



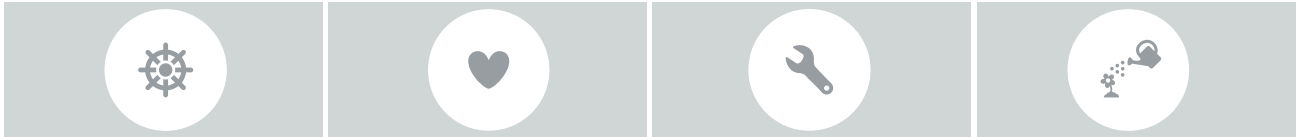
RD interlogue Learning Journey
**LEAN PRODUCTION AND LEADERSHIP –
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT COMPANIES IN JAPAN**

15 – 22 April 2023

Participant Feedback

Exclusively for:

(a prestigious car maker from the UK)



The LEAN LEARNING JOURNEY was a two-level **training journey in Japan**:

- I. **Prepare** – preparatory seminar in the UK (one-day), webinar, online session
- II. **Observe, Evaluate and Transfer** – benchmark visits and evaluation in Japan (eight days)

The seminar took place from **Saturday 15 April to Saturday 22 April 2023**. The group consisted of 16 participants from (*a prestigious car maker from the UK*). The participants' evaluations and comments on the seminar are presented and analysed below.

Concept and Objective

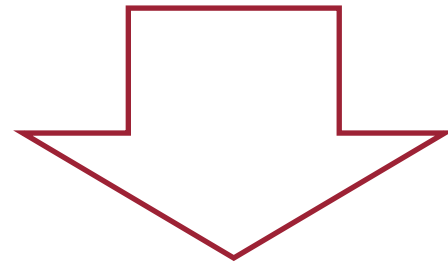
The main topics of our Learning Journeys to Japan are **kaizen and lean production**, as well as the leadership style required for this process. The foundation was laid with an informative introduction to the differences in practice between Toyota Production System (TPS) in Japan and Lean Production in Europe. In Japan the seminar provided a **unique insight** into the practice of selected flagship companies. The seminar focussed on **two areas**: Firstly, the **application of lean production** and the associated methodical approaches and activities in different flagship companies. The second focus was the accompanying **leadership** style – the key success

factor for any programme of lean reforms or continuous improvement activities.

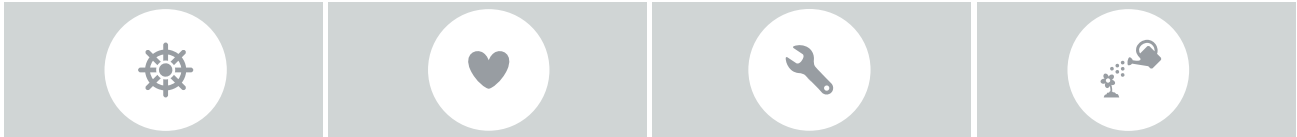
The seminar allowed participants to **experience** lean leadership first-hand; it provided ideas and **inspiration** – with a motivational effect and **lasting impact** beyond the duration of the seminar.

In contrast to seminars from other providers, our Learning Journeys are not limited to just company visits: The seminar concept ensures a **qualified evaluation** of what has been observed. In Japan, the **success factors** for *kaizen* and lean are worked out and elaborated in intensive group sessions.

