

SAFETY, QUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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It is time to invigorate the debate in this Championship. Lean construction unlike current management practices aim to improve, if not optimize project performance at higher levels. The slogan “Optimize the project not the piece” shifts our attention from local optimization to larger systems. This focus is in sharp contrast to typical and historic ways of managing aimed at local optimization. It is hard for me to imagine how we can expect management practices aimed at local optimization to solve problems at the global level. So this year I urge those working in sustainability to come to grips with the principles and practices necessary to deliver quality and a safe, sustainable future.

Three questions to start you thinking.

Can management practices built on decomposition and local optimization produce sustainable results and reduce global warming? Explain how if you can or explore how lean approaches aimed at higher levels of optimization can save our collective bacon.

Is Stanley Dekker right when he claims that human error is not the cause of trouble but a symptom of trouble deeper inside our systems? His view contradicts current error focused approaches to safety. He claims the current view of safety is decomposition, dualist and structural model that is inadequate to explain or reduce accidents. (See Ten Questions about Human Error and The Field Guide to Understanding Human Error both by Stanley Dekker.) He tackles head on current approaches to accident analysis, human factors and the procedural approach to safety. His views can provoke a principled debate. Let us have one.

How can we improve our ability to meet local quality measures **and** improve systems globally? Toyota learned early that one-by-one confirmation was essential. “This also meant verification of each process in relationship to preceding and following processes, as a whole system.” <http://www.mfgeng.com/images/toyota.pdf>