**Kaizen Setup Checklist**

**A. Project Selection** - Pick a process that:
1. _____ Is mostly under your control.
2. _____ Has an impact on the lives of your customers.
3. _____ Addresses some “shared pain” across your organization.
4. _____ Is repetitive.
5. _____ Has other “kaizen compatible” characteristics such as:
   a. _____ Relates to key business issues
   b. _____ High visibility
   c. _____ Leadership is receptive – has managerial consensus on importance
   d. _____ Crosses functional and department boundaries
   e. _____ Cooperation between stakeholders is highly probable
   f. _____ Can serve as an example for other products or processes
   g. _____ Is a definable process – has multiple steps and clear start and stop points
   h. _____ Process not currently being changed
   i. _____ Process not a part of another process improvement project
   j. _____ Not an already developed solution to be tested

**B. Participant Selection**
1. _____ Representative of each area that deals with the process (15 max)
   a. _____ Associates – people doing the work
   b. _____ Middle management
   c. _____ Leadership – opening (30 minutes) and ending “report out” only
2. _____ Facilitator
3. _____ Participant from previous Kaizen Event (facilitator-in-training) – also “outside eyes”
4. _____ Potential participant from future Kaizen Event – also “outside eyes”
5. _____ Outside organization, external expert (process or lean) – credibility and “outside eyes”
6. _____ Student support – slack resources
7. _____ Invite missing participants as identified at first session.

**C. Leadership Support**
1. _____ “Lean Leadership Do’s”
   a. **Show interest** - attend events, respond to emails, notice changes.
   b. **Ask questions** - have team members explain their thinking and actions. Learn about lean through your teams.
   c. **Challenge proposed changes** - the normal criteria of logic, good judgment and cost effectiveness still apply in a lean world.
   d. **Provide sincere praise** for results, as well as the process and progress.
e. **Ask for more improvements** - this shows respect for the efforts already made.

f. **Ask, "How can we lock in improvements?"** - beware of backsliding. Maintaining improvement is generally a lot more work than we think. Make sure teams do this work rather than jumping too quickly to the next improvement. Lean is long term.

g. **Ask, "How will we measure improvements?"** Asking, "How will our customers see/feel the improvements?" is a good way to focus on the right measures.

2. _____ Send out invitations – include “call to action” message from top leadership (see example below).

3. _____ Confirm dates and schedule

4. _____ Reserve rooms (20 min capacity with movable tables and wall space)

5. _____ Schedule and pay for meals – breakfast and lunch

6. _____ Pay for participant mementos ($3/person max)

7. _____ Arrange for kaizen facilitator fee as applicable.

D. **Pre-Kaizen Event Process Data** – provide/collect the following types of “real” (non-anecdotal) data before the Kaizen event. Pick a few easy numbers to get. [Note: *if you do not have a data tracking system in place, get one*]:

1. _____ **Time**
   a. How many days/hours/minutes does the whole process take?
   b. How long is a well-measured part of the process?
   c. How many transactions are in process at any point in time?
   d. How many transactions are completed every day/hour/minute?
   e. How many process steps are there?
   f. Are transactions completed individually or in batches?
   g. How big is a batch?

2. _____ **Quality**
   a. What are typical errors that are made in the process? How frequent?
   b. How often does rework occur?
   c. Is the process repeatable?
   d. Do standards exist?

3. _____ **Cost**
   a. How many people “touch” the transaction?
   b. How many departments touch the transaction?

E. **Schedule**

1. _____ Three 4-hour sessions with 1-hour lunch plus 2 hour follow-up (17 hours total).

2. _____ Sessions are weekly with a maximum of 2 weeks of separation.
3. _____ Sequence:
   a. **Session 1** – Training, practice, and process selection
   b. **Session 2** – Process mapping
   c. < Post-session 2 homework – verify process map and data >
   d. **Session 3** – Create action plan and report out to leadership/management
   e. **Follow-up** – Confirm action plan, measures, roles, and responsibilities

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*Central Coast Lean - [http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/centralcoastlean/](http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/centralcoastlean/)*

**Call to Action Email Example**

Subject: Kaizen Event - Gift Processing

Dear Joyce, Donna, Xenia, Christine, Shelley, Patricia, Cassie, Lori, Al, Corine, Melissa, Craig, Cathy, Lisa, Erling, Linda, Bob, and Alejandra,

As you know, increasing private support through the upcoming comprehensive campaign will be of high strategic importance for Cal Poly achieving our vision in the Strategic Plan of becoming “The Premier Comprehensive Polytechnic University.” The volume of gifts anticipated during the campaign will require greater processing capacity and coordination, while growing donor sophistication will place a premium on speed and accuracy. Working now to optimize our gift acceptance and recording processes is critical to future success of the campaign and its role in achieving our vision for the university.

