



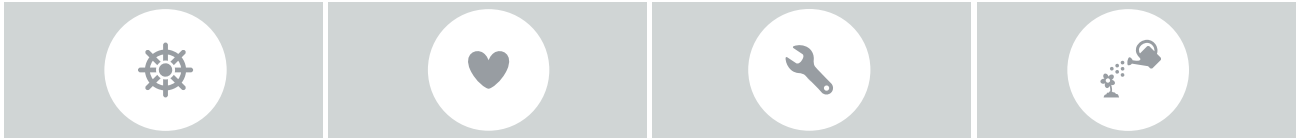
RD interlogue Learning Journey
**LEAN PRODUCTION AND LEADERSHIP –
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT COMPANIES IN JAPAN**

13 - 20 April 2023

Participant Feedback

Exclusively for:

HÄFELE



The HÄFELE LEAN LEARNING JOURNEY was a **eight day training journey in Japan:**

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

The seminar took place from **Saturday 13 April to Saturday 20 April 2024**. The group consisted of 18 participants from HÄFELE. The participants' evaluations and comments on the seminar are presented and analysed below.

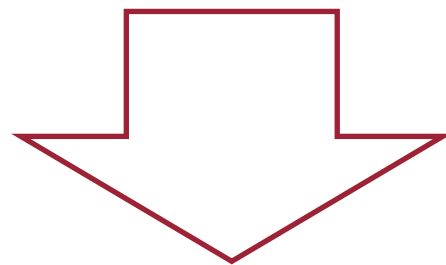
Concept and Objective

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.

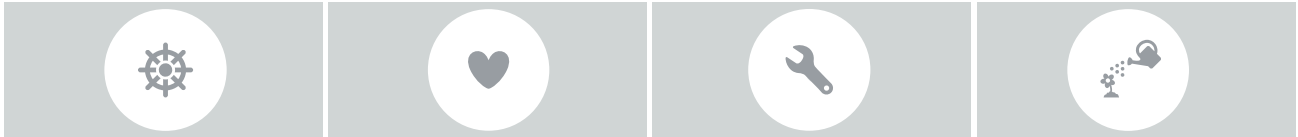
The seminar allowed participants to **experience** lean leadership first-hand; it provided ideas and **inspiration** – with a motivational effect and **lasting impact** beyond the duration of the seminar.

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.

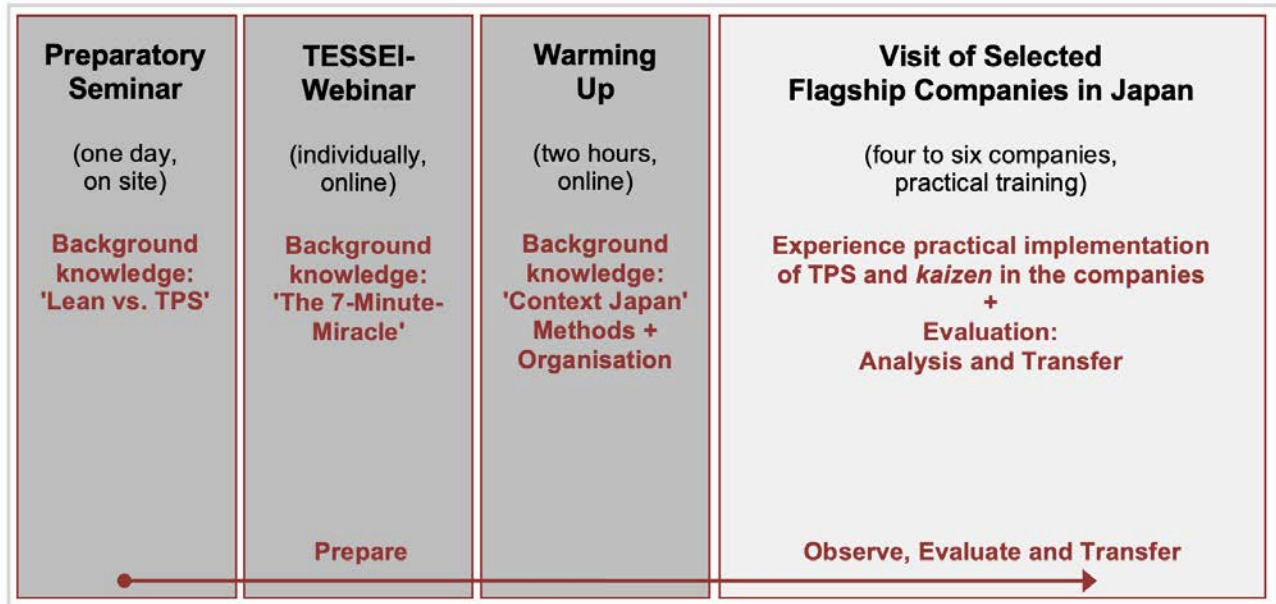
This process is designed to transfer the experience of the individual participant to their own **personal sphere and area of responsibility** – with the aim of conveying **ideas** for their workplace and providing a **powerful impetus** for the improvement process in their own company.



