How Leaders Can Use This Book

This book can be read individually, but many organizations get the best results when leadership teams work through ideas together.

A simple four-week approach:

Week 1

Read Chapters 1–4

Discuss:

• Where are we firefighting instead of managing flow?

• What early warning signs of drift do we recognize?

Week 2

Read Chapters 5–8

Discuss:

• What problems in our organization are currently invisible?

• What cadence conversations are missing?

Week 3

Read Chapters 9–13

Discuss:

• Which execution tools would have the biggest impact here?

• What would it take to implement them?

Week 4

Review Appendix C – The 90-Day Quick Start Guide

Decide where to pilot the system first.

Leaders who work through the material together often discover the most valuable outcome is not the tools themselves, but the shared clarity about how execution should actually work.

This system has never let me down when leadership stays engaged. It can do the same for you.

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90-Day Quick Start Guide

Purpose and Scope

This guide is designed for operations leaders, plant managers, or executives who want to implement the execution system described in this book without waiting for perfect conditions or external consultants.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is traction—visibility, credibility, and a predictable learning rate.
Do not wait for perfect data. Waiting delays learning.

What This Guide Covers:

- Week-by-week implementation roadmap
- Minimum viable requirements for each phase
- Common mistakes and how to avoid them
- Go/No-Go decision points
- Resource requirements

What You'll Have After 90 Days:

- Functioning **Communication Centers** with daily cadence
- Weekly **Roto-Cube** reviews showing operation-level performance
- Active **PDCA** system with closed actions
- Initial **glide path** or improvement roadmap in place
- Measurable improvement in at least 2-3 key metrics
- Leadership team capable of sustaining the system
- **A visible labor tracker** (hours/unit or hours/part) posted and referenced in the system

Prerequisites:

- Executive commitment to attend and support key meetings
- Authority to enforce meeting attendance and board updates
- Ability to dedicate 2-4 hours per week of leadership time
- Willingness to make performance visible—good and bad
- **Willingness to confront reality without blaming, softening, or filtering it**

Week 1-2: Assessment and Baseline

Week 1 Objectives

Understand current state and identify the primary constraint

This week is about seeing reality—not debating it.

Day 1-2: Walk the Floor

• Spend minimum 4 hours physically walking the operation
• Follow work from start to finish for your most critical product/program
• Document:
o Where work stops or waits
o Where rework occurs
o Safety concerns you observe
o Obvious waste (motion, material handling, searching)
o PPE compliance
o Housekeeping conditions
Tool: Use your phone to take photos (if allowed) and notes. Don't analyze yet—just observe.

Do not try to solve problems on the walk. Your job is to see what the system is currently hiding.

Day 3-4: Inventory Existing Systems

Create a simple spreadsheet listing:

Current Meetings:
• Name of meeting
• Frequency
• Who attends
• Duration
• Purpose
• Last 3 decisions made (if any)

If you cannot identify decisions, you have meetings—but not a system.

Current Metrics/Reports:
• What's measured
• How often
• Who sees it
• Where it lives (email, ERP, posted, etc.)
• Last time it drove an action

Metrics that do not drive actions become decoration.

Current Improvement Efforts:

• Active projects
• Who owns them
• Status
• Last update

You'll likely discover:

• Meetings that produce no decisions
• Metrics nobody looks at
• Projects that have stalled for months
• Duplicated effort across departments

This is normal. Most organizations don't fail loudly. They drift quietly.

Day 5: Compare Instructions to Reality

• Pull work instructions, routings, SOPs, or planning documents for your top 3 products
• Watch the actual work alongside the instructions
• Document gaps:
o Steps people skip (and why)
o Steps people add (and why)
o Sequence differences
o Tools or information missing from instructions

This is where belief and reality first collide.

Critical Question: If instructions and reality don't match, you have two problems:

1. Your process is unstable
2. You're not in compliance (especially critical in aerospace/regulated industries)
   Mismatch is not a paperwork issue. It is a reliability and risk issue.

Week 2 Objectives

Collect baseline data and identify your top constraints

Day 6-8: Gather Baseline Metrics

Collect the following for the past 3 months (or whatever data you have):

Manufacturing:

• Units produced by product/line
• Labor hours by product/line
• Scrap dollars or pieces by type
• Downtime hours by reason

• On-time delivery percentage
• Premium freight costs (inbound and outbound)
• Average inventory levels

Labor Tracker Start (Days 1–30):
As soon as you have output and labor hours—even if imperfect—create a simple labor tracker (pieces per hour, hours/unit or hours/part) and begin posting it weekly.

If the data does not exist, start collecting it immediately so you can post actual performance as soon as possible. Early visibility captures the Hawthorne Effect—performance often changes simply because it is being observed. Attention is not improvement, but attention matters.

MRO:
• Receipts vs. Shipments by repair type
• TAT by gate (receipt → eval → quote → repair → ship)
• Backlog by age and category
• Hours quoted vs. actual
• Material quoted vs. actual
• AOG response time
• Customer satisfaction scores (if tracked)

Don't have all this data? That's common. Collect what exists. Note what's missing—that becomes a PDCA action. **Missing data is not an excuse to wait. It is an action to assign.**

Day 9-10: First Constraint Identification
Based on your floor walks and data review, answer:

1. What limits throughput most?
   - o A specific machine or operation?
   - o Material availability?
   - o Engineering release delays?
   - o Inspection/quality bottleneck?
   - o Decision-making latency?

2. What causes the most grief, disruption, variance, and cost?
   - o Frequent equipment failures?
   - o Chronic rework loops?
   - o Material shortages?
   - o Planning inaccuracy?
   - o Handoff failures between shifts or departments?

3. What do people complain about most?
   o Listen to supervisors, operators, engineers
   o Complaints often point to real constraints
   Complaints are often poorly framed truth. Your job is to translate them into constraints and actions.

Output: Write down your top 3 constraints. You won't solve all three immediately, but you need to know what they are.

If you work on the wrong constraint, you will work hard and still lose.

Week 3-4: Visual Controls and Communication Centers

Week 3 Objectives

Build your first Communication Center and establish the board structure

Keep it standard, basic, targeted, and visual. This is an operating system—not artwork.

Selecting Location

Your Communication Center should be:

• Near the work, not in an office
• Visible and accessible to the team
• Large enough for 8-12 people to stand comfortably
• Well-lit
• Where daily shift starts or handoffs occur

Common locations:

• End of a production line
• Near a high-traffic aisleway but in a safe area
• Adjacent to a main entrance to the floor
• In an open area near quality inspection

Don't: Hide it in a conference room or supervisor office.

If it is not near the work, it will not govern the work.

Board Design - The 4+1 Structure

Board #1: Safety / Quality / Manpower / Material

Create sections for:

Safety:

• Days since last recordable injury
• Days since lost-time injury

• Recent near-misses (date, brief description, action taken)
• Top safety concern this week

Quality:
• Recent shift issues (date, part, defect, containment)
• Top 3 quality items requiring focus
• Customer complaints (if any)

Manpower:
• Planned headcount by area/shift
• Actual on-roll
• Absenteeism % or count
• Open positions

Material/Delivery:
• Current-month shipped vs. committed
• Today's planned shipments
• Known shortages with owner and ETA
• Past-due or at-risk shipments

How to create it:
• Use a 4'x8' whiteboard (magnetic is best)
• Divide into quadrants with tape or marker
• Keep it SIMPLE—this is not artwork
• Handwrite numbers daily
• Use magnets, or colored markers for status

If the numbers are not handwritten and current, the board is already fading into theater.

Board #2: Zone Performance by Day

Track daily performance for each production zone, line, or work center.

Option A: Pieces-Based
Zone/Line Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Target Notes
Line 1 480/day
Line 2 360/day
Assembly A 120/day

Option B: Hours-Based
Zone Planned Hrs Actual Hrs Variance Notes
Machining 160 168 +8
Weld 120 115 -5

Option C: Red/Yellow/Green

• Green = Met or exceeded goal

• Yellow = Within 10% of goal

• Red = Missed by >10%

Include brief notes for reds: "Downtime - motor failure" or "Material shortage - Part X"

Color is not the point. The point is ownership and follow-through.

