Business901

Podcast Transcription

Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

Why A3, Why Now in Lean Thinking?

Guest was Mike Osterling of Osterling Consulting

Related Podcast:

Why A3, Why Now in Lean Thinking?

Business901

Podcast Transcription

Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

Osterling Consulting was founded by Mike Osterling in 2000 with the purpose of supporting organizations on their continuous improvement journey. Building upon 18 years of internal experience in operations leadership roles, Mike has worked full time for the last 13 years applying the Lean concepts in manufacturing and office environments. His team of associates comes from a variety of industries; manufacturing and non-manufacturing alike.

Osterling Consulting's mission is to support our clients by putting in place the foundations required for a self-sustaining culture of operational excellence. We have extensive experience working at all levels of the organization. Our engagements typically combine a mix of consulting, mentoring, training, event facilitation, and team support; all with a strong emphasis on learning-by-doing. As opposed to a "one size fits all" approach, we believe our ability to adapt to the unique nature of each client's needs and environment has been the key to our successes.

Mike Osterling is the President and Principal Consultant at Osterling Consulting, Inc. With more than 25 years of leadership experience in the US, Mexico and Europe, he has played a pivotal role in leading Lean transformations across a broad range of clients and industries including manufacturing, service, oil production, pharmaceuticals and construction. Prior to consulting, Mike worked at Square D Company for 18 years and played a key role in the Lean transformation at several their plants. In 1999, he helped found San Diego State University's Lean Enterprise Certificate Program and continues to teach in that program. In his Lean career, Mike has delivered more than 900 days of training and certified more than 1000 students on Lean Enterprise principles and tools.

Joe Dager: This is Joe Dager, the host of the Business 901 podcast. With me today is Mike Osterling, who is the President and Principal Consultant at Osterling Consulting. Mike has 18 of internal experience in operations leadership and 13 years in consulting Lean concepts for manufacturing and office environments. He is the co-author of The Kaizen Event Planner and co-developed the Metrics-Based Process Mapping software. Mike I'd like to welcome you to the podcast and would you let people know what you're up to these days and give me that brief elevator speech.

Mike Osterling: Hi, Joe. Thanks for having me. Good to talk to you again. Actually, it’s been interesting because I've been reengaging with some clients and moving on from a lot of the traditional Lean tools, whether they're being applied in office environment or of a shop floor and going to what they're perceiving as advanced concepts. So that's exactly in line with what we want to talk about today; problem solving and A3 thinking. It's been a good journey and what I think is done in a normal evolution of thought and development.

Joe: That's nice of you to introduce the A3 for me. You started hearing more about A3 about two or three years ago, and it’s kind of the rage right now. But it's been around for an awful long time naturally.

Mike: That's my understanding, and I definitely wasn't there at the beginning. I didn't become really aware of A3 until probably seven or eight years ago. There wasn't a lot of talk about it back then. It has been getting a lot more press as you said in the last two or three years. Sometimes, I wonder if that's because there's a bunch of folks in the middle of the organization who we've ignored as we go through these Lean transformation and these

folks in the middle are saying, what's my role. So it's been nice because we've been able to figure what are these guys are supposed to be doing. What is their real job in a Lean thinking organization?

Joe: When you say the guys in the middle, we are talking about middle managers, I assume. I've always found; these were the guys that made or break the organizations I ran in the past. For years when I heard about Lean, you always heard about standard work and the operators. But that poor guy in the middle, he was always the one responsible for still keeping the quality and the things going out the door, but nobody ever talked about him. They just talked about him as part of the empowering other people maybe. Are those the people you are working with?

Mike: That's a lot of the folks that we're working with, and you are right. We have talked to them about, in very general terms, and I was guilty of this when I was internal, and we went through the transformation. We said, "We've got a job for you in the future. The only thing we know is your job is going to be different" and we kind of left it at that. We asked them to support what the workers were doing. We didn't really tell them how to do that. Again, I am going to say, a lot of organizations and again I was guilty of it as well, we ignored those folks in the middle. It's not just the middle managers, its supervisors, its engineers; it's a lot of staff people. So the population is pretty significant folks that we need to get up to speed.