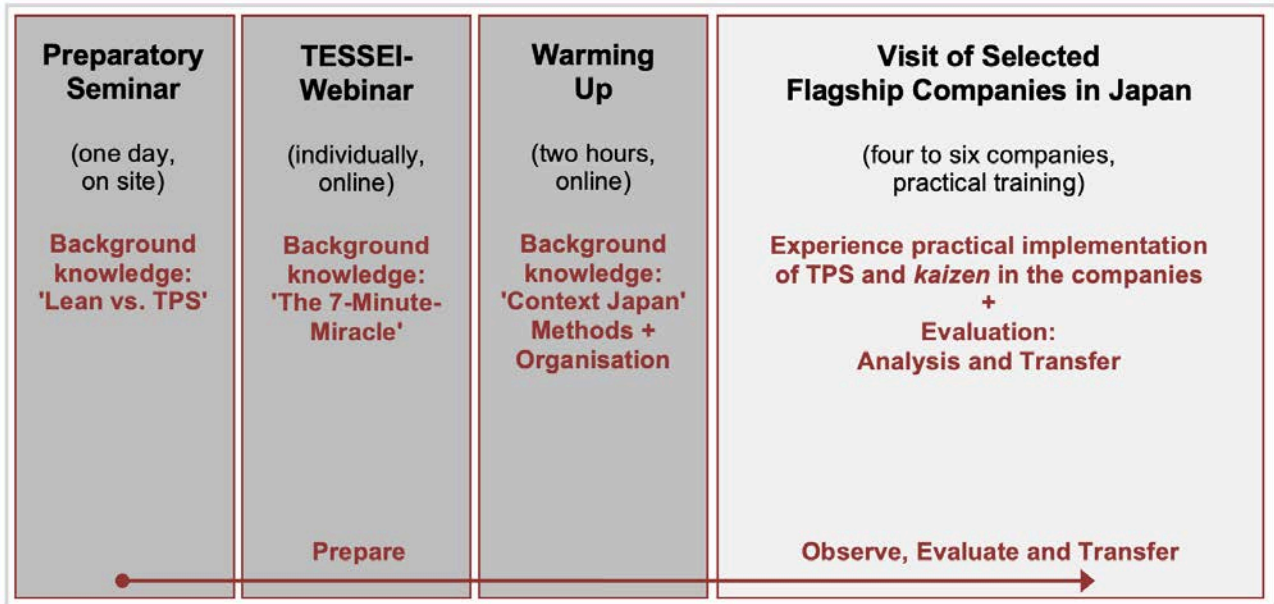
This process is designed to transfer the experience of the individual participant to their own **personal sphere and area of responsibility** – with the aim of conveying **ideas** for their workplace and providing a **powerful impetus** for the improvement process in their own company.



The entire seminar is therefore based on the **fundamental concept**: **Ultimately, the only thing that counts is what is later implemented in your own company.**



Seminar Structure



Level 1: Prepare

Six weeks before leaving for Japan, a one-day **preparatory seminar** was held in the UK. Presentations were given, providing the necessary background knowledge for visiting the companies in Japan. For while there is much to see in Japan, some things may not be obvious at first. And the more the participants know, the more they will be able to see in Japan.

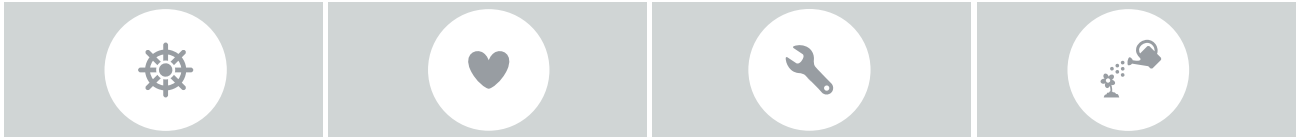
- Presentations 1-3: **Lean and TPS: What are the differences?** Observations from practice in Japan

Particular focus was placed on the **'invisible success factors'** such as leadership and corporate culture. One such success factor is the **'right-brain kaizen' approach**, which lean companies in Japan use more actively and systematically than Western companies.

The speaker, Dr Roman Ditzer, has many years' experience of lean working practises and was able to impart in-depth knowledge and up-to-date information.

A webinar on the **management and process reform at TESSEI** was also part of the preparation. This is a subsidiary of the East Japan Railway Company (JR-EAST) and is responsible for cleaning the *Shinkansen* carriages at the Tokyo Station terminus within 6 to 7 minutes before the trains set off again. This process has become internationally renowned as the '7-Minute Miracle'. Behind this highly efficient process is a **change process** initiated by **Teruo Yabe**, former board member of TESSEI.