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

Three weeks before leaving for Japan, a one-day **preparatory seminar** was held in Nagold, Germany. 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.

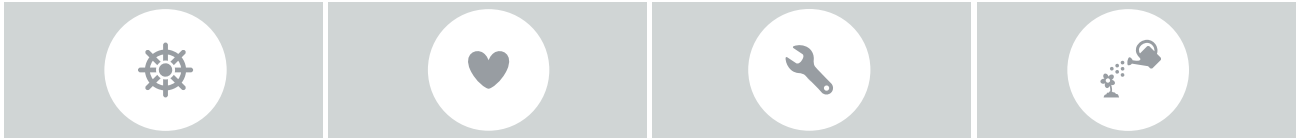
- Presentation 1: **Lean and TPS: What are the differences?** Perspectives from the field in Japan

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.

We also provided answers to organisational questions, as well as more background information on Japan.

- Presentation 2: **Context for Businesses in Japan: Economy, Society, Culture**

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.



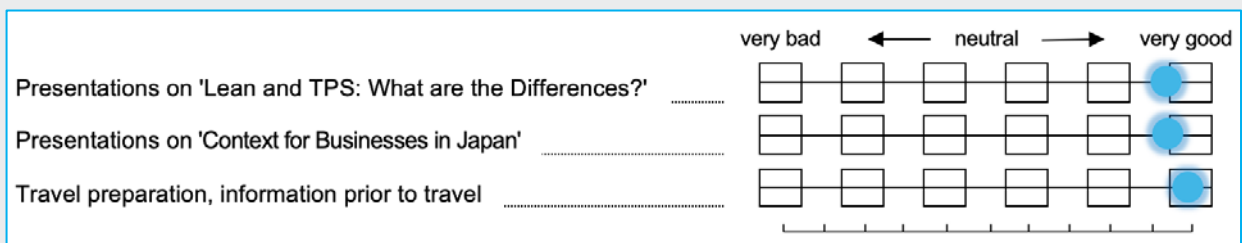
A webinar on the **management and process reform at TESSEI** was also part of the preparation. This is a subsidiary of the East Japan Railway Company (JR-EAST) and is responsible for cleaning the *Shinkansen* carriages at the Tokyo Station terminus within 6 to 7 minutes before the trains set off again. 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.

Assessment and Comments by Participants



On the preparatory seminar and the presentations on 'Lean and TPS' and 'Context for Businesses':

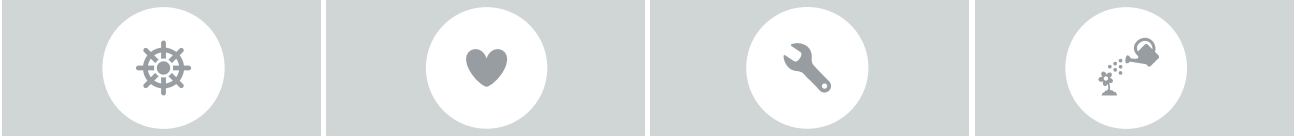
"I really appreciated the connection made between lean and TPS. At all visits, they were very clear and detailed."

