**A3 Reference Sheet**

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| Title | Names the problem, theme, or issue |
| Owner/Date | Identifies who “owns” the problem or issue and the date of the latest revision |
| Background | Establishes the business context and importance of the issue  Explain why you are working on this problem and provide any additional background/context necessary to understand this problem in its entirety. |
| Current Conditions | Describes what is currently known about the problem or issue  Provide charts and data. Diagram the current process with storm-clouds identifying problems or gaps in the current process. Explain how things work today and where the problems are. |
| Goals / Targets | Identifies the desired outcome  Now that the gaps in the current process have been identified, describe what the process looks likes when it’s “fixed.” What improvements would you see if all of the gaps were closed? (Do not put target state here. That goes in “countermeasures.” In this section we are still focusing on the problem and understanding the cost of the gaps.) |
| Analysis | Root cause analysis of the situation to determine what has created the gap between the current situation and the desired outcome.  Divide the problem up into sections, each with the root cause of the problem identified. Can include diagrams, if helpful. Five Whys. |
| Proposed Countermeasures | A proposed set of corrective actions or counter-measures to address the problem, close the gap, or reach the goal  A list of proposed countermeasures (don’t exclude any) that can then be evaluated and ranked based upon how well each addresses the identified causes of this problem. The highest ranked countermeasures are good candidates for implementation. |
| Plan | Prescribes an action plan of who will do what when in order to  reach the goal  Include deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties. |
| Follow-up | Creates a follow-up review/learning process and anticipates remaining issues.  Schedule follow-up meetings to make sure that the countermeasures being implemented are actually working and to review the A3 process as it was applied to this project. |

*Quotes from the Book*

“No problem, is problem.” - Toyota managers are expected to find problems in their processes and opportunities for improvement. Their job is to actively go and look for these and report them. If there do not appear to be any problems in the current process, that is a problem, because it means no one is looking. There are always problems somewhere.

“For Americans and anyone, it can be a shock to the system to be actually expected to make problems visible. Other corporate environments tend to hide problems from bosses.” – Ms. Newton (Toyota associate).

“If the learner hasn’t learned, the teacher hasn’t taught.”

“A problem well-defined is a problem half-solved.” (I can’t find where this quote was in the text, but it was my favorite quote from the entire book).

“The scientific mind does not so much provide the right answers as ask the right questions.” – Claude Lévi-Strauss.

“During his time at headquarters operations in Japan, Sanderson had learned that it was taboo for an individual to argue for a solution to a problem they didn’t actually know about (a fact which Five Whys would reveal). Similarly taboo was sloppiness in any form, especially in thinking.” (page 46).

“We want to not only show respect to our people, the same way we want to show respect to everyone we meet in life, we also want to respect their humanity, what it is that makes us human, which is our ability to think and feel – we have to respect that humanity in the way we design the work, so that the work enables their very human characteristics to flourish.” – Fujio Cho

“Plans are worthless. Planning is everything.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

“I’ll be back in two weeks.” (Always follow up and make sure that there is a deadline – even an artificial one like this – to make sure that progress continues).

“Authority is pulled to where it is needed when it is needed: on demand, just-in-time, pull-based authority.” (page 107) (This is also called “Kanban democracy”, a term coined by Taiichi Ohno)

“Plans are things that change.” (page 110).

“No matter how successful a company has been, it needs to develop an organizational culture of “preparedness.” It must convert both the intended and the unintended consequences of its actions, the lucky breaks and the well-laid plans, the temporary successes and the failures, into long-term competitive routines. … After all, fortune favors the prepared organizational mind.” – Takihiro Fujimoto.