Teruo Yabe
Illustration by Keitaro Kumazuki



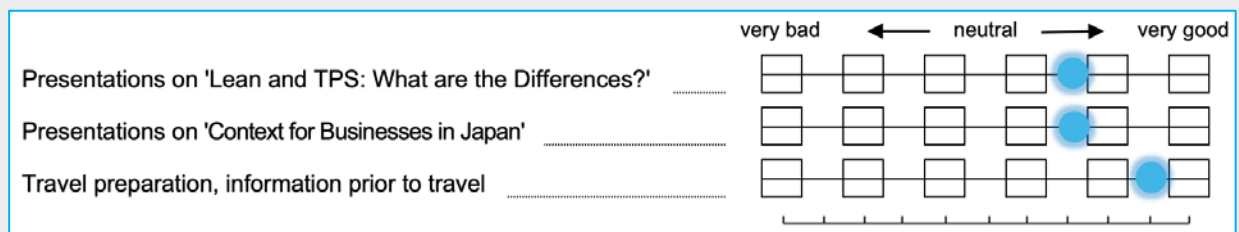
During his time at TESSEI, he succeeded in reforming the company and bringing about a **revolution in its corporate culture**. There is, indeed, a lot to be learned about change management, leadership and *kaizen* in service processes from the TESSEI example.

The webinar presents the management approach and details the success factors of the reform with articles and lecture videos. This preliminary work was picked up and continued in Japan at a meeting and Q&A session with Mr Yabe.

Shortly before the departure to Japan, an online meeting **'Warming-up for Japan'** was held where we provided answers to organisational questions, as well as more background information on Japan.

- Presentation 4: **Context for Businesses in Japan: Economy, Society, Culture**

Assessment and Comments by Participants



On the preparatory seminar and the presentations on 'Lean and TPS':

"Good material and a very useful introduction, however I thought it could have been compacted in terms of time."

"Good material but maybe needed more time and immersion in concepts"

"It was quite a lot of information and before the Japan trip it was difficult to understand it fully without having all the background."

On the presentations 'Context for Businesses in Japan':

"I would like to hear a bit more about Society and Economy because in my opinion that is one of the factors that influences the colleagues on the line most, what has significant influence on lean culture and possibilities, and allowed that managing style."

"Enjoyed these as they supported my improved understanding"



Level 2: Observe, Evaluate and Transfer

Travel to and from Japan was not part of the service package, and arrangements were made individually. The participants arrived in Tokyo on Friday afternoon. In the evening, a communal dinner provided culinary orientation. Saturday began with the **kick-off meeting**, followed by a two-hour **Q&A session with Mr Yabe**, already known from the prior webinar.

In the afternoon we had a fun introduction to the topic of **monozukuri – making things**. This took the form of a **practical introduction** to the technique of knife sharpening, which gave participants a sense of the Japanese demand for precision and quality - even when performing ostensibly simple tasks. This ethic of craftsmanship is what characterizes many lean companies in the country.

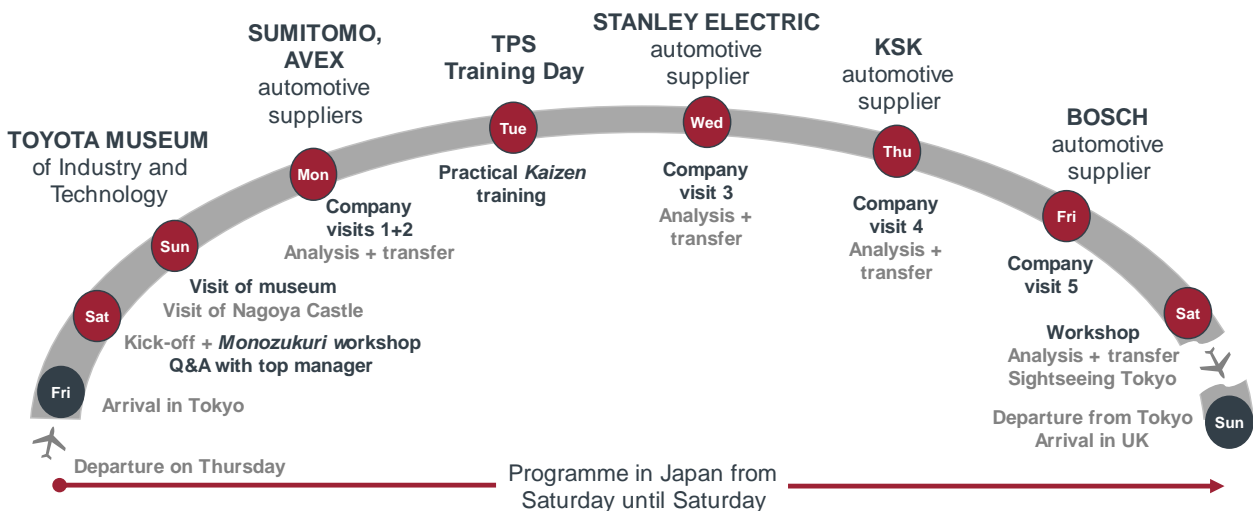
Sunday saw us transfer from Tokyo to Nagoya via the *Shinkansen* bullet train. There we visited the **Toyota Museum of Industrial Technology**.

