy now" and "I can easily train a temporary or other employee to help me do binders with these changes". The team 5S'd and rearranged the layout in literature and tradeshow preparation areas based on the needs of the operators. They also sorted out excess literature and returned more than \$10,000 dollars worth of inventory to their paid literature distribution center (otherwise the center would have re-ordered these materials sooner, costing the company more money). Based on the new tradeshow</p>		

	<p>preparation layout and process flow, the team calculated they had eliminated 12 miles of walking per year! The team also came up with standard checklists to use in preparing for a tradeshow to insure key items are always shipped to the show (these items had been forgotten at times in the past).</p> <p>3. Describe the lean principles and methods you used in the project. 5S, visual systems, flow production, and standardized work methods were all used in this kaizen. Also spaghetti diagrams and before/after metrics and lessons learned were also part of the project.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Role <input type="checkbox"/> Results vs. target <input type="checkbox"/> Level & trend of improvement assessment Total Points _____	<p>Check: (3 possible points)</p> <p>1. What was your role in the check process? In my follow-up visits to the Medical Device Company I would talk with the two key employees working in the area who were on the team to see how the changes were working out and I would always suggest that they keep "tweaking " and searching for further improvement opportunities. I was also pleased to see that this area was included when a public plant tour of the Medical Device Company was held.</p> <p>2. How did your results compare to your target condition? The results exceeded the expectations of the area operators as well as the other team members and the marketing management was impressed with the outcome. As an outsider, I think the results were very good given that the primary operators had no previous lean background and were reluctant about the event on the first day. By including some experienced "lean practitioners" from other departments and myself, the team gained horsepower and was able to help the operators see how to make many changes that would help them in their day- to-day jobs.</p> <p>3. What is your assessment of the level and trend of improvement? This kaizen was exciting in that it opened some non-production peoples' minds to the value of continuous improvement and lean. I believe it showed them that small changes often result in large improvements in time, effort and motion. The Medical Device Company won a <significant industry continuous improvement award in 2006>. I believe this achievement was important in helping them to extend lean to more areas of the company, demonstrating the relevance of lean concepts in administrative and support environments in a meaningful way.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining <input type="checkbox"/> Next steps <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons learned Total Points _____	<p>Act/Lessons Learned: (5 possible points)</p> <p>1. Project Reflection (250 words / ½ page maximum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have you personally done to sustain this project? I visited the area and company several times after the event and inquired about how the changes were going and what else had been done. I made a point to tell the two key operators in the area how proud they should be of the changes they had made and always was sure to if the changes were working out for them and whether others had noticed or commented on the changes made. This gave the key operators a chance to reflect on the event as well as encourage their thinking about what else could be done. I also sent other companies to visit the Medical Device Company to see many of their changes, including the ones in marketing. • What do you think are the next improvement steps for this project? I believe the next improvement for this area would be to work with the operators to see if similar improvement opportunities exist in other processes they are responsible for. Marketing and sales support people typically wear many hats and perform many repetitive tasks that often have not been standardized or organized to promote productivity. I also think the employees would benefit from visiting some other companies who have made significant strides in administrative kaizen. • What lessons did you learn from/about the project? I learned that people who are selected to participate in a kaizen might not always begin as "willing" or "interested" participants. I also learned that getting the operators to explain, demonstrate or simulate how work processes are performed helps a kaizen team to fully understand the issues and problems workers face. It also gives the workers a chance to "be the expert" and for other team members to ask questions that can stimulate improvement ideas or cause the workers to see things in a new way. I learned that having a standard kaizen event format and report out process at the end is a good way to focus on what needs to be done, create a sense of urgency, and provide an agreed upon way and method for capturing before and after conditions and metrics in a standardized way.

