The Kaizen Way
Facilitator’s Guide

The Kaizen Event
Learn what the powerful kaizen event is as well as what the Gemba Academy 5 day recommended kaizen event roadmap is.

A step by step guide to presenting Gemba Academy’s 5S course to lean learners in all positions. This guide includes key points, discussion items, quiz questions and answers, and helpful tips. Using Gemba Academy’s online learning content, any facilitator can teach teams of people to improve their processes.
Preparation and Lesson Plan
Use this page to prepare for each training session.

Resources
- Gemba Academy videos
- Online quizzes
- Kaizen newspaper template

Prepare for a Successful Training Session
- **Watch videos and complete quizzes** on your own at least one day before the training session.
- **Read this guide thoroughly** and become familiar with the course content before presenting to others.
- Prepare a suitable **training room** for your participants.
- Prepare a **computer with internet access** and a projector or large screen. Test all equipment before the training session.
- Have your Gemba Academy **username and password** ready.

U: ________________
P: ________________

- **Choose your quiz style.** The most popular option is to use the online interactive quiz, answering questions as a group with open discussion. Another option is to print the PDF version and have participants complete the quizzes individually.

Training Session Outline
- **Step 1: Introduce** the session topic and content to the participants.
- **Step 2: Play a video.**
- **Step 3: Lead a group discussion** using this guide. Review key points, ask prepared questions and have participants fill in the blanks in their workbooks.
- **Step 4: Take the quiz** and review responses.
- **Step 5: Apply** what has been learned in your workplace.

Choose Your Quiz Style

When questions come up, encourage other participants to answer. Responding to questions with “What does the team think?” goes a long way to build engagement.
Step 1: Session Overview

- **Introduce** the training topic.
  - This module introduces the concept of the kaizen event and an example schedule.

- **Explain** what to expect during this session.
  - In this session we will:
    - Watch “The Kaizen Event” (11:17)
    - Discuss what we learned from the video using the workbook
    - Review the content with a quiz and talk about the results.
    - View two other supplemental videos showing the benefits of kaizen

- **Before you begin…**
  - Ask your participants if they have heard the term “kaizen event” before. If not, what do they think it means? What kind of commitment do they anticipate?

Step 2: Play “The Kaizen Event”

Step 3: Review Key Points

**What is a Kaizen Event?**

- A kaizen event, also called a “rapid improvement event” or “kaizen blitz,” is a focused and accelerated application of kaizen techniques in a specific area. It typically lasts 4 to 5 days, with an emphasis on speed and decisive action.
  - The term “blitz” comes from American football, in which several team members rush at their opponents to take them out quickly and effectively.
  - It also serves to teach our associates how to think critically and solve problems.
  - Kaizen events can be used to improve any process that can be observed, measured, and changed.
  - The narrow focus and cross-functional, team-based approach of kaizen enables teams to make changes rapidly and—optimally—at minimum cost to the company.
  - Kaizen events can be used to improve any process, whether it’s in a factory, office environment, or hospital.
  - It’s important to understand that kaizen events are not “silver bullets”, and even a series of kaizen events will not immediately revolutionize your organization.
    - That type of transformation requires an overall strategy for long-term process improvement and dedicated staff to prepare, facilitate, and follow up on various types of kaizen initiatives.
    - In order to be successful at kaizen events, organizations must have an ongoing system of education and training for workers and managers, focused on lean thinking principles.

**Types of Kaizen Events**

- There are multiple types of kaizen initiatives used by lean organizations:
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• **Project-based** Initiatives: involve implementing new technology, new materials, etc. These often provide a steady stream of progress over time.
• Kaizen **Suggestion** Systems: often occur daily and are small in nature. Despite their small impact, they add up over time.
• Kaizen Event/Blitz: leads to step-change improvements. Best used in conjunction with value stream mapping activities.
• These types of kaizen events are integral to long-term success at Lean at many world-renowned organizations.

