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Podcast Transcription

Implementing Lean Marketing Systems



Making Standard Work Simple

Guest was Alain Patchong

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Note: This is a transcription of an interview. It has not gone through a professional editing process and may contain grammatical errors or incorrect formatting.

Transcription of Interview

Joe: *Welcome everyone! This is Joe Dager, the host of the Business901 Podcast. With me today is Alain Patchong. He started his career at Peugeot where he developed and implemented methods to engineering and improving manufacturing systems. He earned himself a worldwide recognition from industries as well as from academia, including an invitation as a scholar at MIT. After 12 years with Peugeot, he joined Goodyear to head the Industrial Engineering Department in Europe, Middle East, and Africa. In this position, he developed and led Standardized Work implementation in European plants. His books on Standardized Work are based on this story.*

The books, a series by Productivity Press is TheOneDayExpert and is built upon the simple idea that in today's highly competitive environment, industry has already harvested low-hanging fruit and they cannot rely anymore on single-minded or one-size-fits-all tools. Experts with a holistic view and deep insight are needed, yet solutions must be made simple enough for everyone to master and own them.

Alain, thanks for your participation and tell me a little bit about TheOneDayExpert.

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Alain: Okay Joe, thank you for inviting me. Actually the objective at the beginning was to achieve what I call a kind of Lean book. So we want the reader to be able to read the book, understand the book and implement the same day, so it was kind of a very ambitious objective. So this is why we said, okay, how can we do it? I didn't want to have a very, very long book with a lot of pages that the reader will not be able to read quickly. So we said okay, we're going to try to have something around 100 pages. This is something you can be able to read between two and three hours. This is a time here in Europe you will need to move from a big city to another one by train. I know that you don't use a train that much in the US, but we use the train a lot here. So we also want something that's very easy to read. It's a story of a young, very high-potential industrial plant manager from Germany, or at least from a German-speaking country, we sent to France to turn around a plant which is losing money. So we use this story to prepare, to train people how to use this Standardized Work. And we also have something very simple, we are using charts, we are using simple drawings, also using a simple example which is t-shirt folding. So this t-shirt folding is used from the first to the fourth book to illustrate the learning concerning Standardized Work.

Joe: *The four-book series, is it the same person, the same plant, the same storyline through all of them?*

Alain: Yes, exactly. It's the same person. The history from the beginning, from the moment

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he came to the plant. So I'm also using this opportunity to kind of talk about those side stories, those challenges, and those personal challenges you and I can have due to our professional life. So it's also the same example of t-shirt folding, so I'm taking the t-shirt folding from the beginning. And there's a pitch; the pitch is that okay this person should be able to improve a process so that the company can in-source the t-shirt folding in Europe. So this story is used throughout the four books.

Joe: *Why did you use Standard Work as the premise for this? Why didn't you say, oh this is Kaizen event, a PDC event that this guy does to improve the process? Why is this centered around Standard Work?*

Alain: Well, that's an excellent question. I think from the beginning, the West based on my experience is that all personal excellence starts with Standardized Work, so this is really the basic. When I was the Industrial Engineering Manager for Goodyear and in this position, I was in charge of validating resources - when I say resources, in terms of people, workers on the shop floor, but also machines. And I quickly noticed that people who are asking more capacity, more machines than needed and then my solution was to say, "Okay guys, let's go on the shop floor. Let's take a stopwatch and measure and observe." And I started noticing that a lot of people didn't even know what was the standard work. They didn't know the process. So as we were observing which we were seeing a lot of opportunities for improvement and this is how I started. For me, this was really the basic point to start with,

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without doing let's measure, let's see what are we doing? How can we discover what you're doing and from that, how can we improve? Put two people around the table and try to find best practice, capture that best practice, and then spread it out to the plant.

