

LEADER STANDARD WORK

HOW TO START

A NZ LEAN ACADEMY RESOURCE

This resource was developed by the New Zealand Lean Academy team.
There are more resources available at
www.nzla.nz



WELCOME MESSAGE

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Hi there,

Thanks for downloading and using our resources. We have put these together to make Lean Thinking as accessible as possible to our clients and the wider business community in New Zealand.

Please use them to inspire your Lean journey as you build a team and business that embraces Lean and continuous improvement. Feel free to pass on this resource or use it internally for training etc.

If you'd like to purchase an editable copy of our Leader Standard Work template, you can do that [here](#).

Thanks and happy improving!!

Rob & Kate.





INTRODUCING **LEADER STANDARD WORK**

Have you found yourself lately caught in the eye of a shit-storm, where your well-laid plans are tossed aside as you rush to extinguish one fire after another? It's a scenario that Kate and I see all the time, and it always looks a lil' something like this:

It was a Tuesday morning when a client's urgent call threw Sarah's week into disarray. A late delivery had set off a chain reaction, leaving her team in chaos.

When she got to the workshop, Sarah discovered a situation far worse than she'd anticipated. The team leader was M.I.A, making an emergency trip to Mitre 10 for bolts that should have been right there on the shelf. It was a recurring issue that had slipped under her radar.

As she surveyed the shop floor, it became clear that this chaos had been simmering unnoticed for weeks, perhaps even months. The job boards were outdated, materials were scarce, and team members were frustrated, squabbling over tasks that should have been standard. To make matters worse, they were unaware of a significant client update from the previous month.

In this moment Sarah knows then that something has to change. Her lack of communication, organisation, and consistency is clearly crippling her team's performance. It's time to implement a system that will restore order, streamline processes, and keep everyone informed. The solution? Leader Standard Work.

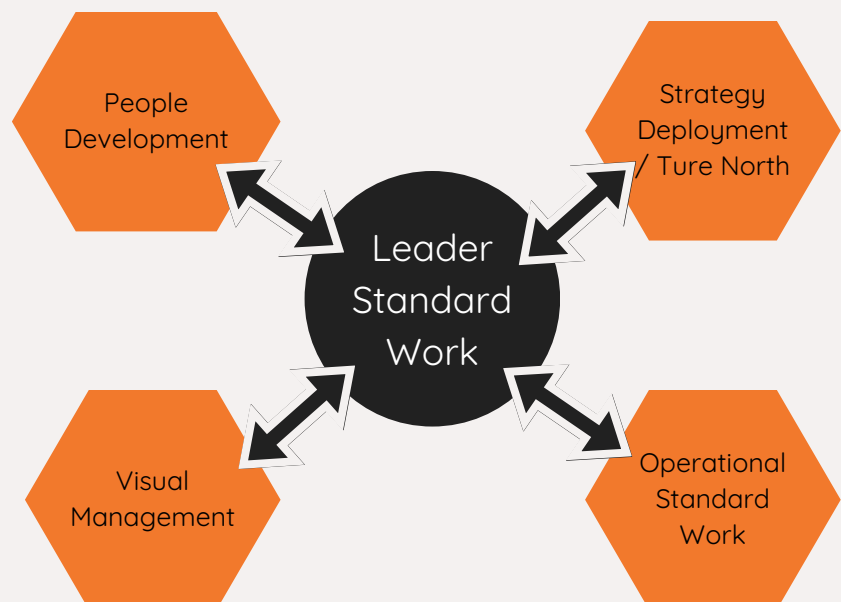
When Sarah (or anyone else) begins to implement Lean Thinking, teams experience a remarkable transformation: communication is improved, processes become more efficient, and frustration gives way to a renewed sense of teamwork. You're about to learn first hand the importance of Leader Standard Work in maintaining a high-performing, well-informed team. Let's explore how this essential tool can benefit your workplace and prevent scenarios like Sarah's from unfolding.

GETTING STARTED WITH LEADER STANDARD WORK

Leader Standard Work is a fundamental Lean management practice that **helps leaders establish a consistent, structured approach to their daily, weekly, and monthly work routines and activities.** It's about **what you do** regularly as a leader, and **when you do it**, managing both your time and focus.

Leader Standard Work emphasises setting clear priorities and allocating dedicated blocks throughout your day for key tasks, such as problem-solving, process improvement, team development, and strategy deployment. In other words, you are prioritising activities that will help improve the overall performance of the business.

There are many key areas of a business that inform Leader Standard Work.



This resource will describe a solid starting point for getting into Leader Standard Work and we'll revisit each area in more detail in further resources as you progress on your Lean journey.