"The seminar was clear, and easy to understand."

"Very good briefing and info for the trip."

"I do think it was a very good preparatory information, at least for me, since I know very little of the Japanese culture."

"Less frontal lecture, more gamification"



Level 2: Observe, Evaluate and Transfer

Eight days in Japan: Travel to and from Japan was not part of the service package, and arrangements were made individually. Most participants arrived in Tokyo on Friday morning and had time to acclimatise themselves. The official program began Saturday with a **kick-off meeting** followed by a fun introduction to the topic of **monozukuri – making things**. This took the form of **practical introductions** to the techniques of preparing sushi and knife sharpening. The two masters in charge 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.

After that we met **Mr Yabe** in person, already known from the prior webinar. He gave answers to participants' questions on the management and cultural reform at TESSEI in a two-hours Q&A session.

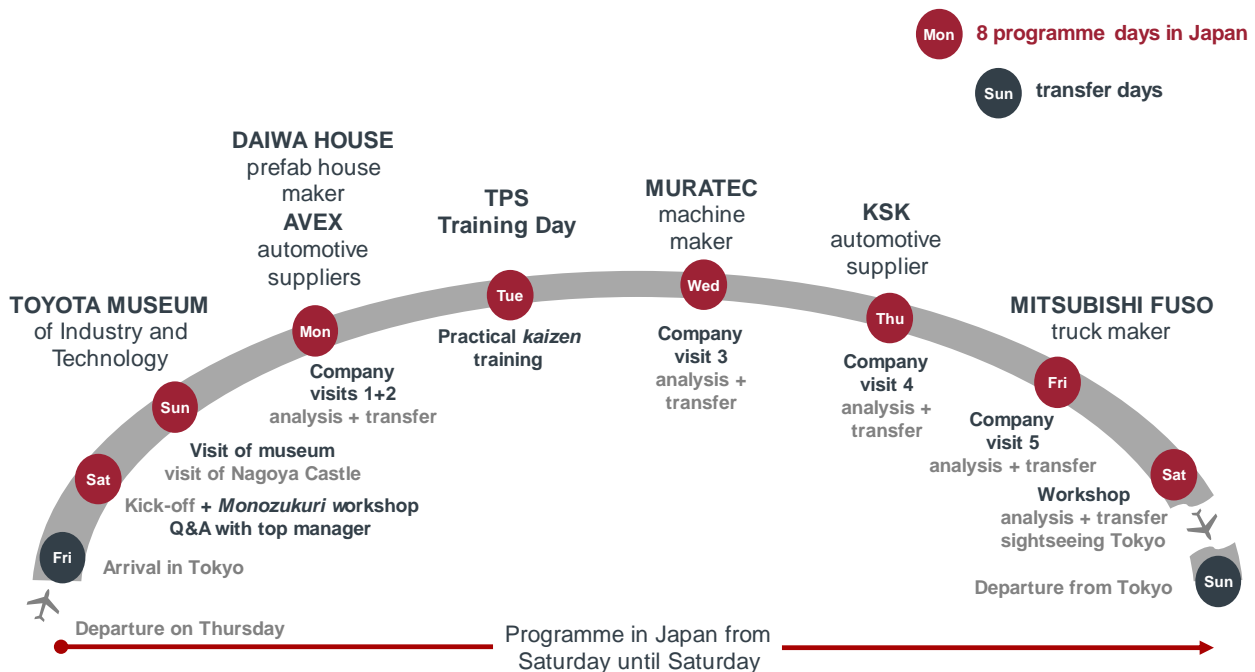
In the evening, a communal dinner provided culinary orientation.

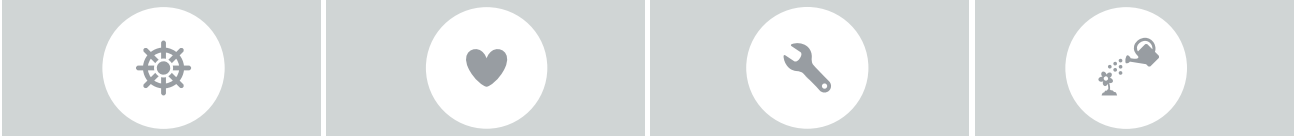
Sunday saw us transfer from Tokyo to Nagoya via the *Shinkansen* bullet train. There we visited the **Toyota Museum of Industrial Technology**. We were especially interested in seeing where the Toyota production concept originally came from – the incremental improvements (*kaizen*) that were made to 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.

