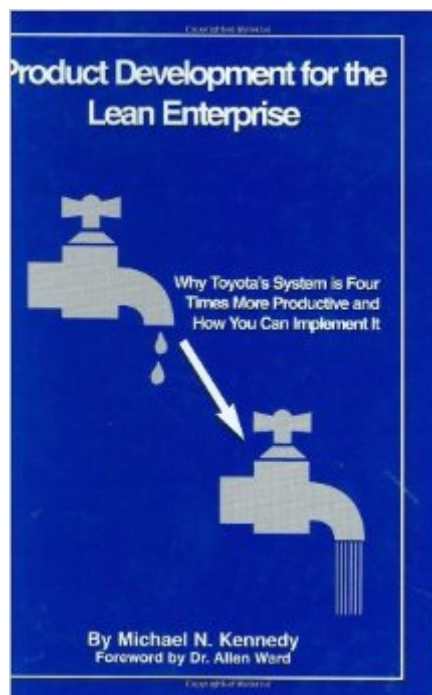


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Product Development For The Lean Enterprise: Why Toyota's System Is Four Times More Productive And How You Can Implement It



Synopsis

This is the must-read of the decade for anyone whose livelihood depends on new products. Those familiar with industry today know western companies are scrambling to emulate the Toyota Production System. But most don't realize that Toyota's new product development system is every bit as important to Toyota's ongoing success. If they've heard that Toyota's development engineers are four times more productive than their western counterparts, they probably chalk it up to Toyota Production System techniques. But they're wrong in doing so. While both systems deliver extremely high productivity, and both free people to do their best, there really aren't many similarities in how the systems work. Such techniques as concurrent engineering and parallel development are used to increase options and creative possibilities while at the same time lowering the risk of failure. No company that depends on an ongoing flow of new and improved products can afford to ignore the revelations this book contains or the potential advantages in terms of productivity and creativity that can accrue from the Toyota method.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michael Kennedy's book, *Product Development for the Lean Enterprise*, gives an experienced insight into the dilemma faced by some of North America's largest organizations, those who have embraced management science in all of its complexity to win national awards, only to find they are unable to compete successfully at the customer level. Using an engaging fictional narrative, Kennedy provides a fresh insight into product development; this book will challenge your beliefs and

understanding and likely intrigue you sufficiently to investigate how aspects of the process can be made applicable in your enterprise. It is a treasure trove of information on, not just its principal topic, Toyota's unique product development process, but details on establishing and operating "a process renewal team" and "large group interventions for organizational change". In Michael Kennedy's very readable book, one is introduced to Toyota's design concepts, unconventional to the majority of us in corporate North America. Imagine your product development process stipulating: * explore not one, but multiple design solutions at the same time; * delay the design's narrowing process to as late as possible in the process; * demand the building and testing of multiple design models and prototypes for performance conformity; * have the development, retention and reuse of engineering knowledge and skills a top priority for the company; * eliminate the use of complex integrated task based program and plans by delegating each program designer to prepare his/her own time-lines to meet fixed review dates and performance levels; and * have functional engineering managers focus on teaching and mentoring engineering talent, not administration.

Thumbs up, but I'd recommend you attend his workshops over the book if the opportunity presents itself. The book is written as a fictional account of a company's journey from process hell to an environment where engineers can devote themselves more completely to the craft they love. It is complete with protagonists and antagonists. The many men and women who have devoted large portions of their careers to wrestling with new product development process issues and trying to improve the quality and efficiency of product development processes may justifiably take offense at being cast as the antagonist, but it wouldn't be much of a story without the villains. The book raises some very good issues and points out some very good practices that have contributed to Toyota's success. Toyota's design philosophy is optimized for lowest possible risk to model year goals. American management teams would do well to think about optimizing for low risk instead of highest efficiency and lowest development cost. For many companies the cost of developing a new product is a fairly modest portion of their overall cost structure and the price they pay for missing new product introduction dates is far greater than the gains from tailoring their internal processes for the lowest cost development. The implementation of highly redundant development paths (called sets in the book) will be far less revolutionary than the book would have you believe. It really comes down to a willingness and ability to make the necessary investments. Readers who have studied Japanese companies will find much that is familiar. Publicly held Japanese companies are far less driven by quarterly results than are their American counter parts.

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