Joe: A3s have become something that seem to apply to a lot of people. It is talked about as a problem solving, a status type report and even for info or proposals. Can you kind of define that huge umbrella there for me?

Mike: My perspective on that, Joe, is like you said. There's a different level of thinking that has to take place within an organization. One company that I've been engaged with and they follow a lot of the stuff that's laid out in the Pascal Dennis's book called "Getting the Right Things Done". He talks about the mother A3s and the strategic A3s. These are not necessarily solving problems, but they're telling us what we need to work on. Then these spawn baby A3s, which may be a problem solving A3s. The report A3s are something that sometimes we see them as Kaizen newspapers or Kaizen report outs. Its documentation, it's almost a history report on what happened within a Kaizen event.

So, that's kind of how I see them. The reports, their problem solving tools or their strategic A3 that tells us, what is it that we need to work on.

Joe: What you're saying when you look at them, is that we're using the A3 format so that we recognize immediately what it is. When I say the A3 format, I don't mean just the size of the page. But the plan on the left and the do, check, act, on the right. We're using that format to explain things. But really the actionable A3 is the problem solving.

Mike: Absolutely. Yes. The actionable thing, the A3 thinking, as we've been, as more and more folks have been learning about, is really talking about the A3 problem solving process.

Joe: When we talk about A3 thinking then, is it just another word for PDCA?

Mike: I suppose it is if we have a real good understanding of PDCA. The challenge that I've run into or what one of the things I've observed, in numerous environments, is we say plan, do, check, act. But we haven't developed our folks in how to do that, how to execute

it. Yeah, if you've had ten different engineers and you tell them to do a plan, do, check, act on something, follow the PDCA cycle to resolve this issue. There's a good chance they're going to take 10 different approaches to it, 10 different styles, 10 different methodologies.

And so one way I think of A3 problem solving, is developing or designing or creating the standard work for problem solving.

Joe: We still have a lot of flexibility though?

Mike: There has to be. It's kind of like in a lot of administrative or office processes. We talk about standard of work. And it's, standard work, and it's a checklist. And completing the work for each of the check items may differ with, from job to job or customer to customer. So absolutely it's more of standard work, you can almost think of it as a checklist. As we get to each one of these, each one of the check boxes or the action items, the questions we ask, the tools we use, the people we engage will be different from problem to problem.

Joe: Also when we talk about A3, it's not just a picture, is it? It's not just like a snapshot of, in business terms, a balance sheet, a snapshot of where we're at today. There's more to it than that.

Mike: I like to think of it as the distillation of the situation. So we're distilling down. When we distil water, we take all the impurities out of it, and we bring it down just to the water. So when there's a whole lot of background stuff that has to take place when we put together the A3. In fact, how many versions of the A3 are there as we go through it? It's

an incredible quantity of iterations, or potentially it can be many, many iterations of the A3.

The A3 does not contain all of the knowledge. Sometimes, we talk about the A3 as being... I don't do it on Power Points, but the analogy is it might be three or four Power Point slides with the key bullets serve as talking points when we're discussing the problem with other people, whether it's with peers, other people related to the problem or when we're communicating up and across the organization, here's what we did and why.

Joe: So, it's really a summary, and you could have a whole file cabinet behind it.

Mike: Absolutely. I don't want that A3 with a whole file cabinet behind it, but it could. There's a whole lot of information behind it. You know, Joe, some people talk about and compare it to an A3 in place of a description of everything that we've learned. It's taking it down to what the actual...here's what we know. It's not just a bunch of observations.

Joe: One of the things, when I talk about A3s and I use them, people always want the action. They want to jump to the right side, and one of the big problems is, can we start on the right side or do we have to start on the left?

Mike: If it's a five minute problem and a two dollar experiment and it doesn't really affect a whole lot of people, I think there's a lot to be said for quick, small cycles of learning and experimentation. I don't know if everybody agrees with me on this one, but I don't think every problem dictates an A3 and documenting it and writing it down. The important thing is that we're going through the thought process. And so, there's some simple tools that we use for simple problems that take us right to, hey, I think if I move this thing over here,

it's going to make my job easier. You know what, Joe? I'm going to move it over there, and I'm going to check it out. One of the things we've done in a lot of organizations is enable quick experimentation.

