

Best Practices In Lean Six Sigma Process Improvement: A Deeper Look,
Richard J. Schonberger, John Wiley & Sons INC, Somerset NJ 08875, 2008, ISBN
978-0-470-16886-8, 290pp., \$45.00.

After more than 20 years of the practices of Lean Six Sigma Process Improvement swept through the business world, this book provides a welcome pause to review and to summarize what the Lean Six Sigma practices brought to us.

With the inventory turns as the main yardstick to measure the goodness of the Lean Six Sigma implementation of a company, Mr. Schonberger use it to compare several great Lean companies; such as Dell, Toyota, Wal-Mart,...,and how do they achieve its greatness in the Lean practices, and how some of the companies lost their ways. Mr. Schonberger also skillfully woven into the stories of how the major lean tools are acquired, practiced and in some cases misused.

A good business management tool requires the support of strong and sound company cultures and business models. Part III went into examining how a few good companies with a strong culture and business model to sustain their practices and how were they related to the Lean practices. In the last part of the book, Mr. Schonberger provides a ranking of the Leanness throughout the business world according to the industry.

This books attempt to measure the best practices with the single measurement of inventory turns requires a more rigorous treatment. We all know that no single measurement can have a high statistical explanation power in the social economical studies. The same is the attempt to relate the greatness of the lean practices with the inventory turns and any financial performance indicator.

These emphases in the inventory turns may lead to the wrong practices of creating processes to increase inventory turns and forget the basic purpose of a process. As a best practices book the anecdotal stories can serve as valuable lessons learned and providing ideas either what should do, and what should not do, in adopting the best practices.

This book will be a very good book for business managers in seeking the best practices in the application of Lean.

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