We were especially interested in seeing where the Toyota production concept originally came from – the incremental improvements (*kaizen*) that were made to automatic weaving looms.

A visit to **Nagoya Castle** with the lavishly restored **Honmaru Palace** rounded off the programme for the day on a cultural note.

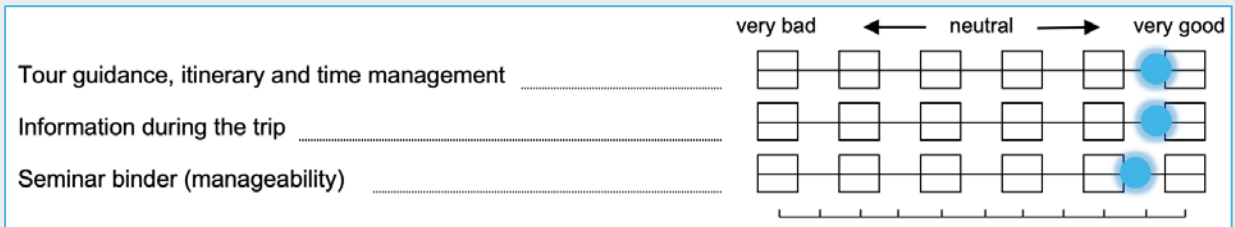
During the week, we visited six plants from five selected **lean flagship companies**. The visits were complemented by a one-day **practical kaizen training**.

The visits were evaluated in **discussion rounds**. General conclusions were drawn and compiled in the **final workshop**. Sightseeing in Tokyo and a final communal dinner rounded off the programme on Saturday, the last day of the programme. On Sunday the participants were homeward bound, arriving back in the UK on the next day.





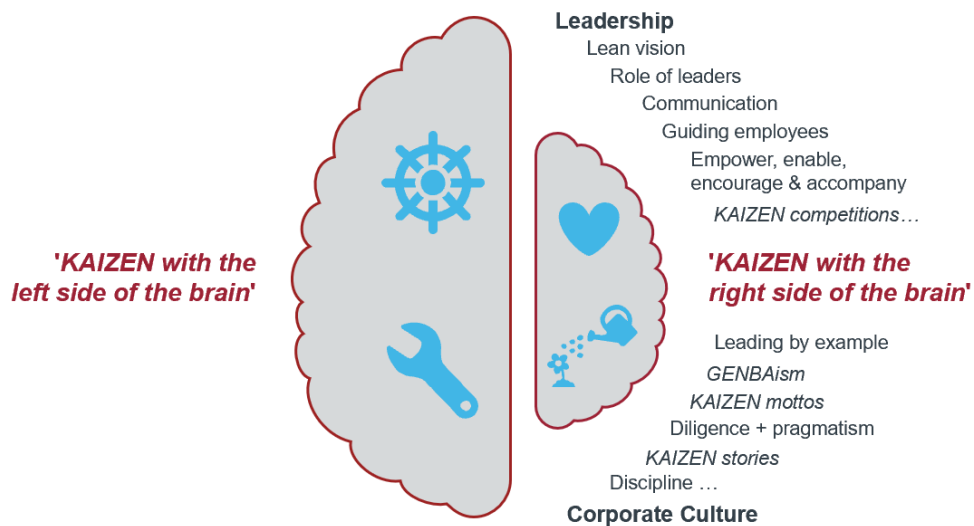
Assessment and Comments by Participants



"Really enjoyed the Lean Journey and I felt it's kept to point but also has been flexible to our needs"

"Could have done with a little more down time at the beginning when trying to adjust to the time difference. Was a lot of one night stays which was harder from a travel perspective but understand why!"