Board #3: Process Tracking by Part/Panel (if needed)

For long-cycle or high-value work (aerospace, MRO, complex assemblies):

Create swim lanes for each process step:

• Receiving / Incoming

• Inspection / Evaluation

• Engineering Release

• Kitting / Material Prep

• Operation 1

• Operation 2

• (etc.)

• Final Inspection

• Shipping

Use magnets with part numbers or unit numbers. Move them as parts progress.

Add indicators:

• Red pin = MRB hold or quality issue

• Yellow pin = Material shortage or engineering hold

• Blue pin = On a tool/fixture (capacity constraint)

• Green pin = on or ahead of schedule

Long-cycle work does not tolerate hidden queues. Make flow visible or accept delay.

Board #4: Long-Term Priority Actions by Function

Create columns for each support function:

• Production Control / Scheduling

• Manufacturing Engineering

• Process Engineering

• Maintenance / Tooling

• Quality

• Materials / Purchasing

• Operations (supervisors/area leads)

For each action:

• Date noted

• Who logged it
• Problem description
• Suggested resolution (if known)
• Owner name (not "Engineering"—a specific person)
• Due date
• Completion date

If actions have no owners and dates, they are not actions. They are wishes.

Board #5: Short-Term Priority Actions

This is for items that must be resolved in 24-72 hours.

Same principle as Board #4 but faster cycle:

• Date/Time
• Who identified
• Problem
• Action
• Owner
• Due date/time
• Completed (date/time)

Key rule: Leaders update this board by hand every day before leaving.

This is where credibility is built—one closure at a time.

Week 3 Tasks

Day 11-12:

• Select Communication Center location
• Order or source whiteboards/materials
• Sketch board layouts on paper first

Day 13-14:

• Install boards
• Create initial templates (draw the grids, labels, sections)
• Brief supervisors and leads on the purpose

Day 15:

• Populate boards with current data
• Schedule first daily meeting for Week 4

Day 15 add-on (still within Days 1–30): Start posting the Labor Tracker weekly in the Communication Center as soon as data exists.

If you do not have clean labor data, begin collecting it immediately.

Week 4 Objectives

Launch daily cadence and begin PDCA list

The purpose of cadence is to convert reaction time into control time.

Preparing for the First Daily Meeting

Who attends:

• First-level supervisor(s) for the area

• Second-level manager

• Support representation:

o Quality (inspector or engineer)

o Maintenance (if available)

o Materials/scheduling (if available)

o Engineering (as needed)

Meeting structure (15 minutes maximum):

1. Safety (2 min)
   o Review any incidents, near-misses from prior 24 hours
   o Update days-since counters
   o Address any immediate hazards

2. Quality (2 min)
   o Review any defects, customer issues from prior 24 hours
   o Update top quality concerns
   o Note containment actions if needed

3. Manpower (1 min)
   o Review actual vs. planned (Ensure no doubled-up jobs)
   o Address absenteeism or coverage gaps

4. Material/Delivery (2 min)
   o Review shortages
   o Update shipment status
   o Note any expedites

5. Zone Performance (3 min)
   o Review yesterday's performance by zone
   o Explain any reds or yellows
   o Update today's numbers if available

6. Process Tracking (2 min, if applicable)
   o Move magnets to current locations
   o Flag any parts that are blocked or at risk

7. Actions (3 min)
   o Review short-term action board
   o Update completed items
   o Add new urgent items
   o Assign owners

Rules:
• Start on time, every time
• Stand—don't sit
• Update boards by hand during meeting
• Deep-dive discussions happen offline
• End on time
The meeting is not for debate. It is for alignment, ownership, and next steps.

Day 16-17: First Daily Meetings
Expect awkwardness. That's normal.

Common issues you'll face:
• People won't know what to say
• Silence when you ask for updates
• Support functions won't show up
• Numbers will be missing

How to handle it:
• Stay calm and consistent
• Call out what's missing: "We need Quality here tomorrow"
• Ask direct questions: "Why is Line 2 red?"
• Thank people who updated boards or brought forward issues
• Don't cancel or reschedule—meet anyway
Consistency beats intensity. If you skip meetings, you teach people the system is optional.

Day 18-20: Start the PDCA List
As issues surface in daily meetings, capture them.
PDCA exists to stop problems from disappearing and to prevent "back pocket systems" from replacing the real one.

Create a simple Excel or SharePoint tracker:
ID Date Logged By Problem Suggested Fix Owner Due Date Status Completed

001 2/10/26 Rob Line 3 die sets taking 45 min avg Review setup procedure, add quick-change tooling J. Smith 3/15/26 Open

002 2/11/26 Quality Weld spatter causing rework on Part X Adjust weld parameters, add fixture shielding M. Jones 2/25/26 In Progress

Sources for PDCA items:
• Daily Communication Center meetings
• Floor observations
• Recurring quality issues
• Equipment failures
• Customer complaints
• Operator suggestions

Rules:
• Every item has ONE owner (a person, not a department)
• Owner may need a team, but one person is accountable
• Due dates are realistic but firm
• Status is updated weekly minimum
• Closed items stay visible for 30 days, then archive
Closed actions build trust. Stale actions destroy it.

By end of Week 4, you should have:
• Communication Center with 5 boards installed and current
• Daily meeting happening at consistent time
• 10-20 items on your initial PDCA list
• Clear understanding of which metrics you're tracking
• At least one "win"—something small that got fixed because it became visible
• A labor tracker started and posted (even if early data is imperfect)

Week 5-8: Cadence, PDCA Discipline, and Early Wins

Week 5 Objectives
Stabilize daily cadence and introduce weekly PDCA review
Solidifying Daily Meetings
By now you've held 5-10 daily meetings. Time to refine.

Audit your meetings:

- Are they starting on time?
- Is attendance consistent?
- Are boards being updated before or during the meeting?
- Are actions being captured?
- Are the same issues repeating without resolution?

Address gaps immediately:

- If support isn't showing up, escalate to their managers
- If boards aren't current, enforce Leader Standard Work
- If issues repeat, they go to PDCA with a due date

If "just this once" shows up, treat it as a warning light. That's how systems erode.

Introducing Weekly PDCA Review

When: Pick a consistent day/time (e.g., Thursday 2 PM)

Duration: 60 minutes maximum

Who attends:

- Operations manager or program leader (chairs the meeting)
- Supervisors/area leaders
- Engineering (manufacturing, process, quality)
- Maintenance/tooling
- Materials/purchasing
- Production control
- Others as needed based on open actions

Meeting structure:

1. Review metrics (10 min)
   - o Roll-up of weekly performance vs. targets
   - o Trends over past 4 weeks
   - o Any customer feedback or concerns
2. PDCA status (40 min)
   - o Go through open actions in priority order
   - o Each owner reports:
     - ♣ Current status
     - ♣ Next step
     - ♣ Any roadblocks
     - ♣ Revised due date (if needed)

- Close completed items
- Add new systemic items from the week

3. New actions and priorities (10 min)
   - Identify what needs to be added
   - Assign owners and due dates
   - Confirm top 5 priorities for next week

Rules:

• Owner must attend or send delegate who can speak to status
• "No update" is not acceptable—there's always a next step
• If an action requires deep-dive or event team, schedule that offline
• Keep the review crisp—status and next steps, not problem-solving

The purpose is disciplined follow-through. Without follow-through, visibility becomes noise.

Day 21-25: First Weekly PDCA Review

Before the meeting:

• Print or display current PDCA list
• Pre-populate status column with any updates you've received
• Identify which items are past due

During the meeting:

• Work through list systematically
• Document all updates in real-time
• Don't let discussions spiral—"take it offline" is your friend
• End with clear priorities

After the meeting:

• Update master PDCA list
• Send summary to attendees within 24 hours
• Follow up on any commitments made

If you do not close actions, your people will stop bringing you problems.