Joe: *Now you had mentioned that you created short stories so someone could read them in a short period of time, is that the reason that there are four separate books?*

Alain: The stories started when I worked for Goodyear and in the beginning I had no money, no budget to implement or to spread out Standardized Work in our plants. So I wanted to let's say kind of evangelize people and then I created this training. I said, okay let's have a training, a very short training that I call 'advocacy training.' So the idea was to say okay, I call a plant manager, and I'd say, "Okay, I have an idea that you can use to improve your plant, okay? Could you just invite your people and minus one for half a day and I would come and do a kind of simulation with this t-shirt folding. In the end, if you feel that this makes sense for you, this can make you save to improve your productivity, I would be very happy to come back for a week-long training." So this is what I did. And then when I started doing this, I noticed that okay, just writing a document was not enough. If you write documents, people say, so what? And you have to think about how can I use these documents to improve. When they start improving, people see the interest of writing documents. And then how do you make sure because if you have documents and it is not applied on the shop floor, this is just waste. So how do you make sure that people can apply

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this on the shop floor? You have to train them, and after you train them, you need to audit to be clear, to verify that this is actually done on the shop floor.

So this is how I came up with this idea of implementing Standardized Work as a system, as a set of tool, and that's why I have those four steps. And from those four steps, you have four books because I didn't want to have everything in one book. I wanted this to be easy to read, 100 pages, so I didn't want to have all those tools in only one book. I said okay, one tool, one book to make it easier for anybody to be able to read, understand, and implement the same day.

Joe: *So then I can implement let's say that book and build upon that with the next one. I don't have to have let's say all four them to get started?*

Alain: No. Actually, we also try to make this effort so that you can only read one book and apply it. I have to say that it's not difficult. It was kind of a tradeoff. This continuity I describe in the beginning, something that will go from the beginning to the end, but at the same time I said okay, we don't want to mandate people to buy all the four books. I think we were successful in achieving that.

Joe: *People struggle I think with the definition of Standard Work. It's just not a set of instructions up there because nobody is going to use them if it's just say a form of their*

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telling me how I'm supposed to do something. Can you maybe define Standard Work for me?

Alain: Well Joe, this is a very good question. You know I'm a very pragmatic guy. There are a lot of definitions out there in the literature; mine is very simple. It's about doing a task which is repeatable the best way; the best way in terms of safety, in terms of quality, in terms of productivity. So there is a clear two ideas here that I would like to convey. The first idea is to say it has to be repeatable; something which is repeatable, which comes from time to time. But also you need the idea of improvement behind it. It's also said to be used for improvement. So Standardized Work is that. It's okay, can I just capture the best practice in order to improve and then spread it out to other places.

Joe: *And I think that's some of the difficulty people have because they look at Standard Work and here it is, but we're supposed to be constantly improving it, so it's kind of like it's a moving target that is there really a standard beneath continuous improvement?*

Alain: Yes, exactly and this is really what is important in this idea is that you standardize and then I should say that you train people, you audit, and then you see the gap and after seeing the gap, you improve. You improve by improving your process or by training people better because sometimes, the gap is simply due to the fact that people are not applying Standardized Work correctly. So it's simple a PDCA wheel. You're using this to make sure that you capture the best practice; you make sure that people are doing it on the shop floor,

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you check it, and then you see the gaps. And since you've seen the gaps, you do the loop again and so on. So it's just this; it's improvement at the end of this continuous improvement.

Joe: *Can and should Standard Work exist in all job functions?*

Alain: Well this is also a very interesting question that I get so very often. Actually we can only talk about Standardized Work when there's anything that repeats. Repeatability is the key. It's really a matter of cost benefits. In some jobs, you see very quickly like a cycling operation work on the shop floor. We see repeatability very quickly. In some other jobs and I always take the example of a nurse, the job will seem like very organic and then you cannot see the pattern when you just look -- from the helicopter, we see okay she is doing everything different every time. But when you get very close, and then you look at actually what she's doing when she gets in a patient's room, she's trying to do things, a module of things which are repeatable. Like let's say monitoring, or administering medication, and nervous infusions, taking patient pulses and temperature and so on. Those kinds of activities are repeatable. She's doing the same thing over and over, and those chunk of activities can be standardized. Make no mistake; it's not all the task, all the functions that can be standardized. When you're getting product from the shop floor, you have less and fewer opportunities to find the possibility to standardize. So overall, the best way is when you look at that is repeatability. If there is a repeatability somewhere, then you can apply

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Standardized Work.