"Great organization"



Key question: In the West, do we possibly use only a part of our potential?



Company Visits

We visited five selected flagship companies in Japan. The main focus of the respective company visits was on:

- their lean production system and *kaizen* activities,
- managing the improvement process and lean leadership.

In the three to five-hour visits, the participants became acquainted with the methodological approaches and activities of each improvement process. A plant tour enabled participants to understand how the methods were used in practice. In question and answer sessions, the managers explained the aspects which they considered to be particularly important. This personal encounter with key players provided a **tangible experience** of effective **lean leadership**.

The aim was to gain a **concrete understanding** of how lean production / management is implemented through the lens of the flagship companies. The methodological **ideas** and **inspiration** from these visits had another important effect, providing stimuli for a **lasting impact** beyond the duration of the seminar.

Practical training, instructed by Toyota 'Old Boys'

The hands-on *kaizen* practical training was a special feature of the programme. At the TPS training day, former Toyota instructors from Japan lead participants in *kaizen* activities, not only teaching the procedure, but also conveying the **specific *kaizen* culture**: **careful** analysis and **pragmatic** problem solving; **quick** to implement and **consistent** when evaluating.

Main topics for the visit:

SUMITOMO WIRING

- *Kaizen* and TPS in a company operating in the electronics industry
- Visual management

AVEX

- Leadership and management in a *kaizen* company

TPS Training Day

- 'Old school' *kaizen*
- The original TPS: Hands on instruction in *kaizen* behaviour by former Toyota TPS trainers

STANLEY ELECTRIC

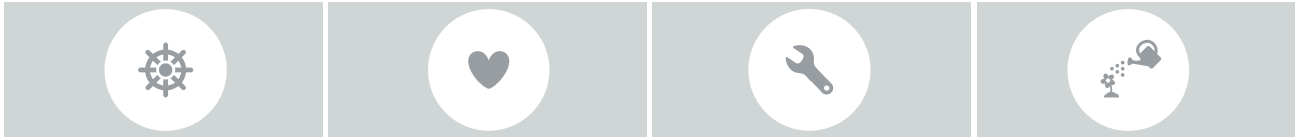
- *Monozukuri* at a supplier to the Japanese automotive industry

KSK

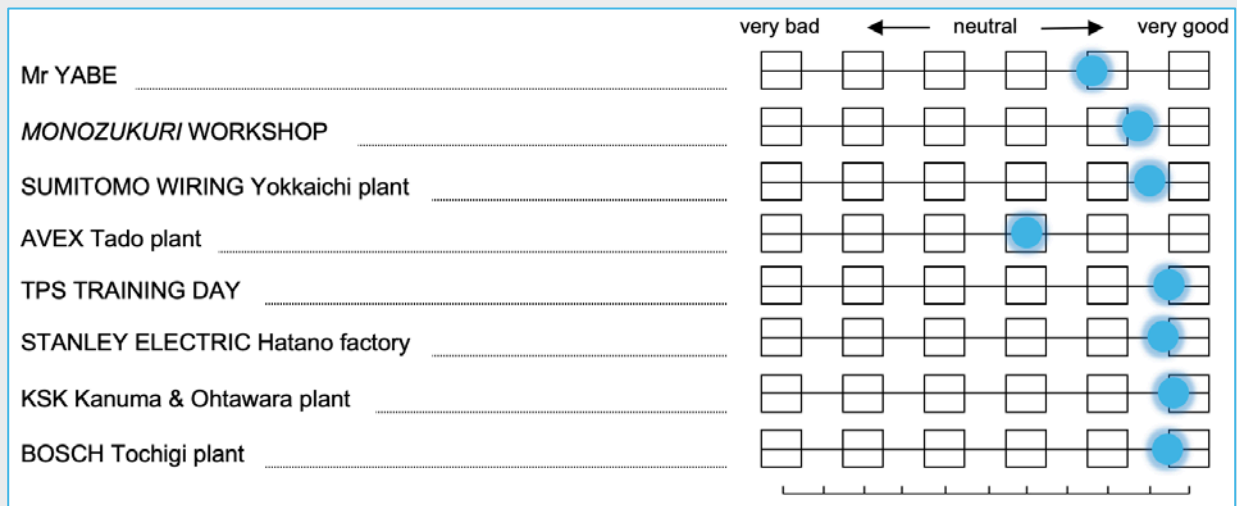
- 'Old school' *kaizen*
- *Kaizen* attitude of all participants and *kaizen* corporate culture
- Low cost automation and perfectly process-optimised *chaku-chaku* lines
- Top-down and bottom-up *kaizen* in perfect balance