Week 6-7 Objectives

Build Roto-Cube structure and drive operation-level visibility

Understanding Roto-Cubes

Roto-Cubes serve a different purpose than Communication Centers:

• Communication Centers = Daily operational status and short-term actions
• Roto-Cubes = Weekly performance deep-dive at the operation level

What goes on a Roto-Cube:
Each side (4 total) shows metrics for one operation, line, or work cell:

Side 1: Throughput
• Trend chart: Pieces per hour or units per week
• Target line
• Actual performance by week for past 8-12 weeks
• Notes on major events (equipment failure, new tooling, etc.)

Side 2: Labor
• Trend chart: Hours per piece or hours per unit
• Target line
• Actual by week
• Notes
This is where the labor tracker becomes real at the operation level.

Side 3: Quality/Scrap
• Trend chart: Scrap rate % or scrap dollars
• Defect Pareto (top 3-5 defect types)
• Notes

Side 4: Open Actions
• PDCA items specific to this operation
• Owner, due date, status
• Quick comments

For MRO, adapt to:
• TAT by gate
• Receipts vs. Shipments
• Hours actual vs. quoted
• Backlog aging

Creating Your First Roto-Cube
Materials:
• Purchased Roto Cube (ready to go) or four whiteboards (24"x36" works well)
• Stand or frame that allows rotation
• Markers, printed trend charts, tape

Steps:

1. Select the operations - Start with your primary constraint or highest-volume line

2. Gather 8-12 weeks of data:
   - o Pull from ERP if available
   - o Manually calculate from timesheets if needed
   - o Use estimates if you must—accurate tracking starts now

3. Create simple trend charts:
   - o Use Excel or graph paper
   - o Plot week-by-week performance
   - o Add target line
   - o Print and laminate (or put in sheet protector)

4. Mount on boards:
   - o One metric per side
   - o Leave room for handwritten notes
   - o Include operation name and key stakeholders

5. Schedule weekly review:
   - o 30 minutes per Roto-Cube
   - o Stakeholders from that operation attend
   - o Supervisor leads the discussion

Day 26-30: First Roto-Cube Build
Day 26-27: Gather data and create charts
Day 28: Build physical cube
Day 29: Brief the team on how it works Day 30: Hold first Roto-Cube review
First Review Agenda (30 min):

1. Rotate to Side 1 (Throughput): (7 min)
   - o Supervisor explains the trends
   - o Team discusses why performance moved
   - o Identify actions needed

2. Side 2 (Labor): (7 min)
   - o Same discussion pattern

3. Side 3 (Quality): (7 min)
   - o Focus on top defect drivers
   - o Discuss effectiveness of recent containment

4. Side 4 (Actions): (7 min)
   - o Provide any updates to PDCA items specific to these operations
   - o Confirm ownership and next steps

5. Wrap-up: (2 min)
   - o Summarize what the team will focus on this week
   - o Recognize any wins

Key principle: This is the team's scoreboard. They should take pride in moving the numbers, and ownership when they don't.

This is where you give operators a winnable game—clear rules, visible score, and closed actions that don't disappear.

Week 8 Objectives

Achieve first measurable wins and communicate them

By Week 8, you should start seeing:

- Daily meetings running smoothly
- PDCA list growing and items closing
- At least one Roto-Cube in place
- Metrics trending positively in 2-3 areas

Celebrating Early Wins

Document them:

- Before/after metrics
- What changed
- Who was involved
- Impact (labor saved, scrap reduced, delivery improved)

Share them:

- In daily meetings
- In weekly PDCA reviews
- With leadership above you
- With the floor team

Example: "Week 1, Line 3 was averaging 42 minutes per die set. Team identified the root cause: tools were disorganized and missing. We replaced hardware, built a shadow board for tools, and created a quick-reference guide. Week 8, average is now 28 minutes. That's 14 minutes saved per changeover—roughly 6 hours per week of additional run time. Great work by J. Smith and the Line 3 crew."

Don't oversell: Stay factual. Acknowledge the team. Tie the win to the system (visibility led to action, action led to result).

Recognition should be specific and tied to measurable improvement—not enthusiasm.

Week 8 Checkpoint Questions

System health:

• Are daily meetings happening without you chasing people?
• Are boards current within 24 hours?
• Is PDCA list being actively worked?
• Do people reference the boards when discussing problems?

Cultural indicators:
• Are people bringing forward ideas?
• Are operators asking about their performance trends?
• Have any "resisters" started engaging?
• Has anyone from another area asked about replicating this?

Metric movement:
• Have any KPIs improved by >5%?
• Has any chronic issue been resolved?
• Have expedites or firefighting decreased?

If yes to most of these: You're ready for Phase 3.
If no to several: Don't advance yet. Stabilize what you have. Common issues:
• Leadership inconsistency (you're not showing up, or others aren't)
• Boards falling behind (enforce **Leader Standard Work**)
• **PDCA** list bloating without closures (prioritize ruthlessly)
• Metrics not moving (you haven't identified the real constraint)
Do not confuse activity with progress. Closure is the proof.

Week 9-12: Process Flow Improvement and Glide Path Initiation

<u>Week 9 Objectives</u>
Deep-dive on the primary constraint and quantify improvement potential

Time Studies and Observation
Now that you have baseline visibility, it's time to improve the process itself.
Visibility is not the finish line. It is the starting line.
Select your focus area:
• The operation that limits overall throughput
• The process with highest labor content
• The area causing most quality grief
• The bottleneck surfaced by your process-tracking board

Conduct structured observation:

1. Time the work (2-4 hours minimum)
   o Stand and watch the full cycle
   o Use a stopwatch or phone timer
   o Record each element of the work
   o Note wait times, walk times, search times
   o Identify non-value-added motion

2. Interview the operators
   o "What slows you down?"
   o "What could be closer?"
   o "What gets in your way?"
   o "If you could change one thing, what would it be?"
   o "What makes a good day here—and what makes a bad one?"

3. Compare to work instructions
   o Are instructions accurate?
   o Are they followed?
   o If not, why not?
   o If reality and documentation disagree, fix one—do not tolerate the gap.

4. Identify waste categories:
   o Motion (walking, reaching, bending)
   o Waiting (for material, information, decisions)
   o Searching (for tools, parts, paperwork)
   o Defects/Rework (built-in process issues)
   o Overprocessing (steps that don't add value)

Output: Create a current-state process map showing:
• Each step in sequence
• Time per step
• Value-added vs. non-value-added
• Key decision points
• Handoffs between people or departments
This is where belief turns into data—and data turns into action.

Day 31-35: Constraint Analysis
Day 31-32: Conduct observation and timing
Day 33: Interview operators and stakeholders
Day 34: Map current state
Day 35: Identify top 5 improvement opportunities

Example opportunities:
Opportunity Current State Potential Gain Difficulty Priority
Reduce walk distance to parts bin Operator walks 40 ft each cycle Save 2 min/unit = 16 units/day Low - relocate bin High
Improve tooling change procedure 45 min avg changeover Target 30 min = 1.5 extra hours/week Medium - training + quick-change pins High

Eliminate secondary inspection 100% re-inspect after welding Save inspector time, free capacity High - quality risk Low
Make sure at least one opportunity is tied directly to your labor tracker metric (hours/unit).

Week 10 Objectives
Build initial improvement roadmap (pre-glide path)

Creating the Roadmap
You don't need a perfect glide path chart yet, but you do need a plan.
A plan without owners and dates is not a plan. It's a wish list.

Structure:
Action ID Description Owner Estimated Impact Resources Needed Due Date Status
FI-001 Relocate parts bin closer to Line 3 Maintenance +16 units/day 4 hrs labor, new rack 3/15 Planned
FI-002 Install quick-change tooling on Press 2 Mfg Eng -15 min/changeover $2K tooling, 8 hrs install 4/1 In Progress
FI-003 Revise work instruction for weld setup Process Eng Reduce errors 30% 2 hrs documentation 3/1 Complete

For each action, estimate:
• Labor impact: How many hours will this save per week?
• Quality impact: Will defects decrease? By how much?
• Throughput impact: Will output increase? By how much?
• Cost impact: Investment required vs. savings
Don't be overly precise. Rough estimates are fine. You'll validate as you go.
Estimates create direction. Verification creates credibility.

