

April 1, 2016

The WCB continuous improvement journey

At the Workers' Compensation Board offices, improvement, measurement, Lean training and the elimination of waste looks and feels different from the 3sHealth experience but the goal to continuously improve processes and outcomes for the customer is the same.

The WCB has sent staff to 3sHealth on several occasions to learn about our Lean journey and experience; to see some of our daily management boards and participate in team huddles and our corporate wall walk. On March 30, members of the 3sHealth senior leadership team had an opportunity to visit the WCB office to see what they've achieved and, hopefully, learn from their experiences.

"Our recent aha moment has been about the balance between doing what we need to improve our work and focus on developing our people," said Mick Williams, Vice-president of Administration and lead of the WCB Business Transformation Office – the equivalent to our Kaizen Promotion Office.

While Williams says WCB has a long path ahead in its journey, there are pockets of success and they have identified some clear paths to their goal to spread the notion of continuous improvement throughout the organization.

The Regina-based WCB office has about 475 employees and a culture entrenched in 80-plus years of doing things in a particular way. "We are a model for change resistance," says Williams.

The organization is following a "recipe" from the Theda Care "Management on the Mend" book. First is laying the foundation and Williams says there is work to do to bring executive on board and create champions for change.

The next phase is the Model Cell where they want to go a mile deep and an inch wide in particular areas of the business – three key teams within the WCB office have daily visual management in place, are encouraging and tracking improvement ideas, and are celebrating success. 3sHealth SLT members were able to visit the walls and see the work that's being done to improve service delivery for WCB claimants.



"Those three (teams) have really bought in," said Mark Anderson, 3sHealth Vice-president of Business Development, following the tour. "There is pride there. When the WCB does start to expand this and roll it out to other areas, they've got a sales force."

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Other aspects of the Theda Care “recipe” are: values and principles, the central improvement team, daily management system, and spreading the work.

“We are really starting to see possibilities beyond what we first imagined,” says Williams.

In one example, the medical payments team had struggled to get payments out within 30 days. After improvement work by the team, they are processing payments within one to two days. It’s the hope of Williams and his improvement team that stories like this will create pull and generate excitement within the organization.

Williams says they’ve learned from 3sHealth and other businesses they’ve toured. Lessons or takeaways have included:

- Daily improvement is for everyone
- Middle managers as agents of change / improvement are critical
- Focus on developing “Lean leadership”
- Focus on executing strategy