



Submission Title: *2 Second Lean*

Author Name(s): Paul A. Akers

A team of Shingo examiners has provided the following feedback. The team rated the submission based on the following categories.

1. Content

a. Extension to existing knowledge and understanding of operational excellence

Paul Akers has written a wonderful and engaging book describing the journey to operational excellence at Fastcap. It is inspirational in its presentation and provides valuable lessons throughout. This has been done in a straightforward manner from initial exposure to lean concepts, to full-scale implementation to final enlightenment, as a lean leader. The book is fun, full of insights and supported with real examples from Fastcap that benefit the reader regardless of lean knowledge or level of experience.

The book is a useful “how to” guide that challenges readers’ preconceived ideas about how to build a lean culture. The author shares valuable knowledge gained from studying organizations in Japan and boils it all down to simple concepts that make lean enjoyable and engaging for employees. He has effectively weaved the *Shingo Guiding Principles* of respect every individual, lead with humility, and embrace continuous process improvement throughout the book.

The author's passion for the subject is infectious. He shares stories that give thoughtful insights of his learnings during the journey to operational excellence. The content is supported with many pictures and a plethora of videos the reader can access over the web using QR codes in the book. It is a nice touch to interweave hard copy with the Internet. All of this solidifies, in the reader's mind, how the journey to excellence was achieved.

This book provided several "aha" moments and new perspectives on practicing lean principles. Examiners especially liked the focus on teaching and training people to build a lean culture that drives continuous improvement and elimination of waste. Akers set the expectation of each employee making a two-second improvement every day in the task that bugged them the most. This is a breakthrough concept, which led to outstanding/unparalleled growth and success.

b. Potential for significant impact on practice and sustainability of performance improvements

2 Second Lean is extremely well written and relevant to practitioners and leaders looking to build a lean culture that works! Hidden gems of implementation guidance are sprinkled throughout the material. The book provides a simple, down-to-earth approach for learning how to implement operational excellence in any business environment, and it should have widespread application.

The book is packed full of examples for deploying lean and practical information that shows how Fastcap applied the underlying principles necessary for success. The author expands the knowledge of operational excellence by describing and demonstrating the values for developing people into lean thinkers who continuously see and eliminate waste. Any organization in any industry contemplating this journey can learn from the information presented here.

The author's background as a business owner, his enthusiasm and vast experience, provides confidence to the reader that positive results will be achieved when following his people-centric approach. His concept of every employee making a two-second improvement in the process that bugs them the most is interesting enough, and then coupled with a daily shift start communication meeting that could last a half hour is another breakthrough idea.

One examiner said, “My personal lean experience was always in a division of large corporations. Two of the plants I worked in were Shingo Prize recipients and we never came close to the process and success that Akers accomplished. I am not sure that larger corporations would/could adopt such an approach as Akers describes, but it surely would be adoptable by any small, privately owned business.”

2. Premise

The premise of keeping lean simple is certainly met in this book. Examiners agree that the ability to improve towards an ideal state by using small daily improvements is the essence of lean. *2 Second Lean* introduces different processes/techniques/tools to help members of the organization pursue that ideal state. Some of those may be common across many types/sizes of organizations, but sometimes an organization has to create the culture and tools that best fit its culture and size. Too many companies may have adopted the consultant-based process Akers described and were not successful since the one-size-fits-all approach does not fit their organization. In this book, Akers shares with the world his valuable lessons and views on how simple it is to deploy lean and have fun doing it. His goal of writing a book that is short, visual, and simple has been achieved. Akers has successfully created a book that makes lean accessible to everyone, as he says, “from homemaker to executive.”

The insights outlined in chapter 16 are valuable nuggets that emphasize key principles to live by to have a healthy lean culture. Akers often escalates waste discussions to highlight the global impact of wasteful habits. Examples are provided to demonstrate lean thinking at home, in restaurants, as well as banking. He shows that lean is not a rigid business tool, but a platform for innovation, creativity, and laughter that can be applied to everyday life.

Regardless of industry, this book should be required reading for all leadership teams debating how to build a lean culture that practices daily continuous improvement. Everyone can learn from this book, which is jam-packed with information that can be

immediately put to use. In fact, examiners feel it should be required reading in high school and university curriculums to expose everyone to the power and fun of lean.

3. Presentation

2 Second Lean is a brief, simple, and persuasive lean culture implementation guidebook. It is a quick read, contains many simple illustrations, and is grounded with facts and visual examples. The summary provided at the end of each chapter asks compelling questions and promotes engaging activities. The organization and style of presentation is easy to follow and should attract the targeted audience and leadership teams. The book is certainly visually appealing as well. Simplicity at its best!

The examples provided throughout the book offer compelling details for building a lean culture through effective leadership. The catchy phrases (i.e. Fix what bugs you), the simple three pillars of lean, the homespun examples from schools to government to banks, “The One Thing” at the end of each chapter, and innovative QR video links are items examiners found to be valuable for understanding the author’s ideas and approach.

Examiners found the use of pictures to be a positive and especially enjoyed the videos they watched. One examiner said he plans to re-read this book several times in the coming months to fully absorb its exciting content. The freely available forms and tools Akers uses in his company will further help others to develop their own lean culture. Examiners hope he continues to provide updates as his lean journey continues. Thank you to the author for giving back to the community and attempting to strengthen the business environment with his unique approach to lean.

4. Examiner Key Take-Aways

The author’s “Three Pillars of Lean” (Chapter 4) was very insightful. The first two pillars are fairly standard throughout the lean world. 1) Make sure all your team members know the eight wastes. 2) Continuously improve everything, everybody, every day. However, #3 is a new insight. 3) Make before and after videos of all your

improvements. With the growing technology use and understanding in the workplace, this has the ability to really impact the daily continuous improvement efforts of an organization. Fastcap is the perfect example. A powerful teaching tool.

The team's key take-away is to keep lean implementation simple, fun, and engaging for everyone in the organization. Simple daily improvement can be done easily in many organizations by starting at the bottom rather than the top. We need to continually focus on the people and the culture if we are to have any chance for a successful lean journey. Also, using videos can ignite the fire of a lean culture in ways examiners had never considered.