Prioritizing Actions
Use a simple 2x2 matrix:
High Impact
|
| DO FIRST DO NEXT
| (Quick wins) (Strategic)
|
|----------

|
| DO LATER DON'T DO
| (Fill-in work) (Waste)
|
+----------

Easy → Hard

Focus on the upper-left quadrant: High impact, relatively easy.

If you cannot explain why something is prioritized, your team will assume politics.

Day 36-40: Build and Validate Roadmap

Day 36-37: Compile improvement opportunities from constraint analysis

Day 38: Prioritize using impact/difficulty matrix

Day 39: Build initial roadmap (15-20 actions)

Day 40: Review with team and stakeholders—validate estimates

This review is where you prevent **"hallway objections"** later. Put concerns on the table while the plan is still adjustable.

Week 11 Objectives

Execute first roadmap actions and establish glide path structure

Executing Quick Wins

By now you should have 3-5 actions that are:

• High impact

• Low difficulty

• Can be completed in 1-4 weeks

Assign these immediately. Don't wait for perfect conditions.

Momentum builds belief. Belief increases participation.

Example execution:

Action: Relocate parts bin closer to Line 3 Owner: Maintenance Supervisor Steps:

1. Identify new location (Day 1)
2. Source/build new rack (Day 2-5)
3. Move bins during scheduled downtime (Day 6)
4. Update work instruction and train operators (Day 7)
5. Validate time savings (Week 2)
   Track progress in PDCA.
   If it's real work, it belongs in PDCA—with an owner and a date.

Measure before and after:

• Baseline: Operator walks 40 ft, takes 2 min/cycle

• Post-change: Operator walks 10 ft, takes 30 sec/cycle

• Result: 1.5 min saved × 100 cycles/day = 150 min/day = 2.5 hrs/day

That's your first quantified win for the glide path.

This is also how your labor tracker becomes a winnable game: the score changes because the work changed.

Introducing Glide Path Concept

A glide path is a visual representation of your roadmap showing:

• Baseline performance (current labor hours/unit, cycle time, etc.)

• Target performance (where you want to be in 12 months)

• Planned trajectory based on actions

• Actual trajectory as actions close

A glide path does not replace execution. It makes execution measurable.

Building a simple glide path in Excel:

1. X-axis: Months (January thru December)
2. Y-axis: Labor hours per unit (or your key metric)
3. Baseline: Current average (e.g., 85 hrs/unit)
4. Target: Aggressive but achievable (e.g., 65 hrs/unit)
5. Planned line:
   - o Group your roadmap actions by month
   - o Stack their estimated impacts
   - o Plot the cumulative reduction
6. Actual line:
   - o Each month, plot real performance
   - o As actions close and savings are verified, the line steps down

   Don't overthink this. A simple Excel line chart works fine.

   The power is not the chart. The power is the conversation it forces.

Example:

Month Baseline Planned Actions Est. Savings Cumulative Actual

Feb 85 - 0 85 85

Mar 85 Relocate bins, tool org -3 hrs 82 83.5

Apr 85 Quick-change tooling -5 hrs 77 (TBD)

May 85 Weld parameter optimize -4 hrs 73 (TBD)

...

Plot "Planned" and "Actual" as two lines. Watch them converge (or diverge—which tells you something).
When they diverge, don't argue. Ask: "Which actions slipped, which assumptions were wrong, and what is blocking us?"

Day 41-45: Glide Path Setup
Day 41-42: Build initial glide path in Excel
Day 43: Review with leadership—adjust targets if needed
Day 44: Print large-format version for Communication Center Day 45: Brief team on what it means and how it works
Post it where the work lives. If it stays on a laptop, it will not drive behavior.

Week 12 Objectives
Lock in cadence, close first major action, and prepare for sustainment
Verify System Integrity
By Week 12, the full system should be functioning:

Daily Cadence:
• Meetings happen every day at the same time
• Boards are current
• Short-term actions are being worked and closed

Weekly PDCA Review:
• Held consistently
• Actions are moving
• New items are being added as old ones close
• Attendance is stable

Roto-Cube Reviews:
• At least one cube is active and reviewed weekly
• Metrics are trending
• Team ownership is visible

Glide Path:
• Initial version is built and posted
• First actions are underway
• Baseline and target are clear

Labor Tracker:
• **Labor performance is posted, reviewed, and tied to actions—**not explained away

Audit and Adjust

Conduct a Week 12 audit:

Communication Center checklist:

- Boards are updated within 24 hours
- Daily meetings happen without reminders
- Support functions attend regularly
- Short-term actions are closing within 48-72 hours
- Long-term actions are owned and progressing

PDCA checklist:

- List is current and accessible
- Every action has a single owner
- Due dates are realistic
- Closed items have completion dates
- No action has been "in progress" for >60 days without update

If items go stale, your system is already drifting—even if the boards look clean.

Roto-Cube checklist:

- Metrics are updated weekly
- Charts show at least 8 weeks of trend
- Team reviews are happening
- Actions from Roto-Cube feed into PDCA

Glide Path checklist:

- Baseline is accurate
- Actions are mapped by month
- Estimated impacts are documented
- Actual performance is being tracked
- Leadership reviews it monthly

If leadership does not review it, the glide path becomes wallpaper.

If you find gaps: Address them now. Sustainment depends on these basics.

Small misses are early warning lights. CEOs should treat them as red flares.

Close Your First Major Action

By Week 12, aim to close at least one significant PDCA action—something that:

- Required cross-functional effort
- Took multiple weeks

• Produced measurable results
• Demonstrates the system works

Document the closure:
• Before/after metrics
• Timeline
• Who was involved
• Lessons learned

Share the story:
• In daily meetings
• In weekly PDCA review
• With leadership
• Post on the Communication Center

Why this matters: Closing a real action proves the system isn't just theater. It builds momentum and credibility.

This is how you earn trust: visible problems, named owners, closed actions, and measured results.

Days 61-90: Scaling, Sustaining, and Leading Forward

Week 13-14: Expand to a Second Area

Don't try to implement plant-wide on Day 1. You've spent 12 weeks building one strong Communication Center, PDCA system, Roto-Cube, and glide path.

Now replicate it.

Replication is where discipline matters most. Do not "re-invent" the system in each area.

Selecting the Second Area

Good candidates:
• Another high-volume line or program
• A different shift (if you started with days, add nights)
• A support department ready to adopt the system
• An area where a strong supervisor wants to try it

Poor candidates:
• An area with weak leadership
• A process that's about to be shut down or moved
• A team actively hostile to change

Replication Process

Week 13:
• Walk the new area using Week 1-2 assessment approach

• Identify Communication Center location
• Build boards using same 4+1 structure
• Launch daily cadence

Week 14:
• Start PDCA list for this area
• Build first Roto-Cube
• Begin weekly reviews
• Link this area's actions into overall plant PDCA

Key principle: Don't customize heavily. Use the same board structure, same meeting format, same discipline. Consistency across areas is what makes this a system.
If leaders cannot transfer between areas without relearning the "rules," you don't have a system—you have local habits.

Week 15-16: Leadership Standard Work
By now, your supervisors and leads have been doing these behaviors for 3+ months. Time to formalize them.
Leader Standard Work is what prevents drift after the initial push fades.

Defining Leader Standard Work
For first-level supervisors, daily expectations include:

1. Shift Startup (30 min before shift):
   o Walk the area
   o Verify material, tooling, equipment ready
   o Check Communication Center boards
   o Remove obstacles before production starts

2. Communication Center Meeting (15 min):
   o Update boards with yesterday's results
   o Lead or participate in daily review
   o Capture new short-term actions
   o Assign owners

3. Floor Presence (70% of shift minimum):
   o Walk each operation at least 3x per shift
   o Verify quality, safety, and process compliance
   o Respond to stoppages within 5 minutes
   o Coach and support operators

4. Handwritten Updates (daily):
   o Update zone performance board

o Update short-term action board
o Log significant interactions in Quality Book

5. End-of-Shift Prep (15 min before shift end):
   o Verify next shift has materials, tools, instructions
   o Brief incoming supervisor on status
   o Update boards with final numbers

6. Weekly Participation:
   o Attend PDCA review
   o Lead or attend Roto-Cube review
   o Update longer-term actions

Document this as a one-page reference.
Enforce it:
• Review compliance weekly
• Address gaps immediately
• Recognize those who execute it consistently
If you tolerate "opt-outs," you train the organization that standards are optional.

