

LEAN Thinking in Printing

Before you read this article or turn the page and move on to other information, ask yourself a few questions: How often do we talk about the need to reduce production time during meetings? Have we ever discussed the need to achieve high quality at minimal cost? Do we have overproduction and how does it affect us? And what about regulating the supply of materials? If all these questions are close to your heart, and I believe that the majority of people will answer yes, then this article is for you. Today we will talk about an effective management concept called LEAN Thinking.

Valeriia Grankina, SE MBA, LEAN Specialist, Co-owner of SLAVENA Printing House

When I first came to the LEAN Institute, I was a little intimidated by the amount of knowledge I had to absorb. It seemed to me that LEAN was something frightening and complicated. Even more frightening was the thought that LEAN was simply a fashionable modern trend that would not justify itself in practice. Alongside all these thoughts, however, there was one huge problem that kept appearing and interfering with every one of them — the misalignment of processes within the company, together with a feeling of anxiety caused by the company's significant slowdown in its desire to move to a new stage of development or become more resilient to external fluctuations. Therefore, I studied and applied the knowledge, methods and principles I had acquired within the company. Of course, all of this is difficult and time-consuming. Of course, you will have to look for and attract like-minded people. But the result is worth it.

What is LEAN Thinking?

Perhaps this is not entirely correct, but do you remember the principles of lean manufacturing? That is exactly what LEAN is about.

LEAN Thinking is an effective management concept whose essence is to optimise business processes by focusing on the interests and needs of the customer (the market) and motivating every employee. It is about creating maximum value for the company with minimal resources, time, energy and effort.

The implementation of the LEAN methodology helps solve a number of key problems that most companies face every day:

- Achieving high quality at minimal cost;
- Reducing the time required to calculate production costs, the time required to manufacture products, and so on;
- Establishing business processes starting from the sales department;
- Avoiding overproduction and the manufacture of defective products;

- Regulating the supply of materials and products to the customer's warehouse, etc.

Today, lean manufacturing has become a new, more effective approach to accomplishing tasks regardless of the type of work, industry or size of the organisation. In a LEAN organisation, problems become opportunities for thoughtful learning rather than mistakes that need to be hidden or quickly fixed. Leadership means creating a management system that supports a new way of engaging with real work, the way it is actually performed now, rather than the way colleagues are accustomed to performing it.

The author of the LEAN concept is Taiichi Ohno. He developed a unique production system for Toyota Corporation — the Toyota Production System (TPS), which in the West is known as LEAN manufacturing. At one time, Henry Ford attempted to introduce the principles of lean manufacturing to the business community, but his ideas were not accepted at that time. By becoming the first in the world to implement the LEAN manufacturing methodology, the Japanese once again demonstrated their talent not so much for generating new ideas as for developing existing ones.