**Gemba Academy’s Recommended Kaizen Event Process**

• Note: before the Kaizen event starts, pre-work setup must be done to prepare.
• Assume the pre-work has been completed, Gemba Academy’s recommended 5-day Kaizen Event process is as follows:

**Day 1: Day of Learning**

• On the first day, associates receive training, walk through the target area, map out the process, review data, and do other things as needed, such as calculating takt time, performing 5S scans, and taking before-improvement pictures.
  • The activities on this day will vary depending on the type of kaizen event. For example, if you are focusing on improving 5S in the marketing department, you probably won’t need to calculate takt time.

**Day 2: Go to Gemba**

• On the second day, associates should observe the process using the best kaizen tool you have, your eyes, to witness what’s really happening with the process in question.
• Tools to record your findings, such as video cameras, spaghetti diagrams, and time observation tools can all be used as well.
  • **Video cameras** are especially powerful, since they help us capture what is really happening while allowing the team to review footage slowly and carefully.
• Also brainstorm what the future state should look like, and document it on a kaizen newspaper, which lays out the improvement plan and tells who will do what by when.

**Day 3: Just Do It!**

• On the third day, associates start making changes to the process, which often involves lots of sweat and hard work.
• When possible, simulate new methods, walk through a mockup of the actual process using the new documentation, and create new documentation where applicable (e.g. revised work balance charts).
• Begin to make physical changes to the work area, which may involve 5S activities, moving equipment, and constructing new fixtures and equipment.

**Day 4: Test & Refine**

• On the fourth day, associates spend the day working in the new process to ensure things are better.
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• There’s a good chance tweaks will have to be made to the process as you learn more and continue to involve the experts.
• By the end of the day, the process should be 100% functional and ready to hand off to the process owner.

Day 5: Sustaining & Celebration
• On the last day, associates should work to measure and document the new current state and identify the financial benefits of the event.
• Communicate the results of the event with all associates, and create a plan to fully implement ideas that we weren’t able to complete during the actual event.
• Use tools like the skills matrix and cross-training plans, and create a sustainment plan that may include things like audits and 60-day return visits to ensure the gains have been maintained.
• To wrap up the event, the team should present their results to management and co-workers while enjoying some snacks and food to celebrate.

Wrap-Up
• Plan how to redeploy the people you free up through kaizen, and ease anxiety that people will lose their jobs.
  • Even if this doesn’t appear to be an issue at your situation, be sure to communicate that nobody will be let go as a result of kaizen up front.
• Understand the investment involved in terms of supplies, people’s time, and production time that may be lost. Create a plan to recover these costs by saving on things like overtime, hiring avoidance, and redeploying freed-up people to other areas that may need their help.

Step 4: Quiz
1. A kaizen event is the focused and accelerated application of kaizen techniques in a specific area.
   □ True
   □ False

2. Kaizen Events are also meant to teach our associates how to _________________.
   □ identify work arounds to problems
   □ enable management to lay off people as a result of kaizen
   □ think critically and solve problems

3. Kaizen initiatives, including the kaizen event, are integral to long-term success at world-class companies.
   □ True
   □ False
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4. Please list these kaizen event activities in the correct order. For example, if you think Test & Refine is the first activity place a 1 beside it.
   
   2. Go to Gemba!
   1. Day of Learning
   5. Sustaining & Celebration
   3. Just Do It!
   4. Test & Refine

5. One of the most important Continuous Improvement Commandments to practice during a Kaizen event is _____________.

   - [ ] to practice old habits
   - [x] to use creativity over cash/capital
   - [ ] to set low expectations so we’re not disappointed
   - [ ] allow the event leader to solve the hard problems

**Step 5: Reflection**

Give your participants 10-15 minutes to fill out the reflection questions at the end of their workbook. Once they’ve finished, have a short discussion with them. Now that you know what a Kaizen Event is and what it involves, do you think it would benefit your company? What processes do you think would benefit most from a kaizen event? Spend 5-10 minutes discussing.

**Step 6: Supplemental Videos (Optional)**

Explain to your participants that you will be reviewing two additional kaizen success videos that tell the story of one company’s success at implementing kaizen throughout their organization.

- Play "Kaizen Success Story" (9:34)
- Play "Real Life Kaizen: (14:02)"