We would like you to participate in a “kaizen” activity described below that will lead us to be more effective and improve our acceptance and recording process for cash gifts. Our experience has been that the people closest to the work are the best ones to solve process-related problems. You would be the second group on campus to take on this challenge and we are confident that you will be successful. One of the goals of these pilots is to develop expertise among the participants so you may then serve as facilitators for other process improvement activities in your own areas and elsewhere on campus. Indeed, you’ll see a number of invitees who were participants in the first kaizen.

In consultation with Erling Smith and Eric Olsen, we have selected the cash gift acceptance and recording process as a second pilot project to which to apply process improvement. This area was selected because the workflow lends itself well to process improvement analysis; it is cross-functional; and the potential benefits of any process improvement (greater effectiveness and improved donor service) are important for Cal Poly. Assistant Professor Eric Olsen [http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/faculty/eolsen.html](http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/faculty/eolsen.html) will be our facilitator. Eric developed considerable expertise in process improvement in several settings prior to joining Cal Poly.

We plan to use a “kaizen event” to undertake this second pilot and you will be a critical participant in the process. Kaizen is a Japanese term for continuous improvement. By bringing together process experts in a focused effort to analyze the process, identify problems, and brainstorm solutions, many organizations are making dramatic improvements in value delivery. In industry, kaizen events often involve 2-3 days of dedicated effort; however, we
have adapted the methodology to encompass three half-day sessions. Your presence is required for all three sessions. A number of other central administrators will be invited to attend the opening session so they can better appreciate and support the kaizen process. The final session will include a presentation to us of your findings and recommendations for improvement.

The kaizen activities will be in the conference room in the OCOB building (03-207) on three of the following dates and times:

- Wednesday, January 20, 2010 – from 8:00am – 12:00pm
- Wednesday, January 27, 2010 – from 8:00am – 12:00pm
- Wednesday, February 3, 2010 – from 8:00am – 12:00pm
- Wednesday, February 10, 2010 – from 8:00am – 12:00pm

A continental breakfast and lunch is included. Because it will be difficult for us to gather everyone together, we urge you to clear/rearrange your calendars as necessary to allow the scheduling of this event. Please respond to Therese Souza (tsouza@calpoly.edu) by Thursday, December 17, concerning your availability on the above four dates. Then we will narrow those down to the best three dates and email everyone the final schedule.

Participants in the entire event will be:
Joyce Adams
Donna Aiken
Xenia Bixler (previous participant)
Christine Boswell
Shelley Bright
Patricia Broering
Cassie Carter
Lori Cordova
Al Liddicoat (Academic Personnel)
Corine Manroe
Melissa Mullen (previous participant)
Craig Nelson
Cathy Rathbone
Lisa Rockwell-Harpster
Erling Smith (previous participant)
Linda Stark
Bob Stets
Alejandra Vergara (previous participant)

Thank you for your willingness to take this on and we look forward to your success.

Robert Koob  
Provost

Sandra S. Ogren  
Vice President for Advancement  
California Polytechnic State University  
1 Grand Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0443  
Phone: office - 805-756-1445 / cell - 805-440-3021  
Assistant Therese Souza - 805-756-2710
Ten Commandments of Continuous Improvement

Per Gemba Academy, 2010

1. Open your mind to change.
2. Think “Yes we can, if…”
3. Always attack processes, never people.
4. Seek simple solutions.
5. If it’s broken, stop to fix it.
6. Use creativity, not capital.
7. Problems are opportunities in disguise.
8. Find the root cause.
9. Wisdom of many, not the knowledge of one.
10. There is no final destination on the improvement journey.