

Chapter 10

A Lean–Kaizen Implementation: A Case Study in the Food Retail Industry

Pedro Silva

CIICESI, ESTG, Politécnico do Porto, Portugal

Alexandra Braga

CIICESI, ESTG, Politécnico do Porto, Portugal

Sara Mota

CIICESI, ESTG, Politécnico do Porto, Portugal

Miguel Soares

CIICESI, ESTG, Politécnico do Porto, Portugal

Marisa R. Ferreira

CIICESI, ESTG, Politécnico do Porto, Portugal

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is one of the greatest challenges facing our generation and the next, and achieving this goal will force society to continuously challenge and overcome itself. In order to attain the required sustainable objectives, many companies are investing in new methodologies, such as the Kaizen-Lean methodology. This chapter focuses on a case study in the food retail industry, a strategic and one of the largest and oldest industries in the world able to thrive even in the face of substantial adversity. The authors systematized the case study in three different stages via an action-research intervention. In a first stage, they identified the most sensitive areas, which enabled them to detect and target the intervention. In a second stage, they implemented and monitored several actions supported by the Kaizen/Lean methodologies. In a third stage, a survey was applied to workers whose work areas had changed in order to analyze and assess the impact of the implemented measures.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7452-2.ch010

INTRODUCTION

In a very short period of time, the global pandemic triggered by the new coronavirus has caused severe limitations to the daily life of people and companies. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced governments around the world to impose lockdown measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus and which has nearly brought the entire world economy to a standstill (Lin, Li, Luo, & Benitez, 2020), affecting a huge number of companies (Kraus, Clauss, Breier, Zardini, & Tiberius, 2020).

Besides the current hostile context, the globalization phenomenon and the consequent search for competitiveness have led companies to revamp their strategies and invest on evolving their working methods to foster better services and cost-benefit optimization to their customers. Globalization expands markets and facilitates trade, but it also leads to higher competition. Now consumers have at their disposal a greater variety of products and services, which generates a greater, and more sophisticated, demand. As a consequence, in the last decade, due to growing global competition, companies have been forced to rethink their manufacturing practices (Modarress, Ansari, & Lockwood, 2005). These facts, combined with technological advances, lead companies to face difficulties and seek solutions to avoid that their products lose value during the production process.

Sustainable development is not only one of the hottest topics of the last decade (Broman & Robèrt, 2017; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011), but also a possible path, and it will probably be one of the most important topics for our generation and future ones, forcing society to continuously challenge and overcome itself. Sustainable development can be considered a proposal of development at a global scale, promoting equal chance of justice and thus leading to global cohesion both in social, economic and ecological sphere (Płachciak, 2009). Broman and Robèrt (2017) state that sustainable development allows companies to gradually reduce their negative impact on ecological and social systems by strengthening their organization through the creation of innovation opportunities and new business models, by exploring new markets, winning new market shares and reducing operational risks and costs.

Faced with this need to invest in new methodologies, many companies are currently using Kaizen-Lean methodologies. These methodologies aim at the continuous improvement of all processes, via a constant effort of waste reduction, methods of space organization and definition of operating standards, so Lean tools are used to improve quality, increase productivity, speed and reliability, while reducing inventories and costs (Belekoukias, Garza-Reyes, & Kumar, 2014). In our industrial world, continuous improvement of production processes has become necessary for companies to remain competitive and retain their share of the global market. As such, the implementation of the Kaizen methodology fosters this enhancement of the performance of activities, cost reduction and quality (Singh & Singh, 2009). According to Glover, Farris, Van Aken e Doolen (2011), Kaizen events have produced positive changes in business and human resources. According to Thessaloniki (2006), Kaizen is a management philosophy that forces higher standards at all levels of the organization, encouraging continuous improvement in all processes. This approach is based on the premise that there is no perfection in any process, because no structure, product or system reaches the ideal point. The Kaizen methodology stresses the importance of organizations optimizing each process to avoid being outdone by their competitors and thus remain active in the market, ensuring the satisfaction of their customers' needs and retaining them as their business partners, for they are central for the company's survival.

Our chapter worked a case study, a specific branch inside the food retailing industry, a strategic industry and one of the largest and oldest in the world, able to thrive even in the face of substantial adversity. We systematized our case study in three different stages through a research-action intervention.

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-lean-kaizen-implementation/280453

Related Content

Premises of Digital Transformation in Autopoietic Organizations: A Framework Proposal

Guillermo J. Larios-Hernandez (2021). *Handbook of Research on Autopoiesis and Self-Sustaining Processes for Organizational Success* (pp. 325-345).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/premises-of-digital-transformation-in-autopoietic-organizations/269070

Administrative Leadership Mindset and Philosophical Approaches: Qualitative Method, Conceptual Framework, Consequentialism, and Capital

Susan S. Reutter (2021). *Integration and Application of Business Graduate and Business Leader Competency-Models* (pp. 89-121).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/administrative-leadership-mindset-and-philosophical-approaches/262666

Trends for Business Education Post COVID-19

Neeta Baporikar (2022). *Handbook of Research on Emerging Business Models and the New World Economic Order* (pp. 287-303).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/trends-for-business-education-post-covid-19/289987

IT-Enabled Competency-Based Performance Management System

Kankana Mukhopadhyay, Nikhil Ranjan Banerjea and Jaya Sil (2021). *Integration and Application of Business Graduate and Business Leader Competency-Models* (pp. 155-181).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/it-enabled-competency-based-performance-management-system/262670

Determinants of RFID Adoption Intention in the Healthcare Industry for Patient Monitoring: A Special Reference to COVID-19

Bijoylaxmi Sarmah, Shampy Kamboj and Neeraj Kumar Phookan (2022). *Handbook of Research on Emerging Business Models and the New World Economic Order* (pp. 197-213).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/determinants-of-rfid-adoption-intention-in-the-healthcare-industry-for-patient-monitoring/289982