Week 17-18: Prepare for Sustainment
Sustainment begins before you think you're ready.
Most systems don't get killed. They fade.

Building the Guardrails
Create a Change Control Process:
Not every idea is good. Not every "improvement" to the system actually improves it.

Simple change board:
• Any proposed change to board design, meeting structure, or cadence goes through a small team (2-3 people who deeply understand the system)
• They ask: "Does this add value, make it clearer, or just busier?"
• Approved changes are documented and rolled out consistently
This prevents "over-tooling" and keeps the system standard, basic, targeted, and visual.

Align HR:
• Brief HR leadership on the system
• Show them Communication Centers, PDCA, Roto-Cubes
• Explain how performance is tracked and documented (Quality Book)
• Ensure they understand: enforcing standards supports the culture, not undermines it
HR alignment matters because drift is often tolerated in the name of harmony.

Monthly Metric Review:

• Establish a monthly meeting with leadership
• Review glide paths and labor trackers
• Discuss which constraints have moved, which haven't
• Adjust roadmap priorities based on current reality

If a metric is drifting and no actions are tied to it, your system is already failing.

Leader Development:

• Start cross-training supervisors
• Have them run each other's areas for a day
• Ensure system can run if someone is out

Document Standard Work:

• Create a one-page guide for each meeting type
• Include purpose, agenda, attendees, duration, outputs
• Store in a shared location (SharePoint, shared drive, or physical binder)

If it is not documented, it will be reinterpreted by the next leader.

CEO Engagement

If you're the CEO, you already own this. If you're implementing below the CEO level, now is the time to bring them in fully.

The system survives when senior leadership treats it as non-negotiable.

What the CEO should see by Day 90:

• A functioning Communication Center
• PDCA list showing actions opened, worked, and closed
• Glide path with actual progress vs. plan
• Labor tracker or key metric showing positive trend
• Frontline leaders confidently explaining their metrics

CEO ask:

• Attend one daily Communication Center meeting (10-15 min)
• Attend one monthly glide path review (30 min)
• Ask questions, don't solve problems:
o "What's your top constraint right now?"
o "Which PDCA actions have been open longest?"
o "Where is the actual line vs. planned line on the glide path?"
o "What support do you need from me?"

If the CEO is hearing about a problem for the first time in a staff meeting, the system has already failed.

CEO commitment:

- Protect the cadence (don't schedule over it)
- Back leaders who enforce standards
- Recognize those executing the system well
- Hold peers accountable to use it

Go-Forward Expectations (Day 91+)

The System Is Now Operational—But Not Automatic

At Day 90, you have:

- ✅ Communication Centers with daily cadence
- ✅ PDCA discipline with actions tracked and closed
- ✅ Roto-Cube reviews showing operation-level trends
- ✅ Initial glide path or roadmap in place
- ✅ Leader Standard Work defined and practiced
- ✅ Measurable improvement in 2-3 key metrics

What you DON'T have:

- Culture that's fully internalized this yet
- Immunity to drift if leadership attention fades
- Automatic participation from everyone

Culture follows discipline. It does not precede it.

Sustainment requires ongoing effort:

Monthly Leadership Reviews:

- Review glide paths and labor trackers
- Identify which actions are slipping and why
- Re-prioritize roadmap based on current constraints
- Recognize teams and individuals moving metrics

Recognition keeps participation rational—because effort visibly leads somewhere.

Quarterly System Audits:

- Walk all Communication Centers
- Review PDCA close rates
- Check Roto-Cube update frequency
- Interview supervisors: "Is the system helping you?"
- Identify and address drift early

If boards are current but never referenced, the system is already turning into theater.

Annual Reset:

• Refresh targets based on new business reality
• Update glide paths for next fiscal year
• Celebrate wins from prior year
• Identify which leaders grew into the system and which didn't

This is where you ensure you have the right people in the right positions to sustain the system.

Red Flags That System Is Fading

Watch for these warning signs:

Boards:

• Numbers are 2+ days old
• Handwriting is rushed or illegible
• Actions stay open with no updates
• Boards are technically current but never referenced in discussion

Meetings:

• Start times drift
• Attendance drops
• Duration creeps past target
• Decisions aren't made—everything is "we'll follow up"

Metrics:

• Labor tracker or key KPIs flatten or worsen
• No actions are tied to the trend changes
• People explain away bad trends instead of attacking root cause

Culture:

• "We're too busy for the meeting this week"
• Leaders stop showing up, send proxies with no authority
• Operators stop asking about performance
• PDCA list grows but nothing closes

If you see 3+ of these: Intervene immediately. Don't wait.

Small drift becomes big failure when leaders stop noticing.

Expanding Beyond Initial Scope

Once your first 1-2 areas are stable (Months 4-6), consider:

Adding Communication Centers:

• Second shift

• Support departments (maintenance, quality lab, tooling)
• Warehouse or shipping

Adding Roto-Cubes:
• Each major line or product family
• MRO areas by repair type
• Support functions (purchasing, engineering)

Linking Systems:
• Plant-level PDCA that rolls up from area PDCAs
• Master glide path showing enterprise improvement trajectory
• Monthly scorecard sent to all stakeholders

But always: Keep it simple, visible, and disciplined. Don't let "expansion" become "complexity."
Complexity kills systems. Standard work keeps them alive.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Mistake #1: Starting Too Big
Symptom: Trying to implement across the entire plant on Day 1 Result: Overwhelm, inconsistent execution, system collapses Fix: Start with ONE Communication Center, ONE area. Prove it works. Then replicate.
A system scales when it is repeatable—not when it is customized.

Mistake #2: Over-Customization
Symptom: Every area wants different boards, different metrics, different formats Result: System becomes unrecognizable, leaders can't transfer between areas Fix: Standardize the core structure. Allow minor tailoring (specific metrics), but don't let format drift.

Mistake #3: Electronic-First Mentality
Symptom: "Let's build this in PowerPoint / Excel / our MES system" Result: Delays implementation by months, removes tactile ownership, people stop looking at screens Fix: Start physical. Whiteboards, hand-written numbers, printed charts. Digitize later if needed—but only if it adds value. (rarely does)
If it takes months to implement, you have already lost momentum.

Mistake #4: **No Executive Air Cover**
Symptom: Frontline leaders are excited, but **senior leadership doesn't engage or protect** the system Result: First time there's a conflict, the system gets bypassed. "We're too busy this week, skip the meeting." Fix: CEO or senior leader must visibly support the cadence. Attend meetings. Ask about metrics. Protect the rhythm.

Mistake #5: PDCA List Becomes a Dumping Ground
Symptom: 200+ open actions, most stale, nothing closing Result: List becomes noise, people stop believing

actions matter Fix: Ensure clear PDCA owner. Ruthlessly prioritize. Close or cancel low-value items. Aim for 20-40 active actions max. If it's not top priority, it doesn't go on the list.
Volume is not strength. Closure is strength.

Mistake #6: Forgetting to Recognize Wins
Symptom: Metrics improve, actions close, but nobody acknowledges it Result: People feel effort doesn't matter, engagement fades Fix: Celebrate closures. Share wins in meetings. Thank people by name. Make success visible.
Recognition reinforces the winnable game.

Mistake #7: Tolerating Exceptions
Symptom: "Just this once, we'll skip the meeting" or "Just this once, the board can be late" Result: Standards erode. People learn the system is optional. Fix: The phrase "just this once" is your warning light.

When you hear it, double down on discipline.