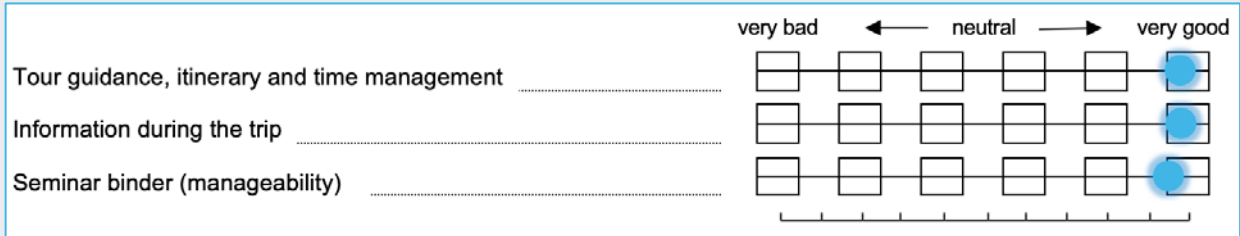
During the week, we visited six plants from five selected **lean flagship companies**. The visits were complemented by a one-day **practical kaizen training**.

The visits were evaluated in '**Analysis and Transfer Sessions**'. 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 Europe on the next day.





Assessment and Comments by Participants



"Well organized trip. Thanks a lot for leading us the trip to those amazing Japanese suppliers."

"I cannot thank you enough for the organization of the trip and the personal support on site. I always had the feeling that everyone was well looked after and I was able to concentrate fully on the experience. I liked the immediate feedback from everyone after every company visit [...]."

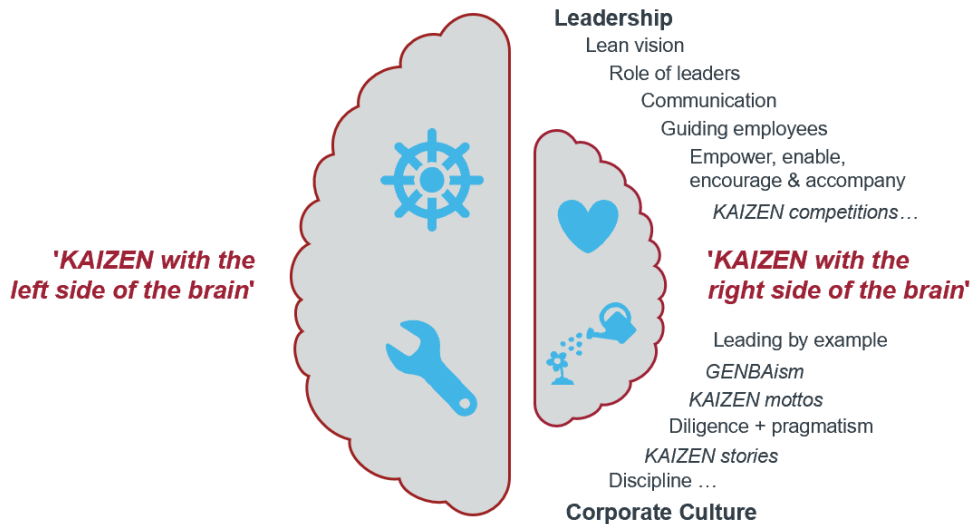
"We could get a general overview of the companies which is fine. However, at least in some cases, it would be great to have the chance of deeper discussions of certain topics (e.g. change management, 5S systems, continuous improvement, etc.)"

"There is a strong transfer of methods (Lean Radar, left right brain etc.) on a daily basis. By creating a transfer or reflection on the personal level (how do I / we work in contrast, what could I do, what would be the impact) on an equally regular basis, it could increase the implementation and transfer after the lean journey."