BOSCH

- Quality management
- Shopfloor management, visualisation
- Industry 4.0 digitalisation
- The best of both worlds (?)



Assessment and Comments by Participants



MONOZUKURI WORKSHOP: "Very good appreciation of the diligence and importance of standardised work / quality"

"Good workshop to understand Japanese culture (we are proud of what we do), good teambuilding activity"

Mr YABE: "Engaging once he got into answering the questions and relied less on his pre-prepared presentation."

"Telling 'his' story, though not fully answering questions. But good to hear it in person"

SUMITOMO WIRING: "Worth seeing. Would have liked more time there."

TPS TRAINING DAY: "Brilliant day. Really engaging and learnt so much"

"I think it would be helpful to change the order. If the TPS Training Day was before the visits then the understanding of what we were looking for would be improved."

STANLEY ELECTRIC: "Top class visit"

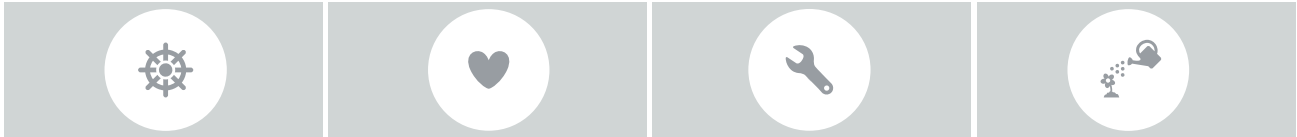
KSK: "My favourite example of Lean in Japan"

"Best of the supplier visits, *kaizen* lived throughout the organisation"

BOSCH: "Great visit. The more informal lunch where we could carry on discussions worked very well"

"Most realistic view of East and West cultures coming together"

GENERAL: "Visiting a Japanese OEM factory should have been a 'must' in order to gain more direct transferable insights for us as a car maker." (Comment by the tour operator: This would have been part of the programme normally but was not feasible this time.)



Evaluation

During the time in Japan, three rounds of 'Analysis and Transfer' took place. The visits were analysed according to the focus areas of the seminar – **Lean Production in Application and Leadership**: This was done at three levels:

Level 1: Immediate Feedback Rounds

- Speed is the key: Exchange fresh impressions on the bus after the visits

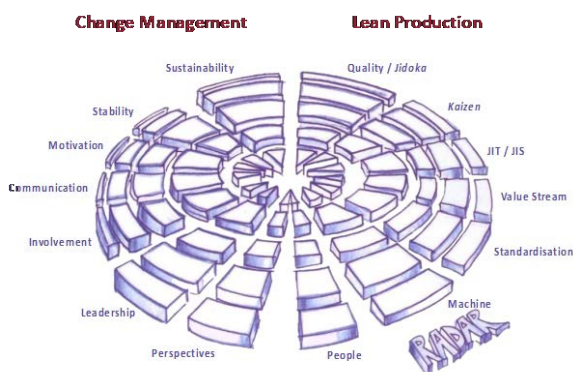
Level 2: Analysis and Transfer Rounds

- Extracting best practices, highlights for memory and documentation

Level 3: Final Workshop

- Working out overarching insights into success factors for lean implementation

We use AKKA Consulting's '**Lean Radar**' as an instrument to structure observation and evaluation.



