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Lean Solutions: How Companies and Customers Can Create Value and Wealth Together

James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones
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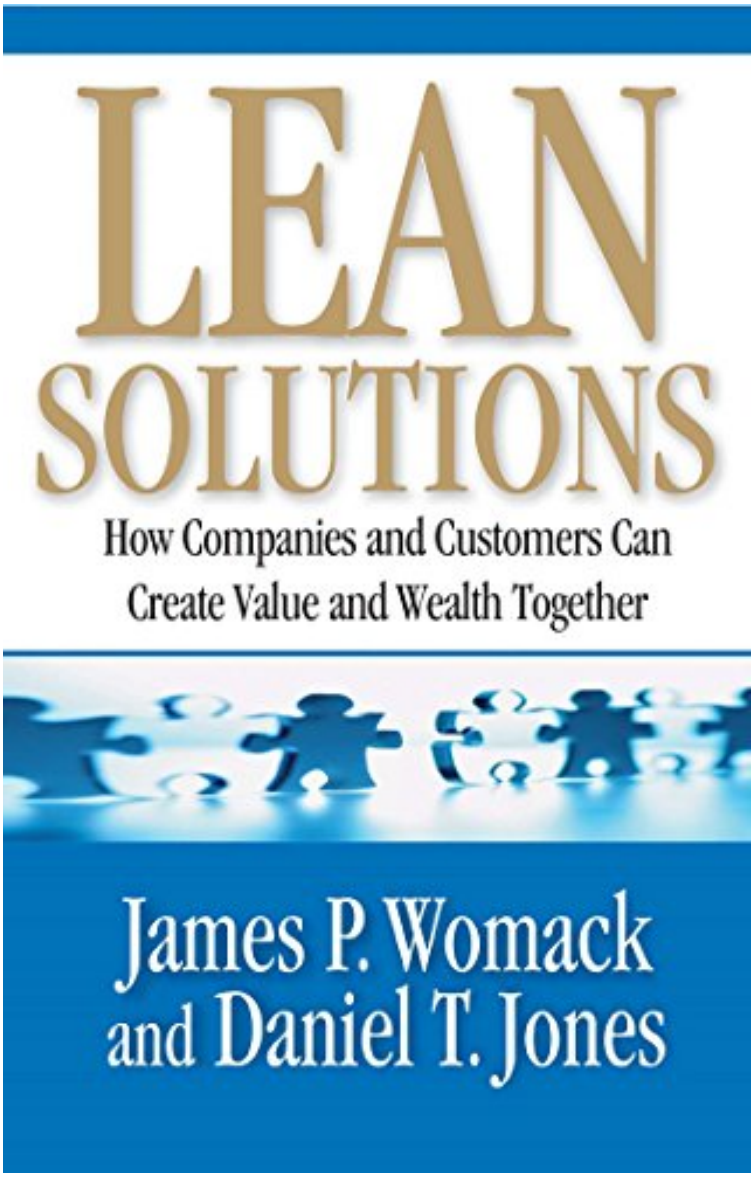