"Perfect"

"Great job managing a big group. And you didn't lose anybody!"

"Very minor optimization idea: Digital itinerary and meeting invites to be added to apps such as outlook calendar."



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 seven-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:

DAIWA HOUSE

- *Monozukuri* and *kaizen* at a company in the construction industry
- Production concept for prefabricated houses

AVEX

- Leadership and management in a *kaizen* company
- *Kaizen* activities, *kaizen* cooperation with a customer from the Toyota Group
- Resilience, strategy and policy deployment (*hōshin kanri*)

TPS Training Day

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

MURATEC

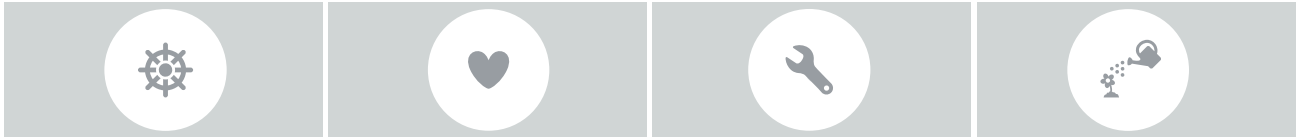
- The TPS transferred to the mechanical engineering industry
- Introduction of TPS and production reform strategically implemented

KSK

- *Kaizen* attitude of all participants and *kaizen* corporate culture
- Top-down and bottom-up *kaizen* in perfect balance
- Low cost automation and perfectly process-optimised *chaku-chaku* lines at Kanuma plant
- The next evolutionary stage of *chaku-chaku* lines at Ohtawara plant

MITSUBISHI FUSO

- Lean production at a commercial vehicle and aggregate manufacturer in the Japanese automotive industry
- Mixture of German and Japanese management approach to *kaizen*



Assessment and Comments by Participants

	very bad	←	neutral	→	very good
Q&A Mr YABE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MONOZUKURI WORKSHOP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DAIWA HOUSE Mie factory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
AVEX Kuwana factory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TPS TRAINING DAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MURATEC Inuyama factory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
KSK Kanuma & Ohtawara plant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MITSUBISHI FUSO Kawasaki plant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

MONOZUKURI WORKSHOP – SUSHI:

"Fun, interacting, great way to start."

"It was an interesting experience and a good preparation for the rest of the journey."

"Learning by doing is the key to mastering lean skills."

"It was a very funny experience as an ice breaker and first 'hands-on' introduction to Japan."

"It's art and requires skill and method to ensure consistent outcomes"

MONOZUKURI WORKSHOP – KNIFE-SHARPENING:

"Nice icebreaker"

"This workshop was more technical, so more interesting for me. The timeframe was a bit short, I would spend more time to have a sharper edge."

"[...] a very funny experience and good one from aspect of cultural exchange."

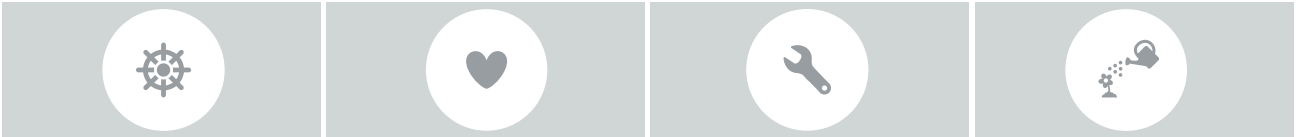
"My technique requires further perfection."

Mr YABE:

"We as a group would have needed to challenge him more on practical examples."

"Long and often indirect answers. But very impressive and good advice."

"A lot of information and questions had already been answered by the videos. A [personal meeting and Q&A session] might not have been necessary at all."



Assessment and Comments by Participants

	very bad	←	neutral	→	very good
Q&A Mr YABE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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MITSUBISHI FUSO Kawasaki plant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DAIWA HOUSE:

"Excellent *omotenashi* [hospitality]."

"I would expect to see larger area of the factory or more production steps, because technology is interesting."

AVEX:

"Best visit of the trip."

TPS TRAINING DAY:

"Very authentic, made a difference on how we all see the *kaizen* philosophy."