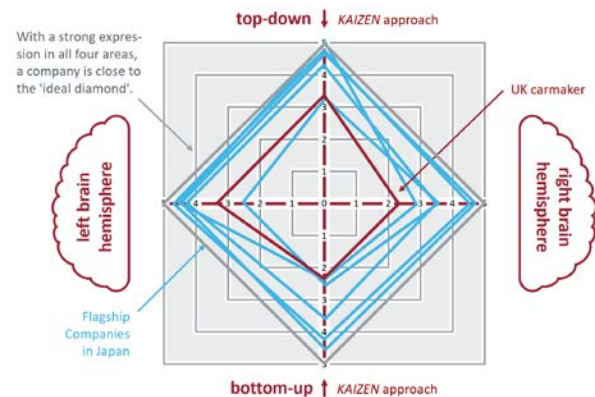
This is used to assess the level of lean maturity in relation to 14 'core elements'.

For our Learning Journeys, AKKA Consulting with their '**Lean Radar**' is the cooperation partner for methodology.

Alongside the Lean Radar, the groups worked with our original method, the '**Kaizen-Balance Matrix**', exploring two key questions:

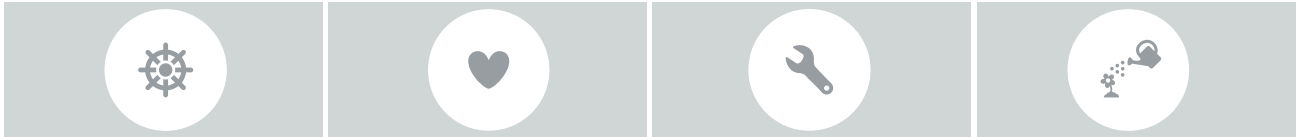
- Do the company's *kaizen* activities tend to be **top-down** or **bottom-up**?
- In terms of its *kaizen* activities, does the company work more with the instruments of the **left** or **right brain hemisphere of the brain**?

In reality, companies employ a mixture of top-down and bottom-up elements, with a similar mix for the left and right brain hemispheres. The ordinal value for this mixture was determined for each company visited. At the end of the learning journey, the participants evaluated their own company.



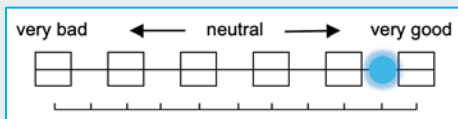
If there are differences in the matrix between the flagship companies and your own, then it should be possible to thereby draw conclusions and derive measures.





Assessment and Comments by Participants

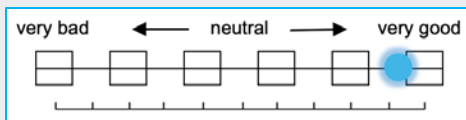
On the 'Analysis+Transfer' rounds (working with the 'Lean Radar' and 'Kaizen-Balance Matrix'):



"Very good and easy to understand process"

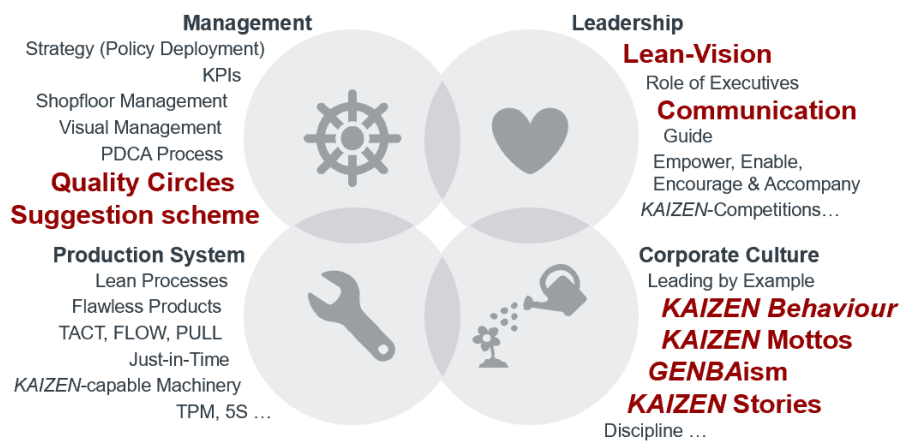
"Good way to capture the journey"

On applicability to your own needs:

