

Where The Fight Is Won

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By Jeff Reinke, Editorial Director

We've all been there. Whether you have to go back to grade school or a recent seminar, I think you'll be able to relate. For me it was the latter. While my heart was in the right place, as I tried to pay attention to the speaker at a recent industry function, my mind began to wander slightly as he went over information that I had heard before.



All of a sudden my day-dreaming came to a screeching halt as a slide being projected on the speaker's screen showcased some new information relating to the topic being examined.

The problem was that I didn't catch exactly what was being discussed, and unfortunately missed out on the information being covered at that time. Although I was able to catch up with the speaker afterwards in requesting a copy of his presentation, it would have been frustrating to have missed the information that prompted my appearance at that seminar in the first place.

Human nature seems to dictate that over-exposure to a given topic or subject matter can lead to a de-sensitized reaction. As a result, this close-minded mentality often results in missing some of the important components of the message being offered. For me it was updated numbers relating to energy efficiency. For you, if you're not careful, this could be the case with topics falling under the umbrella of Lean manufacturing.

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The pages of IMPO are certainly chalk full of feature articles, case studies and new products tailored to these efficiency-focused principles, and while we work to be the best at it, we certainly haven't cornered the market in providing this type of information. In this case, as with the one mentioned above, you could become complacent with your understanding of the topic and potentially begin to lose interest as it's repeatedly discussed, albeit from a variety of different angles.

The resulting danger here is that an "I've seen/heard this all before" attitude can negatively impact the long and short-term success of your company and its employees. Additionally, its ability to compete becomes at least compromised, if not sacrificed.

Perhaps the best way to validate my thoughts is to compare the situation to a boxing match. Very few fights are won with a haymaker to the head in the opening round. Rather, it's the constant exposure to punches at different critical areas throughout the fight, round after round, which have an impact on how and when the competition is won. So instead of potentially brushing aside information that can be critical to your operations and processes because you think you've heard it before, it's key to constantly pay attention to these principles and how they might improve your company's competitiveness, regardless of the perceived redundancy.

I'm not trying to say we're going to beat you up with this information, but rather express my feelings on the significance of it in both our publication and throughout our marketplace. The repetition stems not from a stagnant or narrow approach, but rather from a realization that the journey towards operational excellence demands constant evaluation and exposure. Not every situation can be resolved right away with a standard approach. More often than not, it takes a consistent, repeated action to win the fight.

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[1] <mailto:jeff.reinke@advantagemedia.com>