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James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones : Lean Solutions: How Companies and Customers Can Create Value and Wealth Together before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lean Solutions: How Companies and Customers Can Create Value and Wealth Together:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Audiobook was good content, marginal audioBy Edward J. BartonI listened to the audiobook version, and this review pertains to that. The material was pretty good, and the examples - like the airline industry and auto repair - bring lean into a perspective that every listener could understand and relate to. It was easy to see how lean methods could be applied - and also the examples went beyond the obvious to things like point to point private jet service, and redesign of planes to permit faster turn times, as examples tpo stretch the imagination.The audio, which was James Womack himself, was a little slow paced and done in a monotone. It was tough to keep my attention while listening in the car - and it wasn't because of the content. I've listened to some great audiobooks done by professional readers who can bring material to life - and would have recommended that these guys do the same thing next time. Womack is arguably the genius behind US lean thinking, but he's not well suited to be a recording artist...0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book on process improvement, easy to read, with new applications and examples for service industriesBy PHILIP M COOKEGreat book on process improvement, easy to read, with new applications and examples for service industries. Lean Thinking, a previous book, does a great job improving operations, with the result of giving customers a better experience. In Lean Solutions, the examples given more expressly include the customer experience in the process redesign cycle. I enjoyed the light-hearted writing style. Even my parents enjoyed listening to it. If you only read one book on process improvement, this might be it.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Certain to become a business "classic"By Robert MorrisIt is desirable but not necessary to have already read Womack and Jones's previously published Lean Thinking before reading this volume. In both, their focus is on "five simple principles" which can guide and inform any organization's efforts to achieve "process brilliance" in its product development, supplier management, customer support, and production processes. The principles are:1. Provide the value actually desired by customers.2. Identify the value stream for each product or service.3. Get and keep each step of the value stream in proper alignment.4. Enable the customer to "pull" rather than "push" maximum value from what you offer.5. Once the value, value stream, flow, and pull are established, "start over from the beginning in an endless search for perfection, the happy situation of perfect value provided with zero waste."In this context, I am reminded of Albert Einstein's emphasis on making everything as simple as possible...but no simpler. Lean initiatives should eliminate "fat" but not "muscle." Decision-makers in many organizations confuse rightsizing with downsizing.In Lean Solutions, Womack and Jones identify what they characterize as "the emerging challenges of consumption" despite the availability of better, cheaper products." And this seems very strange when we stop to consider that satisfying consumption - not just making brilliant products - is the whole point of lean production." In response to challenges such as complicated purchase decisions because "consumers are often drowning in a sea of choices," they explain how to combine truly lean provision with truly lean consumption. In process, Womack and Jones examine dozens of real-world examples of how various organizations have done so. When emerges is a new definition of value for today's consumer who insists that problems are solved completely, conveniently and without any waste of time. Moreover, today's consumer expects to receive exactly what she or he or wants, with value delivered where and when specified, with a substantial reduction of decisions which must be made to solve the given problem or fill the given need."Our objective is simple: We aim to teach managers to see all the steps a consumer must perform to research, obtain, install, integrate, maintain, repair, upgrade, and recycle the goods and services needed to solve their problem. We then challenge each step, asking why it is necessary at all and why it often can't be performed properly. Once worthless steps are eliminated, we can talk about flow and pull, heading toward perfection." Womack and Jones insist - and I wholly agree - that lean thinking must not only guide and inform continuous efforts to perfect production of a given product or service but to perfect, also, the provision and consumption of it. To the best of my knowledge, their book is the first to provide the core concepts, strategies, and tactics to accomplish that.True, Womack and Jones suggest and explain a number of "lean solutions" to all manner of problems but it remains for those who read their book to apply the principles of lean thinking to their own specific circumstances. Obviously, bold action is required and there are perils to take into full account. Any decisions made are, at best, subject to constant refinement and, when necessary, revision and perhaps even replacement as new circumstances develop. Effectively combining and then coordinating consumption and provision streams is indeed a journey rather than a destination.

Womack and Jones deconstruct the broken producer-consumer model and show businesses how to repair it, by providing the full value consumers desire from products without wasting time or effort.Why is it that, when our computers or our cell phones fail to satisfy our needs, virtually every interaction with help lines, support centers, or any organization providing service is marked with wasted time and extra hassle? In their bestselling business classic Lean Thinking, James Womack and Daniel Jones introduced the world to the principles of lean productionmdash;principles for eliminating waste during production. Now, in Lean Solutions, the authors establish the groundbreaking principles of lean consumption, showing companies how to eliminate inefficiency during consumption. Lean Solutions is full of surprising success stories: Fujitsu, a leading service company for technology, has transformed the way call centers solve problemsmdash;learning how to eliminate the underlying cause of current problems rather than fixing them again and again. An extremely successful car dealership has adopted lean principles

to streamline its business, making for dramatically reduced wait time, fewer return trips, and greater satisfaction for customersmdash;and a far more lucrative enterprise. Lean Solutions will inspire managers to take the first steps toward perfecting their company's process of giving consumers what they really want.

