

THE LEAN EXPRESS

Five Actions for Building a Lean Culture

edition 9
november 2021

Panama: Five Actions for Building a Lean Culture

Everyone knows that Lean is all about strengthening the culture, but how can we do that? Panama is experiencing great success, and thanks to their implementation of Lean culture, Operating Margin nearly doubled from 2018 to 2021.

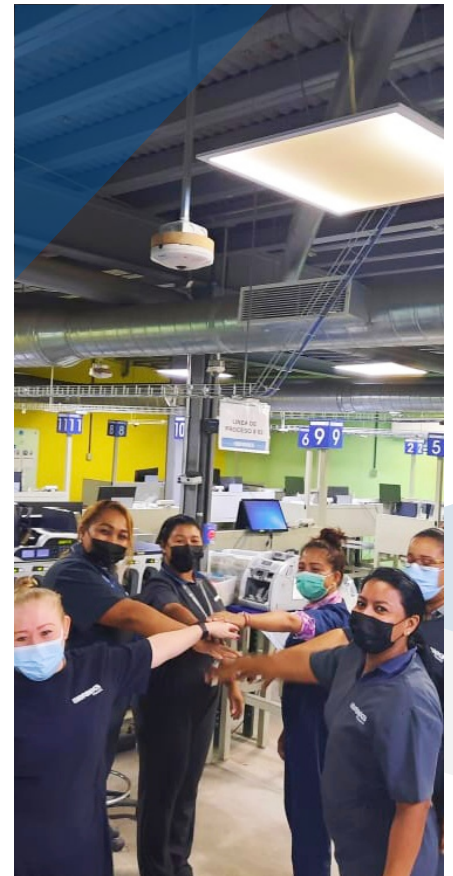
They are sharing specific actions and tips to improve the employee experience at the branch level, which in turn improves culture. We talked with Meredith Waterman, continuous improvement manager, and Nadia Torrero, processes and quality chief, about how Panama is leading the way.

1. Recognize that Lean leadership starts at the top. “We have support at all levels, starting with Mike Beech, Priscila Palhares Mendes and Cesar Lagrava, that extends to our branch managers,” Meredith says. “We are always talking about our culture and ways to improve.”

2. Teach branch managers and supervisors how to listen and engage, and provide training that equips them to solve problems. “When we began, nobody would raise concerns or speak up about problems – or ask for help. No one had asked what they thought,” Meredith says. “We encouraged them to participate with us, and they engaged and created accountability.”

Listening and engaging is especially important to Nadia, who began her career at Brink's as a teller. “I learned that it is important to know the people who work with our customers,” she says. “Doing that generates strong results. It's great to hear a teller say, 'I have an idea.'”

3. Train for Lean certification. 75% of Panama's employees in money processing have earned Lean Bronze certification, and Panama is seeing strong results. In January 2020, when tellers were processing 2.8 bundles per hour, Panama began training in Lean, especially focusing on visual management, with boards for planning and productivity. “We gave them the tools to use visual management, and as a result, tellers are now processing 4.6 bundles per hour,” Meredith says.



THE LEAN EXPRESS

Five Actions for Building a Lean Culture

edition 9
november 2021

4. Recognize and celebrate success. Internal recognition and rewards are very powerful tools for inspiring and engaging employees. Panama provides gifts and incentives for A3s and Lean certification, with employees receiving monetary awards when the country saves money through innovations. They also strive for global and regional awards – a supervisor in money processing was a **2020 Lean Diamond Award** winner, and Panama’s Operational Excellence Team was the **2020 Pinnacle Award** winner in the Close the Gap category.

5. Inspire a sense of pride and belonging every day. Panama accomplishes this with daily huddles, where the supervisor explains what they are trying to achieve that day, the tellers have an opportunity to speak, and if someone needs extra help, it can be discussed privately when the huddle finishes. The huddle ends with a high five all around. “That creates a positive impact to begin the day!”



“LISTEN, LEARN AND DEVELOP PEOPLE TO BUILD THE BEST LEAN CULTURE.”

—MEREDITH WATERMAN

CONTACT:

MEREDITH MEREDITH.WATERMAN@BRINKSPANAMA.COM

NADIA NADIA.TORRERO@BRINKSPANAMA.COM

THE LEAN EXPRESS

Five Actions for
Building a Lean Culture

edition 9
november 2021

Problems Are Opportunities to Improve Processes, Not to Find Culprits

The Lean Principles behind our Panama story should inspire all teams.

They show us the value of engaging people in a very concrete way. When people are connected to the purpose of their work, they are happier, and work more effectively, creatively, and collaboratively. This creates a better working environment that impacts the quality of our services, in addition to creating more capacity in our operation.

This is good for our people, for our company, and for our customers.

Also, we can learn from Panama how to build a culture in which problems become opportunities.

This involves creating an atmosphere of trust where problems are addressed in a systematic way, as an opportunity to improve processes, not to find culprits. This is the main ingredient in Panama's success, allowing the team to consistently improve their performance despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Because of their Lean culture, the Panama team has been able to markedly improve operating margin in recent years, even with the pandemic challenges.

All the principles and tools that Meredith and her team are using are included in our Lean Toolkit.

THANK YOU, PANAMA, FOR SHOWING US HOW TO BEST DEPLOY LEAN PRINCIPLES OF CULTURE!



PRISCILA PALHARES MENDES
Vice President Operational Excellence
Brink's LATAM
priscila.mendes@brinks.com.br