Resources You'll Need

People
• Champion: Someone (you?) who drives this relentlessly for 90 days
• Executive sponsor: Protects cadence, removes barriers, holds leaders accountable
• Frontline supervisors: 2+ people willing to try the system and give honest feedback
• Data support (even part-time): someone who can help pull labor hours and output so the labor tracker stays credible

Time
• Champion: 10-15 hours/week for first 12 weeks
• Supervisors: 5-7 hours/week (meetings, updates, floor time)
• Support functions: 2-3 hours/week (meetings, PDCA actions)

Materials
• Whiteboards or foam boards: $200-500 for initial setup
• Markers, magnets, tape: $50-100
• Printing: Large-format charts for glide paths and Roto-Cubes ($50-200)
• Optional: Roto-Cube stands or frames ($200-1000)

Tools
• Excel or Google Sheets: For PDCA tracking, glide paths, data analysis
• Access or SharePoint (optional): For more sophisticated PDCA management
• Stopwatch/timer: For time studies
• Camera (phone): For before/after documentation

Total investment: $500-1,500 in materials, plus time.

Payback period: If you save even 1-2 hours per day of labor waste, you've paid for this in Week 1.

The tools are simple. The discipline is rare.

Measuring Success at Day 90

Hard Metrics

- At least 2 key metrics improved by 10%+ (throughput, labor/unit, scrap, TAT, OTD)
- 15+ PDCA actions opened and closed
- Glide path shows actual line within 10% of planned line
- Premium freight or expediting reduced measurably

Soft Indicators

- Daily meetings happen without reminders
- Boards are current within 24 hours consistently
- Operators reference performance and ask questions
- At least one other area wants to adopt the system
- Supervisors can explain trends confidently
- **Leaders stop relying on memory and opinion, and start relying on visible facts**

Cultural Shift

- Problems are surfaced earlier
- Firefighting has decreased
- Cross-functional collaboration improved
- People believe effort leads to results

That last one matters. Participation rises when the system proves that yesterday's effort doesn't disappear overnight.

If you hit 70% of these: You've succeeded. The system is working. Now protect it and scale it.

If you're below 50%: Diagnose why. Common causes:

- Inconsistent leadership (you or others not showing up)
- Wrong constraint identified (working on non-limiting problems)
- Resistance not addressed (cultural or individual pushback)
- No executive support (system gets bypassed when pressure hits)

Final Thoughts

This 90-day guide is a roadmap, not a script. Your business will have unique challenges, constraints, and opportunities.

What you cannot skip:
• Honest assessment of current state
• Simple, visible Communication Centers
• Disciplined daily and weekly cadence
• PDCA discipline with real ownership
• Leadership behavior that models the system
• **Posting and referencing a credible labor tracker early enough to build trust**

What you can adapt:
• Specific metrics tracked
• Board layouts and formats
• Meeting durations (within reason)
• Pace of Roto-Cube expansion
• Glide path sophistication

The system works—if leaders work the system.
At Day 90, you won't have perfection. You'll have momentum, visibility, and early proof that execution discipline produces results.
That's enough to sustain and scale—if you choose to.

End of -90-Day Quick Start Guide

Communication Center Work Instructions

Board #1 – Safety, Quality, Manpower and Material

1. **Days Since Last Recordable** = The number of days since the last OSHA recordable injury – *Lead / Supervisor*

2. **Days Since Last Lost Time** = The number of days since the last lost time injury – *Lead / Supervisor*

3. **Near Misses** = Any reported safety near misses in the GE areas – *Lead / Supervisor (or anyone who identifies a near miss)*

4. **Quality Recent Shift Issues** = Real time issues experienced / identified by each shift – *Inspectors / Lead*

5. **Top Quality Items** = Important quality issues or concerns requiring team focus – *Inspectors / QE*

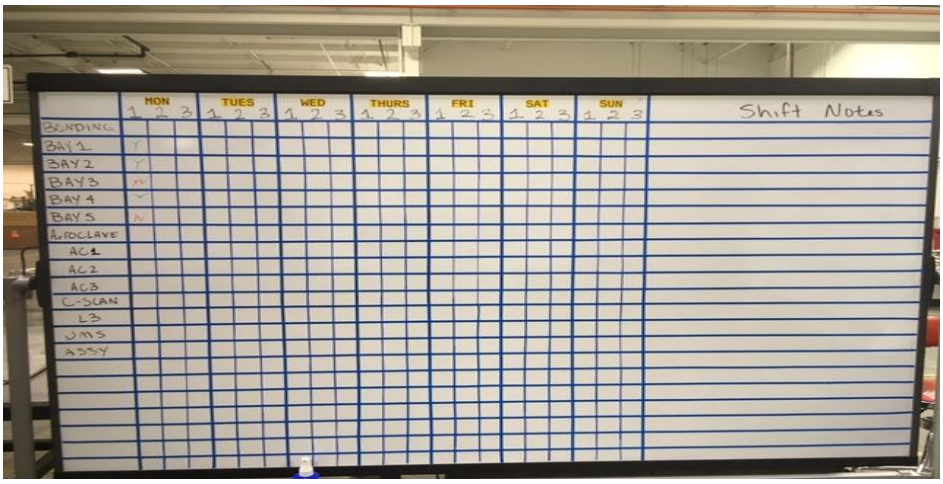
6. **Manpower** = Planned vs Actual Manpower.
    a. **Planned Manpower** = Manpower determined by Industrial Engineering and Plant Manager. On Roll is the number of stake holders on the payroll. RTO is the number of stake holders required to operate to make requirements. (On roll is RTO + absentee percentage) – *Department Manager / IE*
    b. **Actual Manpower** = Actual number of stake holders present in each zone – *Lead/Supervisor*

7. **Shipping** = Prior Month Miss (backlog), Present Month Shipped vs Commit, Daily Ship vs Commit
    a. **Prior Month Miss** = Totals by panel type short to commitment = *Materials Rep / Supervisor*
    b. **Present Month Shipped vs. Commit** = Number of each panel shipped vs the commit + backlog for the current month - *Materials Rep / Supervisor*
    c. **Shipping** = What panel numbers are shipping today = *Materials Rep / Supervisor*

d. **Daily Ship vs Commit** = Commitments to ship per LOB vs actual shipments by panel by day = *Materials Rep / Supervisor*

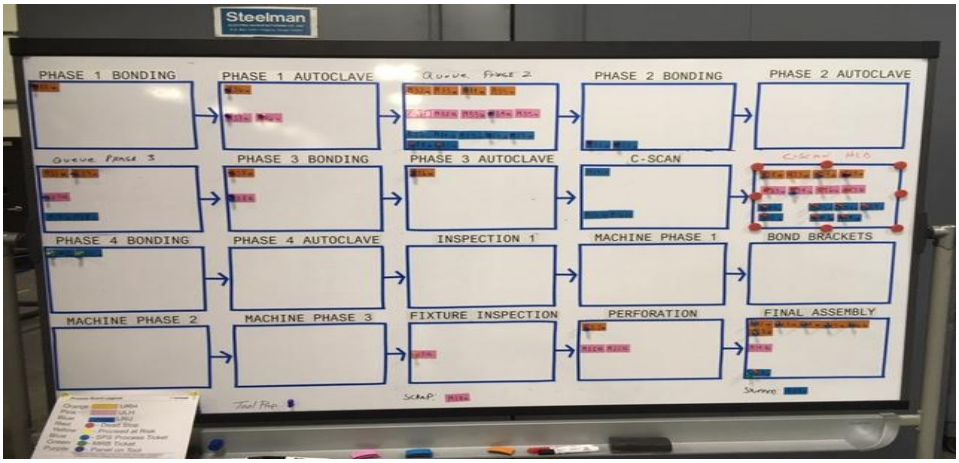
8. **Shortages** = Material shortages identified and that require action and follow-up – *Materials Rep (or anyone who identifies a shortage)*

Board #2 – Zone Recent Performance by Day



9. **Zone Performance** = Daily tracking of zone performance to goals by zone and work center. Log if daily goals are achieved or not for each work center by logging a **Yes** or **No** respectively = *Leads / Supervisor*
    a. **Goal Setting** = Goals should be confirmed, reviewed monthly and set by work center tasks = *Department Manager / Supervisor*