TACTICAL (LOCAL) PROJECT FORM

Project No.	4	Project Title:	Pull System in the Shipping Department
Industry/Organization Function Affected:	Indicate the industry in which the project occurred and the part of the organization that was affected by the project. This company ships temperature and pressure controls and sensors to many OEM customers and about 30-40 worldwide distributors on a regular basis. The project focused on the shipping production and documentation processes.		
Problem Statement:	Describe the problem the project is addressing. The shipping department was a crowded area and items were often handled multiple times within the area before completing the shipping process. Sometimes products were not shipped out in a timely manner and shipping errors were not uncommon.		
Start Date:	Provide the project start date. If you are no longer involved in the project, also provide the date you transitioned off the project. Projects should show a progression in dates to reflect a history of lean experience. This project commenced April 1998 and was completed in June 1998.		
Role in the Project and Team Selection:	Describe your specific role in the project and how the team members were selected. I was a team member and, as the manager of the company's Continuous Process Improvement department took the lead role in facilitating the project. I was able to select the team members and created a team that consisted of shippers and administrative personnel in the area as well as others from the office of Continuous Process Improvement. A consultant from the Toyota Supplier Support Center visited periodically to provide guidance to our team.		
Reviewer Use ONLY Evaluation Criteria	Plan: (4 possible points)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Selection <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Metrics <input type="checkbox"/> Planning methods Total Points _____	<p>1. How were you involved in project selection and definition? Through involvement with Toyota in upstream activities, it was pointed out that shipping was not "linked" to production and visits to the area showed a lack of organization and a definable process flow. Toyota suggested we undertake a project to allow the shippers to pace and "pull" work through their area and also to have shipping "pull" work from the assembly cells on a regular basis.</p> <p>2. How did you participate in the documentation of the current condition and target condition? I worked with the team to document the current process for shipping products and spent time in the area learning how to do the many tasks they performed, under their guidance. I would often go and work there during busy times and used this knowledge to help the team understand the non-value-added activities and opportunities for improvement. Toyota was instrumental in helping the team develop the concepts for the target condition and together we sketched out a new layout that allowed for flow and pull and implementation of 5S and visual standards.</p> <p>3. What metrics did you use in the project? We used takt time to determine a daily schedule for pulling customer work through the shipping process and developed a pitch to pull work from the assembly cells to shipping on an hourly basis. We also measured floor space, travel distance and handling steps.</p> <p>4. What planning methods did you use? We used before layouts to understand the shipping flow and wasted motion and transport and then developed an improved layout to counter these problems. We used Microsoft project to outline the tasks and time frame for implementing the new layout and process flow changes. We had regular team meetings with agendas to maintain focus and drive the project forward. We met with Toyota every few weeks for help with the project and take advantage of their vast knowledge about process improvement.</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution <input type="checkbox"/> Countermeasures & implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Lean principles & methods Total Points _____	<p>Do: (3 possible points)</p> <p>1. Describe your contribution to the project. As the primary facilitator, I was the key link between shipping employees, the Toyota consultant and company management for this project. I kept the project plan, called meetings, published meetings and to-do lists and served as made sure equipment and resources were secured to implement the changes.</p> <p>2. Describe proposed countermeasures/solutions and implementation. The team implemented a new layout in the area that replaced stationary staging racks with customer-dedicated carts that could be "pulled" to the over-packing stations. New pack-out stations were designed to the needs of the operator thus reducing walking, searching and wasteful work steps. Documentation processes were changes to add barcodes to orders to reduce typing time and errors and a daily, timed shipping schedule was implemented to set a pace for shipping and insure all domestic customer orders were sent within one shift of arriving in the shipping department and all international customer orders were sent on their designated weekday (international orders were consolidated for customs purposes at customer request). A visual system was also established to insure UPS red and blue orders got out the same day they arrived in shipping. Shipping began to pick-up goods from the assembly areas every hour instead of having assembly "push" orders into shipping whenever they felt like it. A visual system that included parking spaces and standardized slots on the carts for paperwork was put in place so each customer had one designated (and mobile) spot for items staged for shipment (in the past, one customer's goods could be in many different stationary racks).</p> <p>3. Describe the lean principles and methods you used in the project. Pull systems and a version of Heijunka (we leveled the daily shipments by customer and time slots) were implemented. We took advantage of 5S and visual methods to organize and streamline the workspace and activities. We mistake-proofed and eliminated or reduced some transactional processing steps by adding barcodes and readers and by integrating the UPS and FEDEX data systems with our company ERP systems.</p>		
	Check: (3 possible points)		

