



Reenergizing a Statewide Lean Continuous Improvement Program

Colorado Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budgeting

January 2011 – June 2018

Situation

In 2011, the State of Colorado launched a Lean continuous improvement program for Executive Branch agencies, supported by members of the GPS team. Our support of the initial program included the design, delivery, and coaching for over 800 projects with measurable customer service, process, and programmatic improvements. After the first five years, the Governor’s Office reached out to GPS to refresh and reenergize the State’s Lean Program, with the goal of more engagement and measurable results.

Approach

Feedback from state employees indicated that popularized process improvement methods discouraged State employees from engaging because of the unusual vocabulary, complexity, and association with the manufacturing world.

GPS developed a 5-step, practical, problem-solving approach designed specifically to address issues and problems facing the public sector. We call it the SOLVE model.

SOLVE is an acronym for: Scope the opportunity, Organize the resources, Lean it!, Verify the impact, and Ensure sustainment and these five steps can be applied to solve problems both large and small.

The SOLVE method represents GPS’ Lean management principles and toolkit and was adopted by the State of Colorado because it removes jargon and fear: It makes all employees SOLVERs! In addition, we developed support materials and a resource guide.

GPS designed and administered a flexible training program to support employees new to process improvement, leaders working to create a culture of continuous improvement, and experienced practitioners.

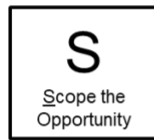
Results

Using our proven method and materials, the State of Colorado engaged GPS to provide training and coaching to more than 250 state employees, resulting in more 400 process improvements across 17 state agencies within the first three years (FY 2017-20).

The 5-Step SOLVE Model

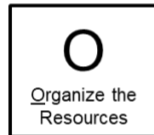
Our State of Colorado employees are professionals who care deeply about the people they serve. They want to address the issues that get in the way of great service—they want to SOLVE problems.

SOLVE is Colorado’s 5-step common-sense approach to understanding problems and doing something about them. SOLVE doesn’t replace what you already know about process improvement, but rather offers us a consistent method, a common language, and a flexible toolkit so that we can work together to make things better.



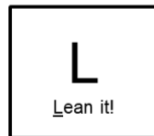
Objective: Define the problem to be solved

“Before we fix anything, we better have a clear understanding of the problem(s).”



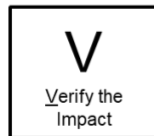
Objective: Make a plan and engage the right people

“We will get a better solution if we work together and follow a rapid but disciplined process.”



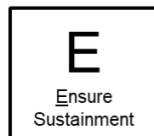
Objective: Apply Lean tools to define potential solutions

“Figure out which of the issues are the important ones (the root cause, not the symptoms) and how we can address them.”



Objective: Test to make sure our fixes work

“Conduct a test to confirm that our planned changes work as desired and to gather feedback from others.”



Objective: Make it stick

“Follow through to make sure the improvements last so we don’t have to fix the same problem twice.”