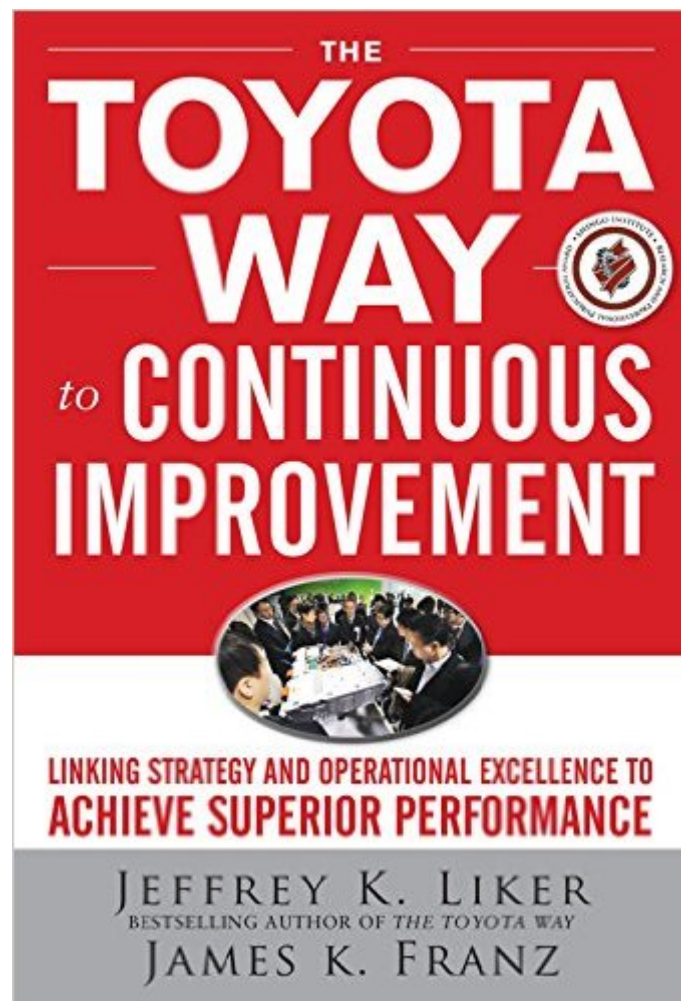


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# The Toyota Way To Continuous Improvement: Linking Strategy And Operational Excellence To Achieve Superior Performance



## Synopsis

Building upon the international bestselling Toyota Way series of books by Jeffrey Liker, *The Toyota Way to Continuous Improvement* looks critically at lean deployments and identifies the root causes of why most of them fail. The book is organized into three major sections outlining: Why it is critical to go beyond implementing lean tools and, instead, build a culture of continuous improvement that connects operational excellence to business strategy Case studies from seven unique industries written from the perspective of the sensei (teacher) who led the lean transformation Lessons about transforming your own vision of an ideal organization into reality

**Section One: Using the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust (PDCA) methodology,** Liker and Franz contrast true PDCA thinking to that of the popular, superficial approach of copying "lean solutions." They describe the importance of developing people and show how the Toyota Way principles support and drive continuous improvement. Explaining how lean systems and processes start with a purpose that provides a true north direction for all activities, they wrap up this section by examining the glaring differences between building a system of people, processes, and problem-solving that is truly lean versus that of simply trying to "lean out" a process.

**Section Two:** This section brings together seven case studies as told by the sensei who led the transformation efforts. The companies range from traditional manufacturers, overhaul and maintenance of submarines, nuclear fuel rod production, health care providers, pathology labs, and product development. Each of these industries is different but the approaches used were remarkably similar.

**Section Three:** Beginning with a composite story describing a company in its early days of lean implementation, this section describes what went right and wrong during the initial implementation efforts. The authors bring to light some of the difficulties the sensei faces, such as bureaucracies, closed-minded mechanical thinking, and the challenges of developing lean coaches who can facilitate real change. They address the question: Which is better, slow and deep organic deployment or fast and broad mechanistic deployment? The answer may surprise you. The book ends with a discussion on how to make continuous improvement a way of life at your company and the role of leadership in any lean transformation.

*The Toyota Way to Continuous Improvement* is required reading for anyone seeking to transcend his or her tools-based approach and truly embrace a culture of continuous improvement.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have read all books by Jeff Liker and most of them more than once. His "The Toyota Way", "Toyota Culture" and "Toyota Talent" are classics for anyone interested in Lean (Toyota Business System). They give a good and detailed view in the way Lean works for Toyota. Many Lean Masters/Practitioners are working in a less ideal situation and are struggling to get Lean implemented or to sustain/improve Lean in an organization. As with 5S, sustaining is the hardest part of being Lean. "The Toyota Way for Continuous Improvement" brings the understanding that the PDCA cycle is the necessary part in a CI process. As a consultant I notice that the CA part of this cycle is often forgotten and the operation mostly falls back to its old levels. Most companies that start with their Lean adventure, start with the ideal of getting Lean but actually look for a nice head count reduction. After a first start the operations always falls back to a basic level of Lean with every now and then an eruption of some Lean activities. Which is preferably linked with the next headcount reduction? This book gives good guidelines on what to do when such a fallback has taken place. The 8 cases Liker/Franz describe, give a good view on how to improve these operations. What I have learned from this wide variation of companies, is that it takes about 6 to 8 years to really implement Lean in companies that already understand some things about it. What I also recognized is the general feeling in such diverse companies, is what I call "we are different" feeling within such companies. Often they have a Lean façade (as Jeff Liker calls it so strikingly). I've heard this "different-saying" from Banks, Hospitals, Government organizations, and so on.

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