<input type="checkbox"/> Role <input type="checkbox"/> Results vs. target <input type="checkbox"/> Level & trend of improvement assessment Total Points _____	<p>1. What was your role in the check process? Once we implemented the new layout and methods, the team stayed with the project for several weeks afterwards. We took turns as workers in the process to learn first hand how well it worked and we walked through at the end of each day to see if the process was being followed and everything had been correctly returned to its designated spot to assure an easy start-up the next day. We solicited problems and suggestions from all workers in the area and asked for support from Toyota if an issue came up that we did not know how to address.</p> <p>2. How did your results compare to your target condition? Our first attempt required too much daily maintenance of paperwork to track orders on the carts. Once we saw this, we quickly made changes that preserved our flow and pull concepts but reduced the non-value-added record keeping. Once this change was made and the shippers got comfortable with the new process results were great. Handling activities were reduced by 40% and work was no longer "pushed" into and through the area. Customers were now certain to get orders shipped within the agreed upon shipping lead-time and other departments could easily come to shipping and find goods now. The addition of the daily, paced customer scheduling box made shipping accountable for orders getting out the door and made it immediately visual if they were ahead or behind schedule. Reported shipping errors and associated credits were reduced (sorry but I don't have this number!) and the new, standardized process made it easier to cross train employees.</p> <p>3. What is your assessment of the level and trend of improvement? This project was the first time most shipping employees had been involved in process improvement that would totally change their area and daily work. Prior to this the area sort of had a "we'll get done what we can" attitude and there was sometimes friction between the "work hard" people and the "hardly working" folks. The new pull system created a system of accountability for all to see and helped develop a sense of team responsibility for hitting the daily customer-shipping schedule. Therefore, I believe it was a big cultural shift as well as a significant change in process flow. It became easy to see who was working and who was not and for the first time defined daily success criteria for the area that went beyond just "dollars shipped out the door".</p>
Act/Lessons Learned: (5 possible points)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining <input type="checkbox"/> Next steps <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons learned Total Points _____	<p>1. Project Reflection (250 words / ½ page maximum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have you personally done to sustain this project? Until I departed the company, I remained a regular visitor in the shipping area and continued to be a welcome "shipper" in busy periods of if someone was on vacation. Having the VP of Operations packing and hefting boxes around was seen as "pretty cool" by the shipping folks and they welcomed me as part of their team even though some other top managers could not imagine why I would "lower" myself to such a task! As VP of Operations I was thrilled to be able to promote one of the shipping team members who had grown tremendously to area supervisor and I also hand-picked a new Shipping/Receiving Manager who was a proponent of lean to insure that the area continued to improve. • What do you think are the next improvement steps for this project? Although during and after our project many good information/documentation process changes were made, I believe further improvements can be made in this area by exploring IT solutions that standardize routine process steps (such as creation of forwarder documents) and reduce or eliminate key stroking and transactions. The company could also benefit from developing and posting packing standards such as what type and quantity of product best fit in which box. There may also be additional opportunities to streamline the process for calculating and applying shipping charges to international orders. • What lessons did you learn from/about the project? My greatest learning from this project was not to assume that the manager in charge of an area wants to be involved in continuous improvement. This area was ripe for improvement and the operators were sometimes sinking in work and frustrated, yet the manager had no interest in being involved in the improvement team. She was happy to just have a general idea of what was going to happen and fortunately let me take the lead with her people and the project. The second thing I learned from this project was that it pays to keep seeking input from the workers. One of the most experienced and knowledgeable workers was used to being told what to do and did not think it was her place to question anyone about "the way things were" even though it sometimes frustrated her. By working side by side with her, learning what she did daily and asking about the problems and for her ideas about what could be better repeatedly, she began to open up and "blossom" as a leader and a change agent. I saw the same thing with other workers in the area to a lesser degree. Finally, I learned that when you help people to define and establish a sensible system and make them accountable for following it, they work hard to make it successful. I also learned that please and thank-you are enormously helpful words in a project, are valued by workers, and cost you nothing to give out!

