



Hosting improvement events with your suppliers or customers are a great way to wring out waste while strengthening relationships. When done correctly, these are win-win activities where both companies benefit.

Here's to ideas you can use to make an impact in your organization,

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## Strengthen Relationships with Joint Events

Normal events are done to improve a process but a joint event does this and more. Joint events are extremely powerful in either strengthening a key client relationship or to drastically improving a weak one.

When problems are identified and solutions are put into place through a joint event, the client ends up serving the customer more efficiently and it pulls them tightly together making for a longer-term and more profitable relationship.

Sometimes the real problem is not clearly understood, so each company puts themselves in the shoes of the other company to learn from this different perspective. "In order to jointly improve the process, it is imperative that both companies understand what the other does," said Victor Klein of Rucker and Associates. "When we are finished, the process is streamlined and it looks like it was all within one company."

Klein recently completed a very successful joint event where both companies were able to better align their scheduling, which will result in significant reductions in both working inventory and aged inventory.

Joint events are more involved and it takes twice as long for joint teams to fully understand the problem and identify the opportunity. Due to this increased complexity, the format for a joint Kaizen event includes two days of on-site prep and two days of sustainment in addition to the



traditional five-day Kaizen event. "It is definitely worth the effort as it makes the two companies more inter-dependent as they have now worked together to see how to improve the process from both sides," Klein added. "You do not need a joint event with every customer, the customer has to be strategically important to your business."

For his last event, the same words were meaning different things to the different companies. "They would have never figured out the problem if there had not been this joint event where they were together in the same room looking at it," Klein concluded.

## For help with strengthening your client relationships...

or just to get result-oriented solutions, give Rucker and Associates a call. We will find the unique approach that directly matches your needs to help your company work leaner, faster and stronger in 2012.

Our goal is to create an independent, self-sustaining Lean Six Sigma program for our customers. Through ongoing mentoring and follow-up, we stay connected - sharing ownership of both the new processes and the intended results.

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