

What is Lean?

Lean is the elimination of waste so that all remaining steps in a process add value from the customer's perspective. Lean is neither a fad, nor a project; it is a long-term commitment to continually reduce waste through the application of Lean principles.

While applying the principles of Lean, organizations will employ a wide variety of tools such as **Single Piece Flow**, **5S**, **Quick Changeover**, and many others. However, Lean cannot be described as the application of these tools. Rather, Lean is the mindset behind their application. Reducing a machine's changeover time by 50% is not Lean if the reduction does not improve the performance of the entire value stream. To qualify as a Lean activity, the reduction in changeover time must be identified during **Value Stream Mapping** as a requirement to better serve the customer, likely by allowing for smaller batches, and thus a shortened lead time.

Many organizations apply Lean tools and believe that they are applying Lean principles. However, the principles of Lean should dictate which tools are used and when.

The Lean Principles

1. Understand the Value you create for the customer.
2. Use Value Stream Mapping to create a plan to improve the whole system.
3. Implement Single Piece Flow wherever possible.
4. Apply Pull between areas of Flow.
5. Continually Improve by repeating the process, constantly removing more waste.

Although the roots of Lean come from manufacturing, the **Lean Principles** can be applied to any process. Non-manufacturing industries that have successfully applied the principles of Lean include Healthcare, Food Processing, Restaurants, Banking, and many others.

or more information on Lean definitions, check out our **Lean Dictionary**. If you would like to learn more about Lean, consider the **Lean Principles** workshop solution for your organization. For more information about the tools of Lean, check out our **Workshop Solutions**.



Related Information:

- [Single Piece Flow](#)
- [5S](#)
- [Quick Changeover](#)
- [Value Stream Mapping](#)
- [Lean Principles](#)
- [Lean Dictionary](#)
- [Workshop Solutions](#)