On the shop floor we talk about wheels. We talk about quick disconnects and things like that. So, we don't need to turn in a maintenance request or get an engineer approval. So, we get our lead over there. We say, "Hey, this is my thought. Can we give it a try? Absolutely. Unlock the wheels. Move it over there. See if it works. If it did not work, then we'll move it back." And we learned something, and we've lost 10 minutes. That's good. That's great stuff.

Joe: I think one of the things everybody's talking about now is getting into the short cycle iterations, and we even talk about to do that, it doesn't necessarily mean that we drop the planning side though. But it does mean that we kind of...maybe, that doing side, that D in the PDCA happens a little sooner. Is that a fair analogy or not?

Mike: What we're trying to do is by putting structure around this plan Do-check act and telling people, training people, getting people experience as to what this really means. What is the problem? By training them to do that when they run into small problems, I won't say it's subconsciously, but they can quickly go through that problem definition, understand what the real issue is, understand why it's a problem, and then get to a countermeasure or a solution or an improvement quicker and with better solutions. If we've developed and if we've trained them on how do you define a problem and how do you go through the do, check, act phases properly.

Joe: The reason I ask them questions is not necessarily to say that I was right in where I was going with that. I just see that the lack of planning is still taking place, so that lack of definition of what we need to solve is still kind of fuzzy. We're talking about iterations and people trying these things out earlier. When we talk that way, it seems contradictive of A3 thinking.

Mike: Again, I think it has to do with the magnitude of the problem. If we have a small problem and it doesn't affect a lot of different people, is it OK to quickly go through that problem definition and say, "Let's try something." Now, the service and office and administrative-type processes ... in my experience, it's not very often that we run into those types of problems. Most of our processes ... most of our activities affect the downstream internal or external customers, or our ability to change something is affected by how the upstream folks do their job, or what it is that they're passing on to us.

More and more, as we get into the office side of an operation, we see that it's a mistake to quickly create solutions in a vacuum.

Joe: When we talk about A3 thinking, we talk about planning being the whole left side of the page and going through that process. Do you really have time for that? Do people really take the time? Do you see people really sit down and zero in on a problem that well?

Mike: No, we haven't done it well, and in most environments we don't have the time. The reason we don't have the time is because managers, supervisors, leaders don't think that way. Most of us have been raised in a culture of firefighting. Firefighters are important. It would be great if we needed fewer and fewer of them, and the way we get to that point is by doing a better job of having fire marshals. I think of the problem-solvers ... we're

investing the time ... as being similar to fire marshals. They don't make the front pages; they don't get the credit for saving lives, but in reality they prevent a whole bunch of problems and a whole bunch of losses, if you will.

In most organizations, we don't have that time. That's one of the biggest challenges I've had, Joe, in doing A3s or transitioning the way an organization thinks is because they don't get that. Most folks don't understand that if we invest the time up front by getting the right people engaged, by really understanding the problem, getting agreement on what the problem is, and of course getting people involved in the left side, as you keep referring to the planning side, that when we get to defining solutions and implementation, it goes fast if we've engaged those folks up front.

Joe: I think I'm going to use my marketing analogy. My experience tells me that I will not get a marketing job with somebody unless I show them what I can do on the right side. They want to see action. What are you going to do to solve my problems? You have to get in there first to be able to get to the left side. That's really where the problem is, is over on the left side because it's never been defined well.

When I ask that question to begin with is, what about that right side? Why do people always want to start there? Because that seems to be where we jump to, but you're lucky to be 50 percent right if you're over there to begin with.

Mike: I agree, but do you think it's a cultural thing, Joe?

Joe: I think that it is. When we look at PDCA, to me, and we look at A3 and Lean problem solving, it sounds good in a book. But is it really happening where people are spending 50 percent of their time on defining a problem?