Joe: *I can standardize certain portions of my work, a small part of it because that should be able to allow me to do it much more effectively and efficiently and also which allows me to do other things. I mean if I standardize the part of any of my tasks that really does even if I paint and go. If I standardize how I sort my paints over here, it's going to allow me to paint much better and give me a much greater freedom of expression. Is there any truth to that?*

Alain: Yes, that is exactly correct. No, you should not be constrained by any let's say theoretical definition. You look at what you're doing, as you just said Joe; that's exactly correct. You look at what you're doing and if there isn't anything that is coming over and over because when it's coming so often, if you save a second and then at the end of the day, this is huge. So if it's not coming that often, you might not have any interest in doing that. So is this something we're doing every day? And then you see that okay, there is a way for me to standardize, then from this standardization to be able to find ways to improve this, this is a lot of money you're going to save, so this is exactly what you have to do.

Joe: *Is there certain components that makeup Standard Work? I mean besides just the definition or are they all different? And that's standard for Standard Work.*

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Alain: Good question as well. When you look in the literature, they say okay there is three elements to Standardized Work. TAT time, job sequence, and Standardized Work in process – so this is what is said from other documents coming from Toyota and so on. The only thing, as I said before I'm a very pragmatic guy and how do you define what you're doing? You define what you're doing using key points. So key points for me is also key if I may say so. And this is why I say okay if I'm not defining correctly key points which are also the heart of Standardized Work, then I'm not doing this Standardized Work that's so good. I may not be able to implement continuous improvement to improve continuously. So this is why in my let's say free approach, I also added key points as an element of Standardized Work because I found that this was also important to be able to find in each operation key points. I just wanted to remind that key point is something which is instrumental in the success of any operation in terms of safety, in terms of quality, in terms of productivity. So if you miss this point, you are almost sure and quite certain that those points will be failed. This is why I included key points as the fourth element of standardization, of Standardized Work.

Joe: *Would you recommend sometimes not using Standard Work? I mean is there times that it's obviously besides let's say repeatable, is there other times that you would shy away from it or is repeatable the key part of using Standard Work?*

Alain: Standardized Work has no interest when there is variation when there is volatility when there is low repeatability. This can be due to a lot of causes. It could be just like this

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process is designed on purpose not to be repeatable - then there is no Standardized Work. But there is some occasions, some situations where it is simply due to the machine, the machine which is very, very unreliable, the machine which is all the product which is causing huge problems and so in those situations, my advice is start fixing those problems first. Start fixing making your machine reliable, so we can use tools like TPM or whatever. But if you try to implement Standardized Work when you have this environment with a lot of disruptions, first of all, operators will be frustrated because they are already frustrated by those stoppages which are coming over and over. But they'll say, okay why are you focusing on us? First of all fix the problem. Fix all those machine stops. So fix them first and then you'll get this credibility to be able to go ahead and start working on Standardized Work

Joe: *I think it's interesting when you say that because so many times workers and frontline people and nurses for a great example, they find workarounds to problems to be able to make things and take care of things and make them work. And when you try to implement Standard Work, they just look at you because there are so many other things going on, they're like -- and so that's a great indication.*

Alain: Yes, yes. That is what I explained in the first book actually. Is that okay? Before doing anything, okay well, fix all the problems because if you come -- and this is what I've noticed during my personal life at Goodyear when I was implementing this, so people are willing to work, they are willing to work with you in improving and doing Standardized Work

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but first, you have to show them that you are taking seriously the daily problems, the daily frustrations and this is where we have to start first

Joe: *I have a couple of things that I want you to kind of expand on and tell me because sometimes Standard Work and Lean practices oppose certain things and one of them I think is ISO, that people will have like two separate systems running. They have this ISO thing over here that they have standard operating policies in and different things and this checklist they're meeting, but then they have standard work over here. Should they be used together and can they be used together?*

Alain: Joe, I'm really not an expert of ISO, but this is what I would say, and there's an example in the second book, the green one. Because when I started implementing Standardized Work, most of the time when I show up in a plant they would say, "Oh, we already have standards. What are you talking about?" And then I will have a very small exercise that I would do with them. I say, "Okay, good. This is your standards. Let's read your standards..." and then I will ask them very easy questions about the process, about operations. The kind of questions that when you go in the plant, you'll want to know. And then I would say okay, answer those questions, and then I would take those and say, "Okay this is the standardize work for the same process..." and I say, "Look, read these documents and then answer the same questions." And they would be very clear that after reading Standardized Work documents, they would understand better the process. They would be

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able to improve the process.