Board #3 –Process Tracking by Panel

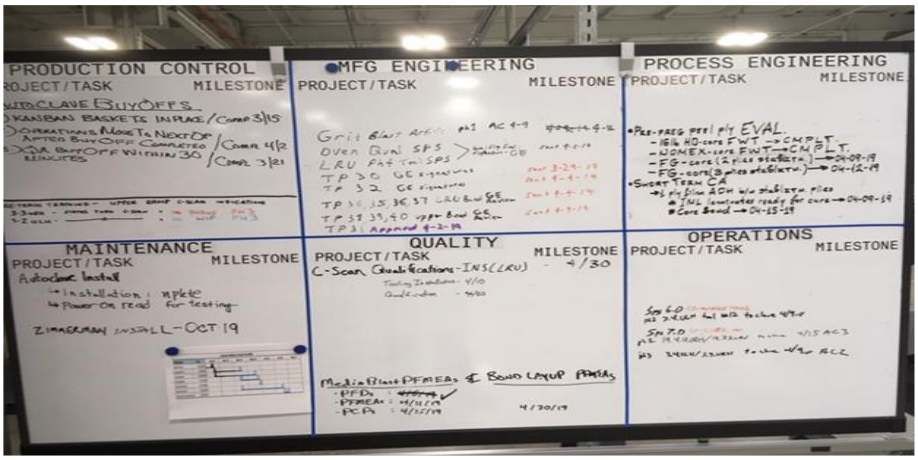


10. **Process Tracking by Panel** = The tracking of the current location of each specific panel in the process with any blocking issues, significant issues, MRB or SPS identified – *Production Control*
    a. **Panel Identification** = **Blue** dry erase magnets for **LRU**, **Pink** for **ULH** and **Orange** for **URH**
    b. **Non-Conformance Identification** = **Green** pin magnet for MRB ticket opened and **Blue** for SPS initiated

c. **Blocking Issue Identification** = Red pin magnet for panel stopped and Yellow for at risk

d. **Panel on Tool** = Purple pin magnet for tool present with panel

Board #4 –Longer Term Priority Actions by Department

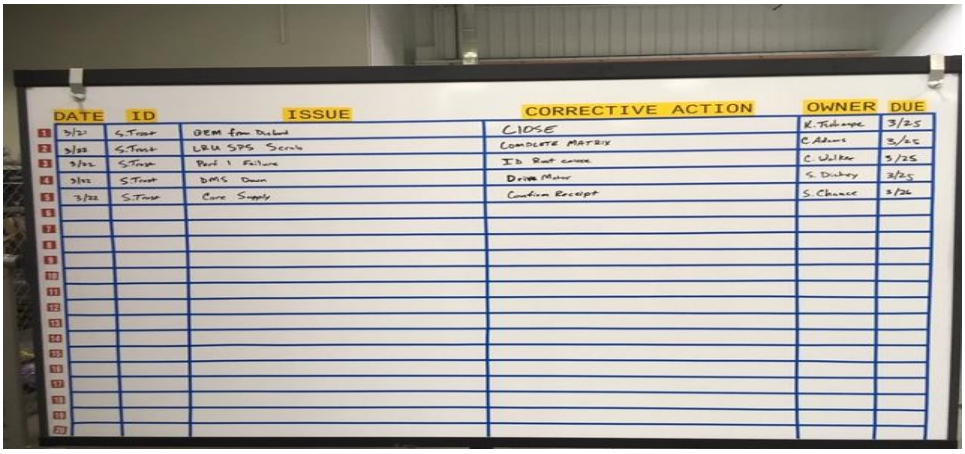


11. **Longer Term Priority Actions** = Top actions, task or projects identified as priority for each department - Department *Manager / Supervisor*

a. **Priority Actions** = Items that come from the Management PDCA Review weekly meeting.

b. Should have task descriptions, person responsible and promise dates. Review if on track, support required or blocking issue is present

Board #5 –Short Term Priority Actions



12. **Short Term Priority Actions** = Top actions, task or projects identified as priority to be completed within 72 hours – *Department Manager or Supervisor*

a. Priority Actions = Items that come from shop floor and management that require quick resolution

b. Each item should have the date noted the person's name that identified the issue (ID), specific issue descriptions, the corrective action, person responsible and due dates. Review daily to see if on track, support required or blocking issue is present

Suggestions:

I. Cadence, flow, and attendance are important to an effective meeting. The Operations Manager should set the tone and not allow side discussions or interruptions of the meeting cadence, as well as absences from key personnel and /or departments. Any required follow up discussions from items identified during the meeting should be noted and held with appropriate personnel after the meeting.

II. The names or titles highlighted in blue italics are suggestions of those that should update the board and speak to those items. In the case of Boards #4 and #5, the Operations Manager should lead the discussion, as his team is the customer, but each person assigned an issue should speak to their specific item.

III. Each person assigned items should have an alternate who can speak to those items if the person assigned is not present.

Examples:

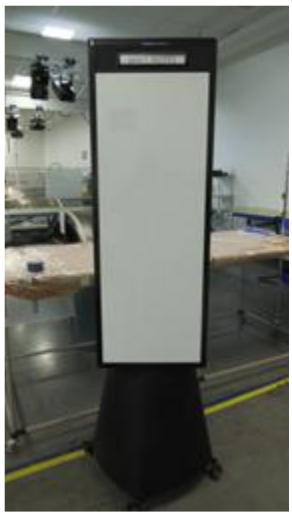
1. *Meetings twice per day (morning and afternoon startups)*
2. *Review of all key people, process and performance information*
3. *Supported by senior leadership*
4. *All support departments present*
5. *Shared resources more effectively planned*
6. *Improved information transfer up and down*
7. *Visual management of panels in process*
8. *Actions reviewed with champions and deadlines*

Roto Cube Kickoff Instructions

Department Manager

- Welcome the Team: Introduce support team members and any visitors
- Who: Stakeholders, Operations Manager, Supervisor, Leaders, ME's, QE's, other support departments
- What: Explain the general outline of content – Throughput, Labor, Dwell Time, Scrap, PDCA
- When: Explain the frequency of the meeting – Once per week, preferably right before or after lunch
- Why: Explain the reason for this new initiative
    - Provide more engagement and knowledge to stakeholders in business practices
    - Provide feedback on performance (nobody likes playing a game without a scoreboard...)
    - Give the team a platform to address process concerns and blocking issues
    - Provide an overview of the program and allow people to become engaged in its overall success
    - Tie the importance of our individual contribution to the program and its effect on the business
- Explain the 4 sections on the Roto Cubes
    - 2 magnetic for Performance
    - 1 dry erase for Notes
    - 1 cork board for Announcements






Supervisor/Lead

- Walk through each metric and explain it - Understand what factors drive each metric, so you have explanations for what you are averaging and why you may have spikes or dips in a given week:
    - Throughput – Actual amount of units produced to the target
    - Labor – Actual labor from SAP data (WO's charged against) to the Standard target
    - Dwell Time – White inside each bar is actual time from close of prior operation to close of that operation. Blue inside each bar is the actual time someone was clocked on in that operation. Negative bars mean that prior operation was not closed before that operation.
    - Scrap – Scrap total vs. target. Also breakdown of scrap causes and or parts.

    - PDCA action list – Open items of issues under work. Closed items already completed.

- Facilitate stakeholder engagement of each metric:
    - Tie in current PDCA actions to improving current performance
    - Ask stakeholders if the team is missing any important factors blocking performance
        - Log issues for follow-up on NOTES side of roto cube
- Reinforce Expectations
    - Highlight key functions, task and duties and deliver specific expectations
        - SMART Goals – Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely
- Provide time for questions:
    - Prompt stakeholders to ask questions if they seem reluctant to engage
    - Answer what you can and get back to them with ones you can't
        - Write the ones you can't on the NOTES board
    - Do not allow long discussions on topics to eat all the time
    - Do not allow grandstanding or argumentative interactions
    - Also keep it positive and respectful – This is a team game

Key Factors:

9. *Must be Supported by leadership of all levels*
10. *All support departments should be present*
11. *Set weekly meeting time when all can attend. Meetings should rarely be cancelled or moved*
12. *Visual and specific feedback of individual and team performance*
13. *Improved information transfer up and down*
14. *Weekly interaction for support team members and leadership with the stakeholders*
15. *Stakeholders get a better understanding of the business*
16. *Reinforces leadership expectations and employee engagement to those expectations*

Senior Leader 5-Minute System Audit

Purpose

This audit is designed for CEOs, VPs, and senior operations leaders to quickly assess whether the **execution system** is truly functioning—or quietly failing.
Use it monthly, or whenever you sense **performance drift**. The point is simple: expose problems before they become crises.