Mike: I think people in organizations need to be convinced that it's a good investment of time. Let me tell you a recent experience. We weren't formally using the A3 form, but we were walking through these guys, these groups through A3 thinking. There was a team that we were taking through a development program was looking...They had a project that they voted to be on, this project team, and they opted in on it. The project team was looking at what this company called Asset Recovery.

So, when an employee leaves the organization, the problem that was perceived upfront was that they weren't always getting laptops back or employee ID badges or cell phones or pagers or whatever these different assets might be. One of the senior managers was saying we need to improve that process, we're losing stuff. As part of the program we were taking them through this thinking process of, let's define the problem first.

When the team went in and started talking to the different parties engaged in mapping the process and collecting data, a very interesting thing that happened was everybody who was engaged in the process, and all of the data that was out there showed that they were at a 99 percent or better rate of asset recovery. It was a very, very rare occurrence when something wasn't recovered, and the exposure was not significant from an information or nondisclosure...proprietary information, disclosure loss or something like that. And the dollar loss was very insignificant.

Historically-in fact, where this team was going initially, they were going to come up with a completely new process. After they did the current process math, they were ready to come up with a new process definition and have different checkpoints and things like that. Once they started getting the data and really talking to the people, they found out that there's no problem! This was a really, really good experience, because before we would not have challenged anybody on what the problem was and they would have gone right to the solution.

So as part of the project report out 15 weeks after we started or 13 weeks after we started, these guys said, well, we learned a really good thing. There is no problem. On one level, it seems like it was a waste of time. But, these guys said the value of going out there and talking to the people that do the job and walking the process numerous times, numerous times-this isn't go to Gemba and walk it once, this is go to Gemba and walk it 15 or 20 times, really understand what's going on-was invaluable.

They said, “Whenever we're going after a problem again, we've got to talk to the people. We've got to walk the process numerous times.” So those guys get it. They get that problem definition, root cause analysis, and measure the current state. They get that.

Joe: I think that's a great lesson, because you may have actually made it worse!

Mike: Absolutely! They would have put more resources at it, people wouldn't have agreed. It's the classic, "Hey Joe, I'm going to fix your problem for you. I'm not going to tell you about it ahead of time. I'm just going to walk out there and give you a new process and say, Hey Joe, start doing it this way so we don't have this problem anymore."

And you'd turn to me and you'd say, "Problem? What problem? There's no problem." And well, so what? Go ahead and do it, and chances are that that improvement won't stick.

Joe: An A3 could be used as a guide for you to go through a process every year to see if it is working or not on another thought.

Mike: It could be used that way. I haven't, but on a critical process it might be a good exercise. Or, if we see some leading or lagging indicators starting to go the wrong way, then you say, hey, let's define a problem owner and see if we can understand why this performance metric has started to slip a little.

Joe: As a practitioner, how do you go through an A3 process?

Mike: A lot of this stuff is well-defined and laid out in John Shook's book called Managing to Learn, and I think he's the one who talks about there being A3 owners and A3 coaches, the mechanics of going through this A3 problem-solving process. I think he's also the guy who talks about thinking problem solvers. The process of going through an A3 is the mechanics, and in most cases for significant problems should engage those two parties or at least include those two parties. I like to think of it as for more complex or involved processes. The A3 owner, the problem owner, is going through each one of those sections if you will, of the A3 form section by section. So, let's define the problem. They take a stab at defining the problem, and they sit down and talk with their coach, especially if they're at the early stages of using this as a problem-solving methodology.

Sit down with their coach and explain to their coach, hey, here's what I think the problem is. The coach's job is to ask a whole bunch of questions. How do you know that's the

problem? Who have you talked to? Have you looked at the process? We're doing that step by step.

One of the reasons that we do that is to make sure people aren't jumping to the right side, jumping to the solutions phase too early. One of the reasons we're doing that is to make sure that we're setting ourselves up for good solutions when we get to the right side, because we know we've engaged the right folks throughout the process. So, the mechanics...I'm not sure if I'm really getting to the core of your question, but the mechanics of it, it's very iterative. We've got the A3 owner, we've got the A3 coach, and we're having these dialogues as we go through the problem statement, the background, the current conditions, root cause analysis, and all that.

