

INTRODUCTION

Competition is getting tougher every day. It used to be enough to use our equipment and manpower efficiently and deliver a good product on time. If we did, we could be competitive and do well. Today and in the future we will have to do even better. This book is about lean production. It is a way to do better by eliminating waste in our production process. Lean is working in manufacturing, in services, in construction, and it works in sheet metal shops. It can work for you.

The term “lean” was coined by James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones in the book The Machine That Changed the World. They use the term to describe the Toyota Production System (TPS), and to contrast TPS to traditional mass production. The Toyota approach has been so successful that virtually every other carmaker is converting to lean manufacturing. The lessons are spreading rapidly through all kinds of manufacturing and beyond to all kinds of businesses. Lean is a way to do more with less, a way to deliver value to customers; what they want, when they want it, where they want it at the lowest possible cost.

This book was written to introduce the owners, managers, and workers in sheet metal shops to the principles and methods of lean production as they apply to your business. The first section addresses what lean production is and the benefits it can produce. The second section contains tools for implementation and a list of resources for further study.

We hope you find it useful.