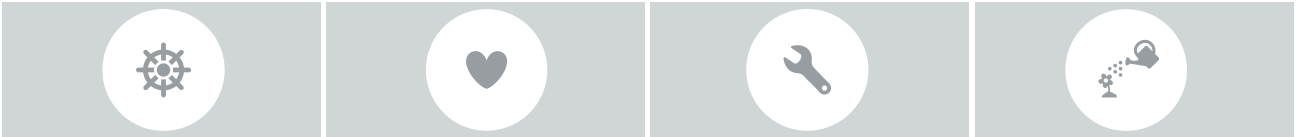
"*Kaizen* was shown in practice, should be compulsory for many of us."

"A little too extensive at times, but overall very interesting and clear."

"[...] Well-developed example, we were well involved taking measurements and thinking of optimisations."

"Best training of my whole career, will never forget it."

"Great hands-on experience"



Assessment and Comments by Participants

	very bad	←	neutral	→	very good
Q&A Mr YABE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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MURATEC:

"Great adaptation of lean principles in an unique environment."

KSK:

"Great to see both plants"

"Excellent example of old and new under the same roof."

MITSUBISHI FUSO:

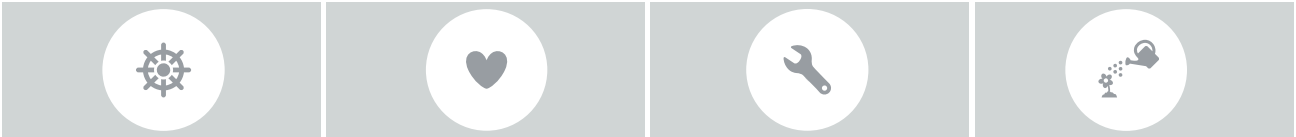
"Highest transfer potential to Häfele for my role."

"Extremely interesting, but from their side it didn't feel as organized as the other ones."

"Continuous improvement in focus, great combination of Japanese and German company management."

"Longer line tour and less presentation time would be more ideal, to understand *kaizen* in *genba*."

"Great learning on company acquired by German multinational Daimler"



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

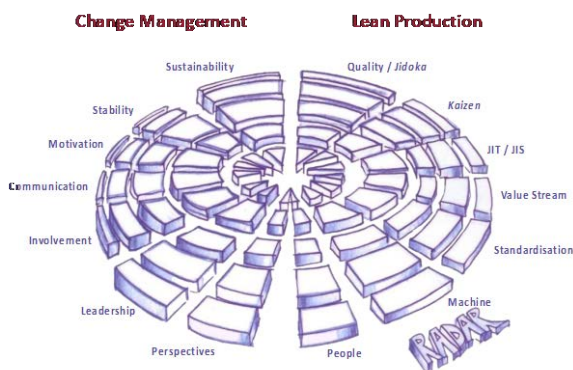
Level 2: Analysis and Transfer Sessions

- 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.



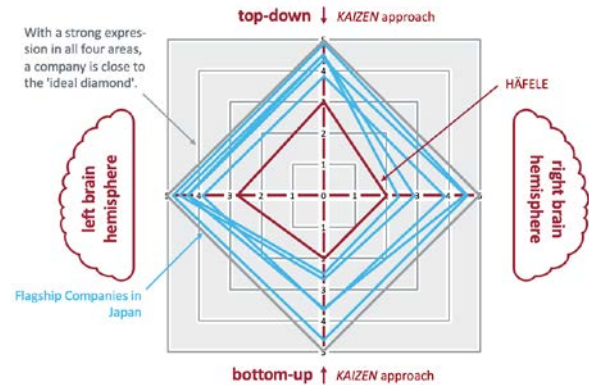
This is used to assess the level of lean maturity in relation to 14 'core elements'.