I would say, "Okay, you don't have to get rid of your documents, the other standards you already have. You don't have to get rid of that." First of all I also did that because I didn't want to have this opposition from the beginning, but I was also sincere. You don't have to get rid of that because, in those documents, you have some definition. It's focusing on standards and clear in defining what has to be done. However, the Standardized Work documents are not only describing but also focus on understanding and then improving. So this is the way I explain, when I went to plants where they already have "standards," so those too can live together and we don't have to -- when we come and we would like to implement Standardized Work, then we'll have to say, "Oh guys, this is Day One, get rid of all your standards." No, this will not work. You might be confronted with a strong opposition from the owners of those standards.

Joe: *You know I've been discussing training Within Industry a fair amount and Standard Work seems very close to the Job Instruction Program of TWI, especially with the key points that you've mentioned in doing that. Are they similar and maybe what are the differences?*

Alain: Joe, this is an excellent question. You remember I said when I started, my approach to implementing Standardized Work was to do it with a set of tools. You capture the current situation using Standardized Work documents or the documents we all know and then from

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there, you can improve by using those documents and after improving, you're going to go back to do some updating of your initial documents and from that, you have to train people and audit. So training is the key. Training is a part of -- a big component of sustaining Standardized Work. And when we talk about training, I don't know a better method to train than TWI. This is the best method to train from what I know.

So the fourth book I'm currently writing is about sustaining. So we would be talking about training and auditing, and the part which is decimated to training would be a lot about TWI. My goal is not to make the reader an expert of TWI but just to give some key aspects that should be use to apply the Four Step Method, which is described in the TWI. Now when you look at TWI, there is a document which is called the Job Breakdown Sheet. This Job breakdown document is used to do the training and in this document, you have key points. Now these key points are not exactly the key points that you would find at Standardized Work. Those key points are quite let's say, free to you from the trainer to define. He has to -- you don't need to define or to train somebody to something which is quite obvious. Therefore, your key point definition is completely your decision to say, "Okay, this is key, this is key, this is key. Let's do it." So you have the same work in the documents and also in the job breakdown sheet but they're not corresponding to the same thing. So again just for me, to summarize, TWI is important for the training step in the deployment of Standardized Work as a system, so it's one of the tools. At least this is how I use it today and in the Job Breakdown Sheet, the five key points which are used to train people efficiently.

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Joe: Which comes first, putting Standard Work in place come before TWI and Job Instruction or does Job Instruction develop the Standard Work?

Alain: Based on my experience and the way I deploy Standardized Work before you train somebody, you should know what you're training about. So knowing what you're training about means that you should be able to define the Standard Work. So you have to start first by defining what the operator should be doing. And what the operator should be doing is then there to supply your TWI part of the Standardized Work. Also go back to the point, to one of my previous arguments, my previous points, you do not have to go down the shop floor and start training people. You also need at the beginning to say, okay guys, okay let's -- fix first of all we said that before on the problems that you have around, so what are you doing? Okay, you describe together with people on the shopfloor the way things should be done, and then you improve, and when you improve, it's something new, and this is an opportunity to train. Because if it's new and you're not training people, then okay, you are not sure that it will apply to the shop floor. So the way I do it, the way I apply it, the way I understand it is that training will come after the definition, after describing how work should be done.

Joe: Could I say then that Standard Work is the development of my current state and the along the way of developing current state, I might get rid of some low-hanging fruit if it's

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there or not. But it's really it's concentrating and developing current state.

Alain: Yes Joe, you can say that because again, you always start with current state. You start with -- it is what I said the first picture and then when you have the first picture, you start seeing things which are not -- you start seeing waste. If it's not described, it's not easy to see waste. So when you start working and trying to define, then you ask your question, "Oh, why is it that this operator is working so long? Why is it that he's doing this before this when it would be more logical or time-saving to do it the other way around?" So this is the kind of question that Standardized Work or a definition of what you're doing is forcing you to do. It's forcing you to think about what is done. And if you're also bringing in your group some operators, quite naturally what I have observed is that okay, they would look at this, "Oh, what am I doing?" "Oh, by the way, this guy is not doing the right way and so on."