GETTING STARTED WITH LEADER STANDARD WORK

The branding team didn't think for too long when they came up with the term 'Leader Standard Work'. It's just that; **setting a standard for your leadership**, turning everyday chaos into focused, intentional actions that align with long-term goals. Let's break down the key elements:

Self-Reflection:

Start by making time for self-reflection, it's the cornerstone of Leader Standard Work. Take a good look at your leadership style, strengths, and areas for improvement. Are you consistently setting time aside to reflect on how you have been as a leader, reflect on those coaching moments? Leader Standard Work begins with fine-tuning your own leadership skills and becoming aware of what you could work on and improve.

Observing what's happening:

Mix regular Ohno's Circle observations with Gemba Walks to master the art of "seeing" what's really going on within your team (there's more info about these in the NZLA resource hub). This practice helps leaders slow down, spot opportunities, and gain valuable insights that can drive continuous improvement. L.S.W is about making a time for this & then keeping to that standard.

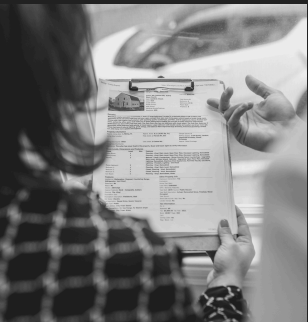
Facilitating Continuous Improvement: Encouraging Team Growth

Promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging team discussions in both informal and structured settings, such as daily huddles. Inspire your team to share ideas, tackle problems, and learn from one another. Again; L.S.W is about setting your standards for frequency and timings of these - and sticking to it.

Strategy Deployment: Keeping the Bigger Picture in Focus

Set aside time for regular strategy deployment to ensure your team stays focused on your business' long-term vision. By taking purposeful steps to support your company's strategy, you'll build a united, aligned, and motivated team that propels your business forward.

As a Lean leader, the above elements become standard practice when you A: schedule them, B: follow through and do them, C: repeat.



KEY ELEMENTS OF LEADER STANDARD WORK



Gemba Walks

Get out to 'see' what is happening on a regular basis. Combine with Ohno's Circle. Taking coaching opportunities.



Audits & Inspections

Check on standards and variation on expected performance.



Standard Meetings

Structured, recurring meetings e.g. stand ups to discuss key issues & information.



Visual Management

Visual workplace standards, team boards to overview key performance metrics.



Training

Training and developing the team on procedures that deliver to the expected standards.



Reflection

Self-reflection or Hansei to encourage leaders to improve their own leadership skills and develop themselves.

PRACTICAL ACTIONS

Here's your road map for getting started with Leader Standard Work:

Start small and gradually build:

Begin by experimenting with the fundamental tasks that I introduced on the previous pages in your Leader Standard Work routine. Commit to trialing your L.S.W schedule for at least two weeks to ensure that you're not chopping and changing things too much, then incrementally add more elements or shift your timings around as you and your team grow more comfortable with the process.

Allocate sacred time:

I love the saying: 'show me your calendar and I'll tell you your priorities'. Making Continuous Improvement a priority is what L.S.W is all about. Sit down with your calendar at the start of the day, week or month & dedicate specific time in your schedule for essential tasks such as Gemba walks and stand-up meetings. Treat your Leader Standard Work actions as **top priorities**, on par with, or even more important than, client-facing responsibilities.

Communicate changes and benefits:

Change isn't the bad guy - but change without communication is! Clearly explain the parts of your new Leader Standard Work routine that directly impact the people you work with. Explain the purpose behind the changes, and how it will benefit both the team and the business.

Follow through and reflect:

Stick to your weekly plan, and if changes arise, use root cause analysis techniques like the 5 Whys to reflect on why the plan changed and improve to eliminate these causes.

Promote team autonomy:

Encourage team members to solve problems independently, involving leadership only when a decision is outside their delegation or they're genuinely stuck.

Consistency is key:

Model consistency by maintaining your Leader Standard Work routine, even during busy periods or when facing challenges. This commitment will boost trust and accountability within your team.

Seek feedback and adapt:

Regularly ask for input from your team and make adjustments as needed to ensure your Leader Standard Work routine remains effective and aligned with the team's needs.

Document and share learnings:

Record your experiences, successes, and challenges in implementing Leader Standard Work. Share these insights with your team to promote continuous learning and improvement.

EVALUATING YOUR LEADER STANDARD WORK

To evaluate progress and effectiveness in implementing Leader Standard Work, I recommend using a combo of self-assessment, team feedback, and performance metrics. Here's my top suggestions:

Self-Assessment:

Regularly reflect on your consistency in following the Leader Standard Work routine, the quality of your interactions with team members, and your ability to maintain focus on strategic goals. Consider keeping a journal or log to track your thoughts, challenges, and successes (a little 3B1 notebook that you can fit in your pocket is my favourite).

Team Feedback:

Gather input from your team members on how well they feel you are implementing Leader Standard Work. Ask for specific examples of where they see improvement or areas that still need work. This can be done through anonymous surveys, one-on-one discussions, or during team meetings.