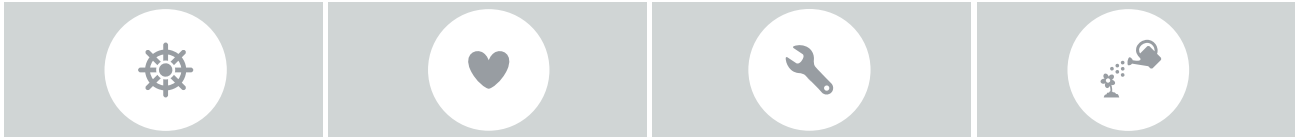


"I feel better placed post company visits to identify opportunities to improve at home and more confident about ways to deliver it"

"Really looking forward to implementation and seeing impact of kaizen in our company"



Key question: What do lean companies in Japan do differently and what are the differences?



At the end of the day ...

The feedback from the participants' evaluation forms on the final day in Japan has been summarised here. However, it is still too early for a conclusive evaluation of the LEAN LEARNING JOURNEY. What is central to the concept presented here is the implementation of the measures and the improvement effect that can be

subsequently achieved. This is the standard by which the Learning Journey ought to be measured:

Ultimately, the only thing that counts is what is then implemented at your own company.

As of May 2023

What would you like to do more if you could participate again?

"More time on shop floor and more training days like TPS"

"Deeper dive into the way in which shopfloor ideas move into application and problem-solving methodologies."

"To visit some other companies outside of automotive manufacturing. To see Toyota"

"I think the Lean in Japan trip is well balanced with lectures & visits. I thought we made good use of our time with coach-based feedback. I appreciated the opportunity to explore culture in both factory visits and in our free time."

"More of cultural experiences but overall it was excellent and so thank you"

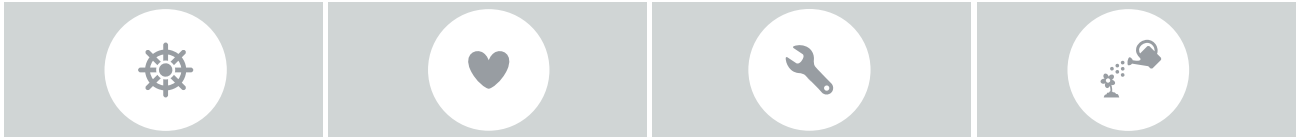
"Rest! (Maybe that means earlier nights) ... but good quality sleep has been difficult due to the travel."

"Excellent trip and really opened my eyes"

Outlook

The participant feedback and seminar results have encouraged us to offer further seminars on 'Lean Production and Leadership – Operational Excellence in Companies in Japan'.

The next Japan seminar with this concept is expected to take place in the second half of 2023. The dates will be announced on our website in due course.



Commitment to Quality

RD interlogue seminars don't take place in classrooms for lean training or in the presentation offices of management consultancies; rather, they facilitate **authentic practice analysis** in flagship companies. Importantly, the ideas and **inspiration** from these visits can invigorate and have a **lasting impact** beyond the duration of the seminar. In

contrast to other providers, our seminars are not limited to mere company visits: The seminar leader ensures a qualified **evaluation** of what has been observed via individual and group work. The focus is always on transferring the experience of the individual participant to their own **personal sphere and area of responsibility**.

Target Group and Participant Group

The seminar is suitable for both management representatives and company improvement specialists. The aim is for a mixed group of up to

20 participants. The minimum number of participants is 16.

Next Dates and Seminar Fees

The **next Japan seminar** is expected to take place in autumn 2023. The dates will be announced in due course → www.interlogue.de

Further information about the **concept** can be found on the same link above.

- 3) Participants formally register in person. ('Contract offer')
- 4) We will confirm – thereby booking your participation and concluding the contract. ('Confirmation of the tour operator')

The **method for registering** is as follows:

- 1) Informal enquiry via email (name and email address) to: ditzer@interlogue.de
- 2) We will reply, sending you a registration form and our terms and conditions, asking you to provide a preliminary participant list. ('Pre-contractual information')

Dr Roman Ditzer – **RD interlogue**
St. Annenufer 5, c/o EQS, 20457 Hamburg,
Germany

Phone: +49.40.3861.8956
Fax: +49.40.3861.8985
Email: ditzer@interlogue.de