It cannot be overstated how **critical executive support** and engagement is to the success of any system. **Without it, it will never survive.**

How to Use This Audit

Preparation (2 minutes)

- Don't announce you're coming. Show up during normal operations.
- Go to the floor first, not your office. Walk directly to a **Communication Center**.
- Bring a notepad or phone. Document what you see—photos help.

Execution (5 minutes)

Walk through the checklist below. Each section is designed to be judged by **observable facts**, not opinions.

Follow-Up (3 minutes)

- Share what you observed with the responsible leader.
- Set a follow-up date if gaps surfaced.
- **Do not solve problems yourself.** Verify the **system** will address them.

The 5-Minute Audit Checklist

1. Communication Center Boards (60 seconds)

What to look for:

Board Condition

- Are boards clean and readable?
- Is handwriting legible?
- Are sections clearly labeled?

Data Currency

- Check dates on **daily performance boards**
- Check last-updated timing on **key metrics**
- Look at **short-term action board** dates

Content Quality

- Are there real numbers, or blanks and "TBD"?
- Do notes explain variances, or just restate them?
- Are action owners **named people**, not departments?

Red Flags

- Numbers are 3+ days old
- Multiple blanks or "TBD"
- Actions with no owner name
- Boards look "too clean" (**theater**)
- Same numbers repeated day after day with no explanation

Green Flags

- Yesterday's data is posted
- Multiple handwriting styles (**shared ownership**)
- Actions have names and dates
- Items are crossed out and closed
- Notes reference specifics ("motor failure Line 2," not "downtime")

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2. Meeting Cadence Verification (30 seconds)

Ask a supervisor or operator:

- "When was your last **daily meeting** here?"
- "When's your next **PDCA review**?"

Red Flags

- "I think it was last week sometime."
- "We skip them when we're busy."
- "We do it in email now."
- Leader can't answer quickly and clearly

Green Flags

- Immediate, confident answer
- "Every day at shift start."
- Knows the day/time of **PDCA** and what gets reviewed

3. PDCA Action List Review (90 seconds)

Ask to see the **PDCA list** (Excel, SharePoint, Access—doesn't matter). Scan for:

List Health

- How many open actions?
- How many past due?
- How many are older than 60 days?

Ownership and Motion

- Every action has **one named owner**
- Every action has a due date
- Status updates are current (within 7 days)
- Closures are happening (past 30 days)

Action Quality

- Problems are specific ("Die set time Line 3 avg 45 min")
- Resolutions are actionable ("Install quick-change tooling")
- Impacts are estimated when possible ("Save 8 hrs/week")

Red Flags

- 100+ open actions (**dumping ground**)
- 50%+ past due
- Owners listed as departments ("Engineering," "Maintenance")
- No closures in 30 days
- Vague actions ("Improve efficiency," "Reduce downtime")

Green Flags

- 20–50 active actions (**focused list**)
- <20% past due
- 5–10 actions closed in past 30 days
- Named owners, dated actions, visible progress
- Low-value items are triaged—closed, deferred, or canceled

---

4. Glide Path or Roadmap Status (45 seconds)

Ask to see the **glide path** or **roadmap** for the area.

Visual Check

• Is it posted and visible?
• Is it current (updated within 30 days)?
• Is there a **planned line** and an **actual line**?

Linkage

• Are **PDCA actions** tied to movement on the line?
• Are major variances annotated?

Red Flags

• No glide path exists
• It lives on someone's computer
• Last updated 3+ months ago
• Actual is flat/worse with no explanation
• Leaders can't explain what moved the line

Green Flags

• Posted, current, and understood
• Actual line is improving or explained honestly
• Gaps trigger questions, not excuses
• Closed actions correlate to steps down in performance

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5. Leader Behavior Observation (60 seconds)

This is the part you can't fake.

Presence

• Is the supervisor on the floor or in the office?
• Are they engaged with the work—or buried in screens?

Command of Reality

• Can they explain current status without "checking"?
• Do operators naturally engage them when issues arise?

Quality Book / Incident Log

• Ask to see it. Is it current? Is it used?

Red Flags

• Supervisor is invisible
• Can't answer basic questions without logging in

• **Quality Book** hasn't been touched in weeks
• Defensive tone, blame language ("they never...")

Green Flags
• Supervisor is present and calm
• Knows status without scrambling for reports
• **Quality Book** has recent entries
• Owns problems: "Here's what we're doing"

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6. Cultural Indicators (30 seconds)

Look and listen.

Visual cues
• PPE compliance
• Housekeeping and organization
• Work instructions visible and used

Ask an operator: "How's it going today?"
Listen for whether they know:
• Target
• Actual
• What's blocking them

Red Flags
• PPE ignored
• Disorder and clutter accepted as normal
• Operators don't know the target
• Cynicism: "Nothing ever changes"

Green Flags
• PPE is automatic
• Work area shows pride
• Operators know the numbers
• Tone is productive: "We had a jam, we fixed it"

Scoring the Audit

For each section (1–6), assign:

• 0 = Major red flags (**broken or bypassed**)

• 1 = Mixed signals (**inconsistent behavior**)

• 2 = Mostly green (**system functioning**)

Maximum score: **12**

Interpretation

10–12: System is Working

• Maintain monthly audits

• Recognize the team

• Replicate to other areas

7–9: System Exists but Fragile

• Tools are present, behavior is inconsistent

• Risk of drift is high

• Focus: **cadence compliance** and **Leader Standard Work**

• Re-audit in 14 days

4–6: System is Theater

• Boards exist, behavior is missing

• Accountability is weak or avoided

• Immediate intervention required

0–3: No System / System Failed

• Pure firefighting mode

• Reset required

• Assign an owner and drive the **90-Day start**

What to Do After the Audit

If you see drift, don't debate it. **Act on it.**

In the moment

• Stay calm

• Be specific about what you saw

• Don't criticize publicly

Within 24 hours

• Meet with the responsible leader

• Set clear expectations (**cadence**, updates, ownership)
• Ask: "What's blocking you?"
• Remove real barriers—then hold the line

Within 7–14 days
• Re-audit the same area
• Recognize improvement—or make a leadership decision

CEO Self-Assessment

Before you audit the system, audit yourself:
• Do I protect the **cadence**—or schedule over it?
• Do I show up regularly—or only in crisis?
• Do I ask about actions and trends—or just demand numbers?
• Do I back leaders who enforce standards—or undermine them?
• Do I tolerate exceptions—or hold the line?
• Do I recognize execution wins—or only problems?

If you answered "no" to three or more:
The system isn't failing. You are.
Leadership behavior sets the ceiling.

Appendix: One-Page Pocket Reference

Use this quick reference during floor walks and leadership check-ins.

The 5-Minute System Audit (Pocket Version)

1. Boards (60 sec)
• Updated within 24 hrs?
• Owners named (not departments)?
• Evidence of use?

2. Cadence (30 sec)
• Last daily meeting (<24 hrs)?
• Next PDCA review known?

3. PDCA List (90 sec)
• 20–50 actions?
• <20% past due?
• 5+ closed in past 30 days?

4. Glide Path (45 sec)

• Posted and current?

• Actual trend believable?

• Actions linked?

5. Leader Behavior (60 sec)

• Supervisor on floor?

• Knows status?

• **Quality Book** current?

6. Culture (30 sec)

• PPE compliance?

• Operators know targets?

• Productive tone?

Scoring

0–3: Failed

4–6: Theater

7–9: Fragile

10–12: Working

Follow-Up

<7: Intervene this week

7–9: Coach, re-audit in 14 days

10–12: Recognize, maintain rhythm
