



TOUCHPOINT

The Division of Education Newsletter

Conn-Selmer
DIVISION of EDUCATION

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser
Vice President of Education
Cell: 260.410.0717
DrTim@conn-selmer.com

Michael Kamphuis
Managing Director, Division of Education
Work: 574.523.0677
Cell: 574.607.6000
mkamphuis@conn-selmer.com

Kelly Bryan
Manager of Educational Outreach
Phone: 574.523.0651
Cell: 574.329.8727
kbryan@conn-selmer.com

Gary Markham
Executive Director,
Music Administration Collaborative
Phone: 678.300.3438
markham@aol.com

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A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint*, **David Branson**, Former Director of Fine Arts for the **Washoe School District**, introduces the concept of Lean manufacturing as a vehicle for improving education.



Music Parent/Booster Seminar

Conn-Selmer Institute presents an enrichment and growth opportunity for your Music Parents/Boosters

June 10th, 2014

Bethel College, Mishawaka, IN

\$25.00 per person

Only 15 spots lefts!

[Click here for more information](#)

Our Next Issue Featuring:

An article by **David Branson**, Former Director of Fine Arts for the Washoe School District in Reno, NV.

In Our Last Issue:

How to Structure an Effective Jazz Band Audition Process by **David Orehowsky**

[Click here for the full article](#)

Improving Music Education By Using the Lean Business Model

By David Branson

Facing challenges is not a new phenomenon to music educators. With issues such as student retention, STEM initiatives (curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering and math) and state mandated testing, it seems that music educators are constantly standing at the defense of their programs. Despite the extensive brain research available to support the positive impact of music education on all areas of student academic development, many education professionals tend to view music as an accessory to the core curriculum areas. In some extreme cases, music education is being deemed as irrelevant and expendable.

It is fair to assume that most music educators did not choose their profession because they wanted to spend countless hours completing paperwork, teaching tested content such as math and English or fighting to keep their programs afloat. In this article I will introduce a structure that has helped many organizations in the business industry minimize the amount of time spent on the kinds of tasks listed above. This has allowed them the freedom to focus on initiatives that are deemed valuable for all stakeholders. In the case of music education, this would mean more time in front of students making music.

The Lean model for manufacturing focuses on value for the end customer and considers any resource expenditure that does not enhance that value as wasteful and a target for elimination. Lean was first implemented as the automobile manufacturing production system created by the Toyota Motor Corporation (Womack, Jones, D., & Roos, D., 1990). By applying the principals of Lean, Toyota was able to posture themselves as one of the leading automobile manufacturers in the world. After witnessing the great success of Toyota, several business sectors beyond manufacturing began to adapt the Lean business principles including logistics, finance, government and even healthcare.

Lean has not previously been applied to education, but imagine creating music programs where every decision made is prefaced with the effect it will have on the core values of the program. Furthermore, the customers (i.e., students) and all of the stakeholders (e.g., parents, administrators, and assistants) are empowered to work towards continuously improving the quality of the music program.

Principles of Lean

There are six key principles that guide the Lean model.

1. Identify your customer(s) and define your core value(s).
2. Identify all of the process steps leading to your desired result.
3. Evaluate each step of the process chain and identify how it addresses and promotes your core value(s).
4. Make the value-creating steps occur in tight sequence to improve efficiency.
5. Continuously refine and improve your process by addressing the weakest link in your process chain.
6. Eliminate non-value added steps. Anything that does not add value and support your program's core values, needs to be eliminated.

Figure 1 illustrates the Lean model. As you can see, the cycle begins with clarifying your core values. This step is followed by establishing program processes that support your core values. Once processes are established, begin evaluating them, continuously striving for higher levels of efficiency. Finally, make adjustments where necessary to create a more effective, efficient process. Continuous monitoring is a cycle that should be ongoing and should involve all stakeholders.

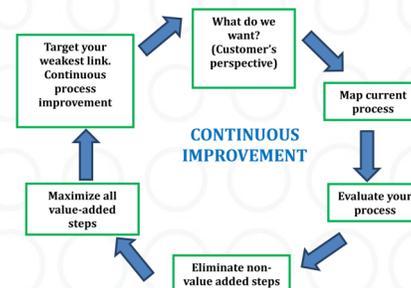


Figure 1
are Lean-principles?

1. What

This introductory article briefly described the Lean model. A broader description with specific examples relating to music education will be presented in the next issue of Touchpoint.