Joe: When we talk about countermeasures, why is it called "countermeasures?" That's always confusing to me.

Mike: It's interesting that you bring that up, because most of the time when we're introducing folks to A3, somebody says, "These aren't countermeasures; they're solutions! I want to call them solutions!" The reason we call them countermeasures is because... I should say the reason that they're called countermeasures is because every time we make a change; there will be unintended consequences. They may be really small and insignificant, but there's a whole bunch of moving parts in the system, and so we change one of the gears and it will have an effect somewhere else. One of the other things, Joe, we talk about in this Lean mindset is pursuit of perfection, and when people say it's a solution, it has this connotation that we have perfected it. But we all know we never arrive at that point of perfection, so this is a countermeasure. I sure hope that it's going to make

things better than it was before, but we need to continue to monitor to see if there's other issues that rise to the surface, either as an unintended consequence or as one of those rocks problems, rocks that was invisible before.

Joe: When we talk about countermeasures, should we only implement? I mean, from your experience, should we be careful in the number of countermeasures we implement at one time?

Mike: That's a tough one, Joe. There are a lot of folks out there that say we should only make one change at a time, because if you make more than one change at a time, then you don't know which one of the changes that you made really affected or impacted the process performance. Go back to that five-minute implementation that five-minute change. Hey, if we can do one of those at a time and look at the effects, that's fantastic, but a lot of the A3s that we're working on for complex problems take two, three, four, five months to pull together. It's a complex process. And so, to make one change in a two-month time cycle or three, four, five-month time cycle? I'm not sold. I'm sure there're people that vary or have different opinions, but I'm not sold that we have to limit it to one change at a time.

Joe: So the take from that, what I would say is that you would maybe put three or four countermeasures down and do the best possible job of putting metrics in there to define each countermeasure the best you can.

Mike: The best you can, or you look at the overall performance and pragmatically speaking, hey, go back to John Shook's book and the example that he uses in his book. He's talking about this problem; I think he called it "Lost in Translation." There's a whole bunch of changes that they put in place as a result of that A3. That was for a project, and

that project's going to happen once every X number of years. And so, we ran it x number of years before. Now, we're getting ready to do that same project again, and can I afford to make only one change? I don't think so. We've learned a lot of things, and on that one they're talking about different translators. They're talking about a different way to split the work between the translation services. So, to only do one change at a time isn't always appropriate. If you put metrics around the individual changes, great but if you can't, don't let that limit you to only making one change at a time. That's my opinion.

Joe: The next thing that you go through after you go through the countermeasures is really the implementation on an A3. The implementation in the A3, is that just basically a summary of a good project management practice?

Mike: Yes, it's a real high-level snapshot of all the activity that would have to take place. It's not the detailed plan. Now we go back to your folder or file cabinet of stuff. So, what are my major milestones? Who owns those different things? What are my metrics that I've going to have in place to make sure that as we go through the implementation these things are working? So yes, it's just a summary.

Joe: When you look at A3s over other type of thinking, is A3 thinking really anything new, or is it replacing other thought processes out there that people have been using and just a better definition? What's created the interest in A3s?

Mike: Years ago I used to refer to plan-do-check-act as being the Lean version of scientific thinking, the scientific methodology. See the problem, create a hypothesis, and all of those seven or eight steps. Honestly, Joe, I think there's a whole lot of similarities between all of...Whether it's DMAIC, the PDCA, scientific methodology, A3, they're pretty

much all doing the same thing, pretty much. Hey, what's my problem? Why do I have a problem-that's my hypothesis, right? Let’s come up with some experiments or proposed solutions, let's put them in place and let's check them.

I think one of the reasons that the A3 approach is getting so much play and so much interest is because it's teaching people how to do it. It is creating at least an outline, a checklist, standard work if we want to call it that, for going through this problem-solving process. It's my how-to approach for solving problems.

