

My 82-year-old mother recently asked me a good question: do hospitals in Japan have a good standard of practice? Her question surprised me, but I was happy to hear that she understood the importance of Operational Excellence! My answer to her was yes, they are on their way. Many Japanese hospital directors are visiting US hospitals today, to see the Toyota Production System in action. Many American Healthcare organizations like Virginia Mason, Theadacare, and Cleveland Clinic are leading the world in the implementation of Lean methods. They understood that not only the tools but also a robust Lean Management System is the key to a healthcare transformation.

By now, it is very well established that:

- Lean can help to achieve financial and non-financial goals.
- Lean can boost: sense of ownership, autonomy and loyalty.
- Lean can provide safe, flexible and high-quality care while meeting demand.

What can you do to achieve these gains while simultaneously increasing margins, improving retention of nurses and doctors, and greatly enhancing the patient experience?

Learning about Lean Healthcare is a great start. Although this book focuses on the OR, it also applies to any other department in a hospital. For me, “Lean is Lean” and this book is for everyone. It not only documents a detailed Hospital tactical roadmap, but also emphasizes the strategic role of leadership in a sustainable Lean Transformation.

The question remains: will this “Leaders’ Guide” be applied in exactly the same way for all of the hospitals out there? No, it should not. Lean principles will need to be applied intelligently in your specific organization. At the end of the day you will not have the roadmap exactly as detailed in this book, you will have your own version of it. You create your own path, but the foundation will be exactly the same.

Reading a book is not enough. Excellence is a personal choice. It is up to us and how serious are we about it, how dedicated are we to make it happen. If we only want to tinker with improvements, and do the occasional project, you will be disappointed with the results, and this is not Lean.

The Lean approach to improvement is powerful stuff, and some hospitals are achieving staggering results. Other hospitals are not doing much and consequently are wasting huge opportunities. The Lean Hospital Roadmap is all about transforming your hospital from wall to wall, and understanding that it is a long-term activity that you will not complete in a week.

Last but not least!

They call themselves “the Road Map Guys”, and I call them “Masters of Clarity”.

I would like to thank Richard Rahn and Gerard Leone for their support, encouragement, and invaluable guidance in writing this book. Their international experience along with my Lean training, mentoring and learning in my part of the world helped me to contribute modestly to this valuable book.

My wish is that this “Leaders’ Guide” will contribute not only in healing some major issues we are facing today in healthcare but also it will make “The patient smile through our Caregivers’ smile”.