.com American and European feelings towards Japanese business practices have varied dramatically through the last few decades. In the late 1970s and 1980s, a wave of fear swept through many Western leaders as they contemplated Japan's stunningly rapid rise from the ashes of World War II. Then more recently, as the 1990s and early 2000s saw stagflation gripping the Japanese economy, and knowledge-based innovation in technology and financial services bringing unprecedented prosperity to many Western countries, a feeling of vindication (and sometimes smugness) returned to those same corporate chieftains. Most recently, perhaps, the pendulum of conventional wisdom has begun to swing back to a middle position, in between the extremes of adulation and disdain: respect for the positive contributions of Japanese business culture, without blind acceptance. It's with this spirit that the authors of Lean Solutions offer their insightful observations about process design and service delivery in modern companies. James Womack and Daniel Jones are well-recognized contributors to the lean-business movement. Lean Solutions is the consultants' fifth book together, following earlier works like Lean Thinking and The Machine That Changed the World, and springs as before from their keen interest in Japanese business methods and philosophy. What compels them to write yet another book, though, given the well-established literature on lean business? The authors offer an intriguing description of their mission at the beginning of this latest book. Principles of lean design have in fact been adopted by many Western businesses, they acknowledge, and manufacturing quality has steadily risen as a result. Yet customers remain often dissatisfied with their experiences. The cause? To Womack and Jones, the answer rests in a myopic application of lean business principles: companies have successfully improved their manufacturing and product-development environments, but they have not had a large enough view of the overall customer relationship, and of the need for leanness in all aspects of companies' interactions with customers. Put another way: in Lean Solutions, readers find a new and much broader conceptualization of how lean-business methods--which, to be fair to Womack and Jones, have evolved so that they can claim a global heritage as much as a Far Eastern one--might apply across entire customer experiences, rather than just manufacturing processes. The structure of Lean Solutions centers on 6 requests that the authors believe customers implicitly demand from their vendors: "Solve my problem completely; don't waste my time; provide exactly what I want; deliver value where I want it; supply value when I want it; and reduce the number of decisions I must make to solve my problems." With a compelling mix of case studies, and illuminating thought experiments in industries ranging as widely as shoe manufacturing, health care delivery, auto repair, and grocery shopping, Womack and Jones walk readers through careful explanations of how lean thinking might be expanded beyond the factory floor to broader business problems. Lean Solutions isn't for all readers. It rests on an appreciation of the large cumulative effects that many small processes can have on business, and it requires patience from those who want to learn the secrets of lean business. --Peter HanFrom BooklistIn Lean Thinking (1996), Womack and Jones expanded on the lean manufacturing model developed by Toyota to reduce waste and costs, reduce lead times, and improve quality. Here, they bring lean thinking to the broader world of consumer satisfaction. Traditional mass-consumption thinking has brought us tons of gee-whiz products but more frustration when it comes to actually getting what we want where and when we want it. Through a series of "consumption maps," Womack and Jones highlight the "hassle time" inherent in the ways we shop, travel, and receive essential services, and then they offer novel ways for both consumers and providers to reduce this wasted time. We all know the dissatisfaction of going to the grocery store and finding the very item we need is out of stock. The new models reduce out-of-stock situations drastically by allowing consumers to dictate flow through demand rather than flow being driven by sales projections. Womack and Jones introduce ways to bring lean provision streams to some of our most hassle-laden consumer experiences, including the auto-repair, airline, and health-care industries. We can only hope someone is listening. David SiegfriedCopyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reservedAbout the AuthorJames P. Womack is the president and founder of the Lean Enterprise Institute (www.lean.org), a nonprofit education and research organization based in Brookline, Massachusetts.Daniel T. Jones is the chairman and founder of the Lean Enterprise Academy (www.leanuk.org), a nonprofit education and research organization based in the UK.James P. Womack is the president and founder of the Lean Enterprise Institute (www.lean.org), a nonprofit education and research organization based in Brookline, Massachusetts.