Joe: I have to tell a story. The first time I ever did an A3, I really just did a DMAIC on 11 x 17. I created my DMAIC storyboard on it.

Mike: Now, one of the big differences between what a lot of us get taught when we got our belts and in A3 thinking is I think most folks...There's a lot of Six Sigma folks out there or a lot of people following DMAIC that are doing it in a vacuum, and they don't have the benefit of having a coach walking them through the DMAIC steps, at least not a good coach with good problem-solving experience. They aren't being forced to talk to the people and get-maybe it's not consensus, but its support at a minimum-from the stakeholders in the problems, stakeholders being the people that are doing the process on a day-to-day basis. I think A3 thinking does a real good job of forcing us to make sure we've got a good understanding of the problem by getting all of the involved parties engaged.

Joe: So what you're saying, A3 does a better job of really going to Gemba and driving that home.

Mike: Yes. I think A3 does a much better job of forcing us to go to Gemba, talk to the people, and really understand what's going on, absolutely.

Joe: I still think that's where it happens. When I talk about A3 in marketing, one of the things, I always say to people? Don't divorce themselves from the marketplace. They always internalize customer value, and customer value's only one place-at the customer! It sounds really simple but most of this stuff is when you do it, isn't it?

Mike: Yes, it is, and I would assume that in marketing it's hard to get into the marketplace, or it's more difficult depending on what it is that you're trying to market. It's hard for me...I'd love to get into the marketplace of my clients and understand what their real needs are. It's real interesting, because time, and again I'll receive calls from prospective clients and they want a proposal on how to fix this problem. They're looking for a...you could say it's a point solution. But they want to know what I'm going to do to fix their problems. Again, back to your observations or comments earlier they want me to jump to the right side.

Based on a two-hour conversation that we had on the left side of the A3, and it is hard for them to understand. I cannot give them a good solution until we really understand what the problem is and why it is a problem with cosmic.

Joe: That really is the essence of the problem solving. What is the difference in A3 thinking though from the regular Lean practice of building a current state map and then moving to a future state map and putting Lean metrics? Going through the same five-step process is there a big difference between that type of thinking and the regular just mapping process.

Mike: You know when you look at mapping me think mapping is one of the tools that we may or may not use within an A3. Is there a difference? I get people involved especially on office processes we do a lot of what we call metric based processes mapping. Think of it as swim lanes with metrics, we do a lot of that and typically in those types of engagements its cross-functional themes. Therefore, all different functions are represented within the swim lanes are in the room. That's part of defining what the current state process is; there is a risk that we can be looking at. We can be mapping a process that is not really a problem. As we go through that process we document the current state, we identify the disconnects, we design a future state and put together an implementation plan.

My experience in most office related mapping events or Kaizen events like I'm describing we don't actually get to implement awhile lot of stuff inside of those administrators processes from a process improvement perspective for a variety of reasons.

So is there a difference between mapping a process, Lean mapping whether its value stream mapping or detailed level mapping and A3 thinking. I think we can be moving faster than we should if we are tackling very complex cross-functional processes. In my experience one of the biggest risks with doing these Kaizen events, quick improvement activities on complex office processes is that the people in the room buy in totally. In addition, their bosses are just really, anxious they do not have a good understanding what the problems are, and the solutions are.

In addition, because of that, a clear understanding they resist the changes where they drag their feet, or in some cases, they stop the team, they stop the improvement activities.

Therefore, for complex problems the A3 approach is probably a better approach because it forces us to go up and down those different silos. Get the different people engaged at a variety of checkpoints and could potentially result, good chance it would result in a better solution.

Joe: What you are saying there is that when you go through that Kaizen event or that mapping event process that you could really take two or three critical issues out of that event and then go through an A3 process with them.

Mike: Absolutely you could do that.

Joe: Is that the correct way to do it?

Mike: On complex stuff. And again, it's a function of the culture of the organization where you're working. I have clients whose senior leadership team and middle management team has total confidence in these Kaizen teams. They'll do a Kaizen event on very complex stuff. If that's what the team comes up with, they support, they go with it, they follow up, and they make sure it's sustained. In companies that are less mature from a Lean thinking perspective, then having some A3s spawned out of a Kaizen event could be a better approach.

