



Gateway hosting 'lean' programs

By Howard McEwen • Enquirer contributor •
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Gateway Community and Technical College's Workforce Solutions Division is offering a series of instructional programs in the lean philosophy to help businesses target ways to improve their productivity and quality.

Barry Wilhite, Gateway's workforce development liaison, said the lean techniques they are teaching combine ideas from several disciplines and cultures.

"The Toyota Motor Company, led by Taichi Ohno, took these combined ideas and developed their philosophy or production system that is now commonly referred to as TPS and developed lean management in the 1960s," said Wilhite. "In 1988, a group of researchers from MIT led by Dr. James P. Womack were examining the international automotive industry, mainly Toyota Motor Company, and observed this system. The researchers saw a company that was 'lean' and efficient with their production system and thus this system became known as lean manufacturing."

Wilhite said the lean approach tries to eliminate seven kinds of waste and requires the input of every employee.

"Lean is a dynamic and constantly improving process that is dependent upon the understanding and involvement of all the organization's employees," said Wilhite.

The benefits of lean manufacturing, according to Wilhite, are greater efficiency, less waste, higher employee self-esteem, lower costs, improved quality, improved safety, less down time, fewer product defects and less over production and unnecessary processing.

Wilhite also said lean is not for manufactures only. Service companies can benefit from Gateway's modules also.

"The same philosophy of lean manufacturing - identifying and eliminating waste - is applied. The only difference is that some of the tools do not," said Wilhite. "Otherwise the same ideas of eliminating waste through implementing lean."

Employees from Durobag, Cascades and Aristech Acrylics have already signed up for the lean simulations.

"The students or participants are employees of various business and industries located in the Northern Kentucky area, but in truth, anyone who wants to learn about lean can participate or become a student," said Wilhite.

The lean training simulations are on the first Tuesday (manufacturing) and Wednesday (office) in April, May and June. All simulations and modules will be conducted from 8 a.m. to noon at Gateway's Boone Campus at 500 Technology Way in Florence. The cost is \$150 per person per

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