Implementing Improvement Strategies: Practical Tools and Methods

Program Details
This program goes beyond traditional Toyota-style tools and far beyond the factory floor, translating Toyota methods to western cultures and language, and to industries to all kinds. It provides participants with a framework for understanding what drives improvement and how it can be implemented in every function across the organization. It also helps leaders see how these methods can be applied and integrated with major business targets and work streams. It focuses on the thinking behind the tools and methods, allowing improvement to be accomplished in a rapid and natural way. The course helps managers identify the true value-added elements of work and understand the good practices that they already have in place so that they can build on their successes in a principled way rather than forcing a formulaic, programmatic approach. Inspired by extensive research on several leading companies, this program highlights the principles and practices that have enabled several such companies to consistently and significantly outperform their competitors year after year.

Takeaways
The main purpose of this program is two-fold: one is to help participants understand how continuous improvement strategies, sustained over a long period of time, affect core business metrics and contribute to the success of the organization from bottom-up and top-down perspectives; and the other is how to change the way managers see work and their own roles as leaders in the culture of improvement. This program will enable participants to:

• Understand the principles and approaches that drive improvement; and apply them in all areas in the context of a particular company, thus creating a tangible culture of continuous improvement
• Implement improvement naturally in their everyday work, not from a prescribed list, but from a deep personal understanding of the principles
• Recognize successful improvement initiatives already in place and build on them
• Identify the true value-added aspects of work performed by individual workers and the entire organization
• Ensure that business targets and improvement activities are tightly linked at every level
• Develop inquiry and evidence-based problem solving skills for individuals and for organizations
• Transform managers from controllers to enablers by leveraging the relationship between designing the work well and the engagement of employees that follows
• Generate “pull” from within the organization for new methods of work
• Make results (and problems) visible so that they can be addressed constructively
• Not just remove defects, but learn how to design work correctly from the beginning

“\nIn today’s challenging business climate, it’s essential that companies develop management and operational practices that are based on sound principles. Don Kieffer’s hands-on style and business insights are invaluable to any executive team looking to lead their organizations in this competitive business environment.”

—Bill Dannehl
Former Executive VP
Harley-Davidson
## Implementing Improvement Strategies: Practical Tools and Methods

### Sample Program Schedule

**Day 1**

- **7:45 AM–8:30 AM:** Registration and Continental Breakfast
- **8:30 AM–11:30 AM:** Introduction and Program Objectives  
  Principles of Improvement  
  Practical Applications: Implement in Action
- **11:30 AM–12:30 PM:** Luncheon
- **12:30 PM–5:30 PM:**  
  Problem Solving, Structured Thinking  
  Problem Solving, Practice, and Live Coaching  
  Visual Management I: Problem Solving Boards  
  Visual Management II: Decision Making Boards  
  Review of the Day
- **5:30 PM–6:30 PM:** Reception

**Day 2**

- **7:45 AM–8:30 AM:** Continental Breakfast
- **8:30 AM–12:00 PM:** Putting It All Together: Improvement Simulation  
  Scaling Up to Impact the Entire Organization: Collapsing Square  
  Architecting Agility
- **12:00 PM–1:00 PM:** Luncheon
- **1:00 PM–4:30 PM:**  
  Accelerating the Pace Long Term  
  How Do Leaders Show Up?
- **4:30 PM:** Adjournment

### Participants

The program is intended for executives, senior managers, and leaders from every sector. Managers at any level of responsibility will benefit from this program, but it’s the senior leadership that should be able to embrace and champion the principles of improvement for the benefit of the entire organization. Here are some indicators that this program will be of value:

- An organization’s need for improvement is greater than its ability to deliver it
- Company executives are drowning in data, emails, and meetings, and suffering under the weight of a large number of activities and initiatives, many of which are not focused on the important issues
- Management behavior doesn’t change much or is actively resistant to improvement
- Improvement methods are not integrated into all of the company’s work beyond that of the improvement department
- There is lack of clear understanding how improvement methodologies and value-add apply to executives, knowledge workers, and technical and administrative staff in non-factory settings

### Program Faculty

Please note that faculty are subject to change and not all faculty teach in each session of the program.

- **Don Kieffer**, Senior Lecturer, Operations Management
- **Nelson Repenning**, School of Management Distinguished Professor of System Dynamics and Organization Studies. Faculty Director, MIT Executive MBA Program

"This course blends the practical insights of the instructor with “theory” (still very grounded) along with an engaging game and a case study. The combination of learning modes reinforces the concepts in a highly effective manner.”

—Brady J.  
Past Participant  
Read this review and others online.

### Contact Information

MIT Sloan Executive Education  
P: +1-617-253-7166  •  E: sloanexeced@mit.edu

---

http://executive.mit.edu/iis