For our Learning Journeys, the company AKKA Consulting 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:

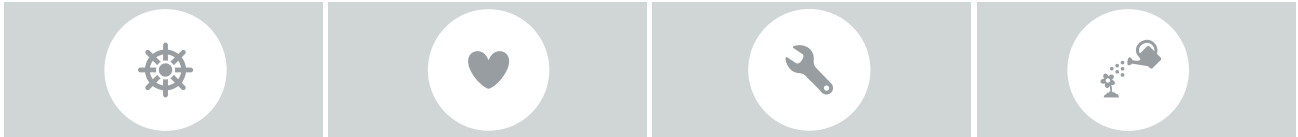
- Do the company's *kaizen* activities tend to be **top-down** or **bottom-up**?
- In terms of its *kaizen* activities, does the company work more with the instruments of the **left** or **right** hemisphere of the brain?

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.



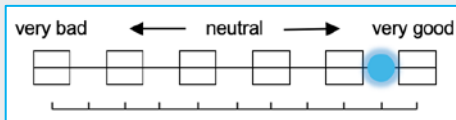
If there are differences in the matrix between the flagship companies and your own, then it should be possible to thereby draw conclusions and derive measures.





Assessment and Comments by Participants

On the 'Analysis+Transfer' sessions (working with the 'Lean Radar' and 'KAIZEN-Balance MATRIX'):



"Very helpful to refresh on highlights and also get different perspectives from different people"

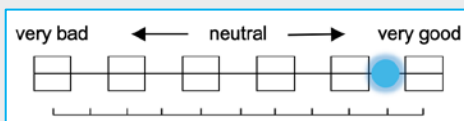
"This is a very good approach to learn the key advantages and competences, and learn how to conduct lean assessments at the plants."

"Helped to strengthen the view how we look at the companies, yet it would have been more efficient and effective to apply strict time boxing and add more focus on 'what does it mean for me', how could I apply what I saw..."

"Groupwork was well organised"

"Very quick and strong"

On applicability to your own needs:

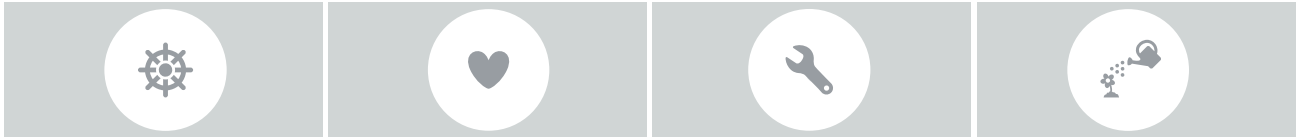


"Very much on point"

"One-to-one, really, since the whole trip just showed us that the principles are applicable by the book and will actually work."

"Good takeaways to apply everyday"

"We will see how willing our companies will be regarding implementation."



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 HÄFELE 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 HÄFELE.

As of May 2024

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

"👤"

"I am really fine with the trip."

"Karaoke ;-) just a joke - thank you very much for this incredible week!"

"The practical TPS Training Day was very instructive. So, I would like to do more practical training."

"Of course [I'd take the trip again], especially if some deeper discussions of certain topics with the visited companies were possible."

"Get the TPS training and visit the lean benchmarking factory."

"More practical examples into *kaizen* and TPS"

"Participate in a [*kaizen*] workshop at a company. How do they proceed, what methods are used and what does a workshop actually look like?"

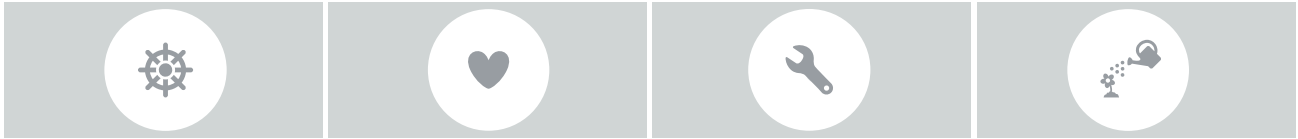
"The practical Training Day was very helpful. So, I think more practical training will be good."

"Work in the companies at least for one day to see their daily activities"

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 2024. The dates will be announced on our website in due course.



Commitment to Quality

RD interlogue Learning Journeys 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

22 participants. The minimum number of participants is 14.

Next Dates and Seminar Fees

The **next Japan seminar** will take place in autumn 2024. 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')

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