

*Our source of new business is referrals from friends and clients. If you know a company – customer, supplier, friend, or your own – that could benefit from improved operations, please email a link to this site or just let us know. Your best interest is our best interest.*

The Finish Strong™ monthly e-newsletter is for business leaders who recognize Operations as more than an execution tool. If you value Operations as a strategic function that creates competitive advantage, profitability and brand loyalty to the marketplace this newsletter is for you!

## IGNORANCE LIGHTS THE PATH TO PERFECTION

Regardless of your years of experience, education, and industry, there is much that you and your team don't understand in your organization's processes.

If that statement offends you, either your organization has ZERO problems arise every single day, or you are not an effective lean leader.

Complete knowledge about the processes would mean that no unexpected events occur. Ever. If you cannot predict with 100% accuracy the exact impact on factor Y that will result from specific changes in X, or in any combination of changes in X, Z, and Q, there is learning that can occur.

Effective organizations treat every problem as an opportunity to learn and get better, not as an annoyance or a person-based failure.

Your operations speak to you. They tell you there are things you don't understand. They tell you where to look harder. Don't get mad at your people, or your processes. Listen, learn, improve and then, like Cortes, burn the ships so going back is not an option.

Ignorance is not shameful; it lights the path to perfection.

## LESSONS FROM DETROIT

Regardless of which side of the aisle you're on re: the US government giving / loaning money to Ford, GM and/or Chrysler, don't overlook the huge lessons that can be learned from those conversations. Here's just a few to consider:

1) Do you think that any of the three CEOs would have responded generously to a subordinate making a request for significant funds without details of how those funds would be used coupled with payback expectations? If a process makes sense for others to follow, don't behave as if you're above it.

2) Chrysler wants a "rebate" from Daimler because they didn't realize how poorly positioned the operations were before they bought them. At some point, we've all been misled, rushed to conclusions that we wanted to believe, or pointed a finger when a decision we made turned out badly. But is that any way to run a company?

3) Are cries of "legacy costs" cries of victimization? Two parties, the union(s) and the company(ies) both knowingly and willingly signed the agreements that created those costs. Didn't anyone have a calculator? Who is the unwitting victim there? Consider the long term impacts of decisions. They can be more significant than the short term objective they are intended to meet.

## FINISH STRONG™

### *The Starting Pistol*

Mark Twain:

"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble; it's what you know for sure that just ain't so."

### *The Tape*

Rebecca Morgan:

"Ergo, the need to state and test the hypothesis rather than assume something known is really a fact in your complex environment."