I just want to tell you a very short story. When we start implementing this at Goodyear, I went to a plant -- I guess this plant was in the UK and the first day, it was quite difficult. We go on the shop floor for another reason, I will not talk about this reason, but the bottom line is that at some point, they noticed that there was a guy, a guy heard about this initiative going on the Standardized Work, and this guy was somebody working during the weekends. And then he came alone, and he came to the group and said, "Well, I have a method which is different from other guys." "Oh well, we didn't know that. So what is your method?" And they start observing the method and say, "Oh, this is a method which is very, very efficient..."

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and I noticed that this method was like 70% more efficient than the ones that were trained to other guys. Took this method and from this method they built a more efficient one and they were able to double the production simply by observing. So observing is key then, and I urge people to use and not to be shy about using things like cameras, like videotaping. It's quite, quite efficient. And my colleagues there in the UK, they used to videotape, and you will see them with like three, even four videos going on at the same time. They would be able to visualize several operators doing the same thing and when they put everybody in the room, and they will be able to observe in parallel and then see the difference. And people would say, "Oh, why this is not correct..." or "This is better than this one." Okay, this is how you do continuous improvement – observation, observation, observation.

Joe: *Talk about Leader Standard Work a fair amount of knowledge work and outside of the factory floor, is there a specific difference between Leader Standard Work and Standard Work as you describe it?*

Alain: Actually the West it is like complimentary tools or concepts. Standardized work is mostly for operators on the shop floor, for the way they are doing their work even if the documents can be used by somebody else. Whereas the Leader Standard Work is the way to define the managers, the plants managers work. So it's kind of the same idea but applied to different people. Standardized work for workers on the shopfloor and the Leader Standard Work for leaders to say it very clearly. So same idea but different areas of application and I

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think complementariness.

Joe: *When will your fourth book be out?*

Alain: Oh, this is a very difficult question, Joe. I have been writing this for awhile, reschedule from my editor and for my publisher, so I'm now writing -- I guess to be really fair, I should be like at 60% of the writing of the book. So hopefully, I will be able to submit to Productivity Press around April and then maybe by the end of by June or September, you'll get something out on Amazon and so on.

Joe: *Where can we find the book? Okay, I assume Amazon is the logical question or the logical answer, and maybe learn more about you and your work?*

Alain: Yes, yes. No, sure you can go to Amazon. You said it; everything is now on Amazon. But also you can go to my publisher's Website. To contact, it's quite possible to contact me. You can contact me via Patchong@TheOneDayExpert.com. There is also on this Website my phone number if you want to call. I will be happy to answers all questions regarding the books. I'm a very big -- I will say an aficionado of manufacturing excellence in general, but also of Standardized Work, so I'm very happy to answer any questions which are asked around my book and Standardized Work in general.

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Joe: *What else is upcoming for you and point to us a little bit about how you envision the Standard Work and the things that you are doing now?*

Alain: Well what I'm doing now is to be able to keep, to take this idea of Standardized Work and this idea of TheOneDayExpert to push it quite far and use it in a new business which is kind of implementing manufacturing excellence which is two or three pillars. The first is process; the second one is people - so how can we use this method to better train people, and the third pillar is technology. So I'm also trying to use this to bring some new and smart technologies in the plants. We're talking here about automated guided vehicle or those vehicles that move automatically on the shop floor. This is something also that I'm very interested. So the idea at the end of the day is to be able to have this holistic view, to bring this idea to the plant but in a very simple way, in a way that people can master and own the idea.

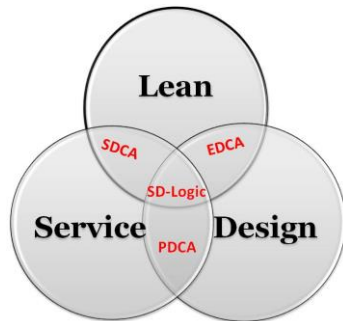
Joe: *I thank you very much, Alain. That's very informative. This Podcast will be available on the Business901 iTunes store and the Business901 Blog Site. Thanks again!*

Alain: My pleasure Joe. Thank you so much for having me.

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Joe Dager is President of Business901, a firm specializing in bringing the continuous improvement process to the sales and marketing arena. He takes his process thinking of over thirty years in marketing within a wide variety of industries and applies it through Lean Marketing and Lean Service Design.

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