



How Lean Process Improvement Works

Lean allows *those who actually use a process* to seek out and remove waste from that (and other) process(es). The acronym TIM P. WOOD helps us to remember what kind of wastes we might eliminate or reduce so that we can focus on those steps that add value to the process: Transportation, Inventory, Motion, People, Waiting, Overproduction, Overprocessing, and Defects.

[Lean Process Video](#)

At Cornell, Lean really has two components:

- 1. The launch phase:** During the launch phase, facilitators from Organizational & Workforce Development teach a team that wants to improve a process how to use Lean. The launch entails a time for the team to tell the facilitator and the other team members (and leaders) a story about the current process: the team creates a map of the current process (using Post-It notes) to tell the story of now. Then, the team gets a chance to re-think the current process: the team will again use post-it notes to write a new story about what the process *might* look like in an *ideal* world.
- 2. The improvement phase:** After the launch, the team works on any ideas that it had about the ideal way to do the process (and likely needs to-and will-generate many more ideas) so that the team can actually make the process better. The improvement phase will likely last about 90 days and will have check-in points (one at 30, 60, and 90 days) along the way, so that the team can tell leadership, colleagues, customers, and any other stakeholders what they have done and what they want to do to improve the process. During the improvement phase, a facilitator will attend weekly meetings with all of the team members and will act as an advisor as the team works to improve its processes.

Share Your Success:

[Tell us](#) about your gains and successes using the Lean Process!
