

LEANING IN

(From left) Josh Sutton, Joshua Hodel and Bobbie Sagun helped design a drill that simplifies the installation of sidewall pockets inside an airplane cabin. The team cut the installation time nearly 90% while also reducing foreign object debris.

PHOTO: MARIAN LOCKHART/BOEING



Lean on the Line

5 tips for going lean on a global scale

Who couldn't use one more hour in the day?

The 737 team in Renton, Washington, created time when they standardized the task of installing sidewall pockets on the 737 MAX. Using a new drill that is safer, faster and cleaner, installers can cut holes in the sidewall and install a pocket in under 10 minutes. That's an improvement from 90 minutes, saving the team more than an hour on the task.

That's the power of Lean, and it's why Boeing Vice President Scott Stocker is passionate about the effort.

IQ: Simply put, what is Lean?

SS: Lean is a way of thinking and acting that enables teams to solve problems and make continuous improvements. It's about listening to the people who do the work, cutting waste and growing more efficient and predictable. Lean is not just a mantra; it's a fundamental principle of engineering excellence and operational stability.

IQ: Why are Lean principles important for the aerospace industry in particular?

SS: By reducing waste and streamlining processes, Lean helps increase efficiency and productivity. Every Lean improvement – from manufacturing to design and customer support – helps us deliver on our quality, safety and on-time delivery commitments to our customers.



MEASURE ONCE, CUT ONCE

Technician Oscar Vilches uses templates to measure and cut the fabric for the CST-100 Starliner crew seats. Accurate measurements save time, allowing Vilches to focus on making the seats nice and comfortable for the astronauts who will fly on Starliner.

PHOTO: JOHN PROFERES/BOEING



ROOM TO GROW

Tool and fixture specialist Sienna Wilferd inspects a pneumatic drill used to assemble 737 MAX engine inlets at Propulsion South Carolina. Empowered to lean out the inlet assembly process, teams have created room to expand their work to support 787 engine buildup, B-52 commercial engine replacement and aftermarket services.

PHOTO: JOSHUA DRAKE/BOEING

IQ: What are the challenges of Lean for a global workforce?

SS: Let's talk about some common challenges, but more importantly, how to overcome them.

- 1 **Cultural alignment:** Foster a common Lean culture by providing training and mentorship. Emphasize the shared vision and benefits of Lean, highlighting its positive impact on daily work. Encourage leaders to act as Lean champions and drive change within their teams.
- 2 **Communication and coordination:** Use digital communication platforms and collaboration tools to communicate and share ideas across different locations. Regular virtual meetings, webinars and shared online spaces can help align teams and share best practices. Consolidate Lean initiatives and track the progress to ensure consistency and avoid redundancy.
- 3 **Change:** Involve employees at every level when implementing Lean principles. Seek their input, feedback and ideas to engage everyone in the improvement journey. Provide training and support to help teammates adapt to Lean principles. Show them how Lean benefits their daily work and expands their skills and competencies, which could lead to new career opportunities.
- 4 **Standardization:** Start with pilot projects in specific areas, and use them as models to scale Lean practices gradually. Identify early successes and share them across the organization to build momentum. Implement a robust training program for new hires to embed Lean principles in the organization's culture from the beginning.
- 5 **Continuous improvement:** Promote Lean thinking as an ongoing process rather than a one-time initiative. Encourage others to share improvement ideas and celebrate their successes. Establish regular performance review and feedback mechanisms to track progress and make step-by-step improvements.



INSIDE IQ

Meet Maddox, Sienna Wilferd's medical alert dog.

IQ: How are Lean improvements driving innovation?

SS: We're challenging ourselves to crush bureaucracy. We're questioning what processes are redundant, and rethinking what hinders creativity and innovation. As teams, we're working together to identify and eliminate bureaucratic practices, streamlining decision-making processes, and empowering one another to take ownership of our work. Reducing unnecessary administrative burdens energizes teams to be creative and find new solutions for the complex problems of the aerospace industry. And that's driving innovation. **IQ**



PHOTO: BOEING

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**SCOTT STOCKER,
VICE PRESIDENT, BOEING COMMERCIAL AIRPLANES
MANUFACTURING & SAFETY,
CHAIR, MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS COUNCIL**