Performance Metrics:

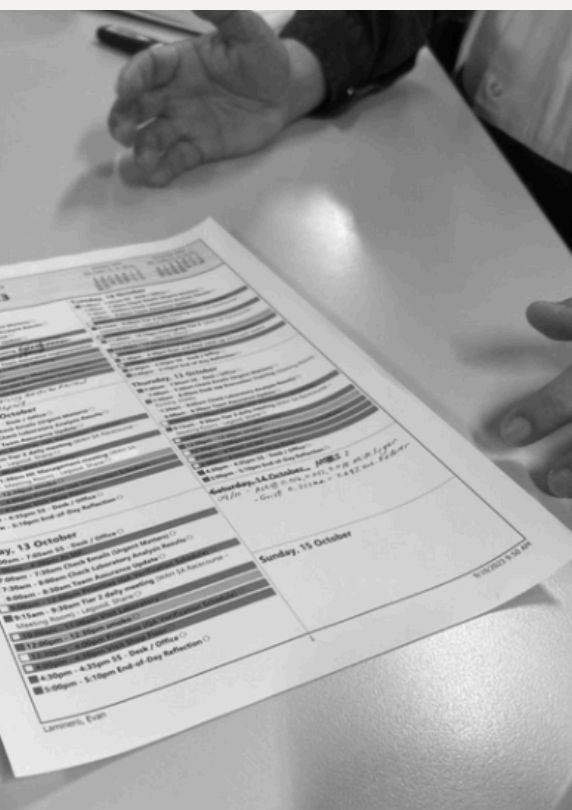
Measure the impact of Leader Standard Work on key performance indicators (KPIs), such as team productivity, quality of work, employee satisfaction, and overall goal achievement. Analyse these metrics over time to identify trends and determine if your efforts are resulting in positive changes.

External Input:







While I love a notebook, Kate loves a conversation: this is her favourite tool for evaluating the impact of ... well, anything! Consider seeking feedback from a mentor, coach, or peer who can provide an objective perspective on your progress. Discuss your experiences and get their advice on areas for further improvement.






This Is Continuous Improvement:

As you gather insights from these evaluation methods, use them to refine and adjust your Leader Standard Work routine. Make changes as necessary to ensure the practice remains effective and beneficial for both you and your team.



Daily Tasks					
Activity	M	T	W	T	F

Weekly Tasks	
Activity	Progress Indicator
	
	
	
	
	
	

Legend	
	
	Scheduled
	Underway
	Check
	Completed

Top 3 Goals This Week

Monthly Tasks Due This Week	
Activity	Date Completed

Gemba Walks					
Key workspace and/or team focused on:					
	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F

Team Performance Metrics			
Area	Issue	Action	Key Liaison Person
Safety			
Documentation			
Inventory			
Quality			
5S			

My Example					
Activity	M	T	W	T	F
Daily Performance board walk	X	X	X	X	X
Gemba walks organised		X	X	X	X
Review customer experience tool & process		X			
Schedule refresh workshop on problem solving process & tools				X	

Weekly Tasks	
Activity	Progress Indicator
Gemba Walk - Fab team	<div><div></div></div>
Daily Stand Ups	<div><div></div></div>
5S Audits	<div><div></div></div>
	<div><div></div></div>
	<div><div></div></div>
	<div><div></div></div>

Legend	
<div><div></div></div>	
<div><div></div></div>	Scheduled
<div><div></div></div>	Underway
<div><div></div></div>	Check
<div><div></div></div>	Completed

Top 3 Goals This Week
Reinforce Problem Solving tools with the team
Reduce rework issues
Review Customer experience process

Monthly Tasks Due This Week	
Activity	Date Completed
Review monthly strategic actions	
Tier 2 - Planning Stand Up	

Gemba Walks					
Key workspace and/or team focused on:					
Fabrication team	M	T	W	T	F
Sales & planning	M	T	W	T	F
Dispatch	M	T	W	T	F
Stores	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F
	M	T	W	T	F

Team Performance Metrics			
Area	Issue	Action	Key Liaison Person
Safety	No significant issues	Feedback at Tier I Stand ups	All
Documentation	Missing specs from plans	Book design team into problem solving session	James
Inventory	Consumables running out	Review Kanban system with stores	Andrea
Quality	Rework rates in Fab	Gemba walk / Ohno's Circle	Bruce
5S	tracking OK	Feedback at Tier I Stand ups	All

FINAL THOUGHTS

Getting started with Leader Standard Work is a power-move towards becoming a more effective, intentional, and growth-focused leader. By setting clear priorities and dedicating time to essential aspects of your role, you're chipping away each day at building a culture of continuous improvement, empowerment, and open communication within your team.

If you want to take our L.S.W template and make it your own, you can purchase an editable Canva template for \$8.99 right here.

Don't hesitate to take the first step with L.S.W – the rewards for both you and your team will be well worth the effort.



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