BRONZE (TACTICAL) PORTFOLIO REFLECTION

SAMPLE GOOD REFLECTION

Reviewer Use ONLY Evaluation Criteria	Portfolio Reflection (25 possible points) -- 1 page maximum
<input type="checkbox"/> Lessons learned <input type="checkbox"/> Past greatest challenge <input type="checkbox"/> Future effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 year plan <input type="checkbox"/> Future greatest challenges	<p>1. What are your lessons learned through completing the lean certification portfolio process? A major learning is that I underestimate the contribution and value of the lean tools I have applied and the projects I have been a part of. I've seen through this portfolio that projects that were seemingly disconnected really impacted each other. For example, the 5-S project in Cell #1 removed wasted time looking for tools and materials. Because we spent less time looking for things, we were actually able to increase throughput, which caused Cell #2 to become a bottleneck (because we didn't take into account that our increased throughput would affect anything other than our own Cell). A small team from Cell #1 then went to Cell #2 to help them with their process improvement. Eventually, we went through all 4 Cells because every time we "fixed" one, the next Cell became a bottleneck. I believe it's important to look at what you're doing locally, but I also learned that it is important to consider the impact your changes may have on other areas.</p>
Total Points _____	<p>2. What has been the greatest challenge in your lean journey and how did you address it? One of the biggest challenges I had was how to get my peers to see the value of lean. In our Cell, the senior operator was the biggest obstacle to trying out lean. He resisted every idea I had. I figured that I had to take a different approach, so every time he resisted, I started asking him, "We can't keep doing things the way we are, so what would you do?" Eventually, he started coming up with ideas, and slowly he actually helped others out with their ideas. This took more than six months to happen! I am not a patient person, so my second challenge was to learn how not to force changes because I want them and I'm ready for them. Instead, I have learned to make sure that people are involved in the changes. It may take a little longer, but the results are better because the people involved take more ownership of the changes.</p>
	<p>3. What changes could you make in your lean implementation process that could make you more effective? One thing I definitely need to change is how I involve others in the projects I'm working on. For the project where Cell #2 became the bottleneck, if I had involved the Cell #2 team leader in our proposed changes, he might have been able to foresee the problems that it would cause for his Cell. I also need to work on ways to better sustain efforts, to prevent slippage into old habits. When problems with a process change occur, I need to find better ways to engage the people at the time the problem occurs to see if it's a process problem, a standard work instruction problem, or other -- getting to the root cause before they slip back into the way they "used to do things."</p>
	<p>4. What is your three to five year personal lean developmental /continuous improvement plan? I have come to recognize, through reflecting on my portfolio projects, that much of what I enjoy in work is the coaching and teaching of others. I like to help others as they look for ways to improve processes while making their jobs easier. And it really makes me work on being patient, listening to others, and improving how I ask questions. I like "doing" the work, but I also like seeing the joy of discovery in others when lean thinking starts to click. I would like to get more training on value stream mapping and communication so that I can develop a deeper understanding of lean, and can then teach others lean principles, thinking and tools, and learn about communication practices that will help me listen and communicate better with others. I would also like to start working on cross-functional projects or projects that involve multiple work cells so that I can better understand the overall value stream and customer/supplier relationships for my company. I would really like to take the experience I have gained in my Cell and pass those lessons learned onto others.</p>
	<p>5. What do you see as the greatest challenges to achieving your plan and how do you plan to overcome them? My greatest challenge today is to get the training I believe I need. I plan to propose to management that I participate in training programs offered by our customers or suppliers. Depending on the topic of the training, part of my justification will include a specific project that I want to work on, and how the training will be used to help me on that project. For projects that are cross-functional, there are few obstacles to me working on projects contained within the plant. The ones that will be a challenge are ones involving the main office or administrative areas. Though our company is small, there is a perception that lean is a "manufacturing thing." I have not yet figured out a plan for how to tackle this. I do plan however to try to increase my network of lean colleagues (through networking, joining associations and hopefully attending a conference) and will hopefully be able to tap into those resource to help me figure out what to do next.</p>

BRONZE (TACTICAL) PORTFOLIO REFLECTION FORM

SAMPLE POOR REFLECTION

Reviewer Use ONLY Evaluation Criteria	Portfolio Reflection (25 possible points) -- 1 page maximum
<input type="checkbox"/> Lessons learned <input type="checkbox"/> Past greatest challenge <input type="checkbox"/> Future effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 year plan <input type="checkbox"/> Future greatest challenges	<p>1. What are your lessons learned through completing the lean certification portfolio process? Frankly, I believe the documentation of the portfolio is a waste. In the world of continuous improvement, things are always changing. If I put documentation down on paper, it's immediately outdated, and requires rework to bring it up to date. Rework is a waste, so why create something that needs to be reworked in the first place?</p> <p>2. What has been the greatest challenge in your lean journey and how did you address it? My boss and company management are my greatest challenges. They are not supportive of the ideas I bring forward. When I implement some of them anyways in order to illustrate that my ideas will work and improve efficiencies, they always want things set back to the old way. I confronted my boss about this, and he told me that though my ideas were good for my work area, the impact they had on other areas was creating problems and proceeded to go on about how the unauthorized changes I made caused a week-long bottleneck in welding. We've basically come to an impasse, because lean is about figuring out how to remove waste in my job and make my job easier, and he's preventing me from doing that.</p> <p>3. What changes could you make in your lean implementation process that could make you more effective? First, I think I need to do a better job outlining the change plans before I bring others into the process. It seems that when I bring a straw man forward, everyone has something to add, adjust or completely change with it. I think that if I brought a more comprehensive work plan to the team involved, that we could get started on improvements much faster, and we'd see more immediate results. Creating a more comprehensive work plan early on might also help me with getting my ideas through management more effectively.</p> <p>4. What is your three to five year personal lean developmental /continuous improvement plan? I would like to get more lean training. I'd like to go to a few conferences.</p> <p>5. What do you see as the greatest challenges to achieving your plan and how do you plan to overcome them? I see management as my greatest challenge. They'll have to budget training for me. And I'll have to work on my work plans to get more of my ideas to become accepted. Once I can get management to see that I am right and they are wrong, I think it'll be much easier for me to get the lean training I want.</p>
Total Points _____	