Joe: We kind of went through the A3 in general terms but how do you put an A3 to bed?

Mike: Well. I try to explain that to teams as saying, right after, during and after the countermeasures have been put in place, the improvements have been put in place, and we put in place some leading indicators. Try to measure the process as an interim activity.

So we put in place some metrics for 30, 60, 90 days, something like that. And if that leading metric, that leading indicator, continues in the direction that we were looking for, or it maintains at the improvement level. Then perhaps we can stop measuring that leading indicator and monitor progress based on lagging indicators.

I think that if the lead time of this piece of my design phase is reduced by 50 percent, that I'm going to have faster response to my customers. We're going to put in a metric, so that piece of the design phase for a period of time if we're able to maintain it, it was 15 days. We're holding it at eight days. We're able to hold it at eight days for two months, three months, something like that. Then maybe I take away that metric. Because we don't want to have to just be buried with hundreds of metrics in an organization.

Now, we go to our lagging indicator and say, OK. Our total pre-production design time was 30 days. Our new target is 22 days or 15 days. Are we holding those 15 days? That's my lagging indicator; it's after the fact. If we're holding that, then we don't have to go back. It's an indication that the improvements that we made in that specific phase are holding.

So I think you can put an A3 to bed. If a couple months after the fact, we can perhaps stop measuring some of those things that we've got other metrics, existing metrics in place, that would give us an idea if things are going out of whack.

Joe: You have some speaking engagements coming up. You're talking at the ASQ, I believe, in late February.

Mike: ASQ has an annual Lean six sigma conference in Phoenix. It's a neat conference because you've got about three, four hundred people that are focused just on Lean and Six

Sigma. They're from around the world, very specific tracks and topics. There are a handful of workshops in there as well. And I always find it a great environment to mix up with people and learn some new stuff. So that's February 28th and March 1st.

Joe: What workshop are you putting on?

Mike: I'm putting on a workshop related to white collar Kaizen events, Lean Kaizen events in the office.

Joe: Well, I'd like to thank you very much, Mike. I appreciate your time and your knowledge about A3. I think that it will prove quite valuable to a lot of people. And how can someone get a hold of you?

Mike: Probably the easiest way to get a hold of me is by email or through my website. My website is www.mosterling.com, and my email is mike@mosterling.com.

Joe: Again, thank you very much. And I look forward to talking to you again.

Mike: Joe, thanks. Always enjoy your podcasts. And I appreciate the opportunity to participate in it.

Joe: This podcast will be available in the Business 901 blog site and also the Business 901 iTunes store, so thanks again.

Business901

Podcast Transcription

Implementing Lean Marketing Systems

Joseph T. Dager

Lean Six Sigma Black Belt

Ph: 260-438-0411 Fax: 260-818-2022

Email: jtdager@business901.com

Web/Blog: http://www.business901.com

Twitter: [@business901](https://twitter.com/business901)

What others say: *In the past 20 years, Joe and I have collaborated on many difficult issues. Joe's ability to combine his expertise with "out of the box" thinking is unsurpassed. He has always delivered quickly, cost effectively and with ingenuity. A brilliant mind that is always a pleasure to work with." James R.*

Joe Dager is President of Business901, a progressive company providing direction in areas **such as Lean Marketing, Product Marketing, Product Launches, and Re-Launches. As a Lean** Six Sigma Black Belt, Business901 provides and implements marketing, project and performance planning methodologies in small businesses. The simplicity of a single flexible model will create clarity for your staff and, as a result, better execution. My goal is to allow you spend your time on the **need versus the plan**.

An example of how we may work: Business901 could start with a consulting style utilizing an individual from your organization or a virtual assistance that is well versed in our principles. We have **capabilities to plug virtually any marketing function** into your process immediately. As proficiencies develop, Business901 moves into a coach's role supporting the process as needed. The goal of implementing a system is that the processes will become a habit and not an event.

Business901 | *Podcast Opportunity* | *Expert Status*