

Book Study Guide

BLUE-COLLAR KAIZEN

LEADING LEAN & LEAN TEAMS



MACK STORY
Blue-Collar Leadership® Series

Blue-Collar Kaizen

Leading Lean & Lean Teams

By Mack Story

Ch. 1: Creating a Kaizen Culture: Develop the frontline to improve the bottom line.

- Positive culture change doesn't just happen. A leader must become intentional and make it happen.
 - How do you define culture?
 - What is the foundation of culture?
 - Why don't leaders develop the character of everyone at every level?

“In a culture dominated by intense pressure to meet quarterly or annual targets, too many of our leaders value high performers with little consideration of whether others on the team can trust them.” ~ Simon Sinek

Ch. 2: Living Kaizen: Live it to lead it.

- Character is developed daily, not in a day.
 - What does it mean when leaders aren't leading by example? Provide some examples of leaders not walking their talk.
 - Do two-faced leaders build trust or create distrust? Explain.
 - How does a leader's character impact the team they're leading?

*“We're always teaching what we're modeling, regardless of what we're teaching.”
~ Mack Story*

Ch. 3: Overcoming the Resistance: The challenge of change.

- Motivation is never enough. High impact leaders seek to inspire others.
 - What is the difference between motivation and inspiration?
 - Which is more likely to inspire others...authority or character? Why?
 - How can your words and actions inspire others to embrace change?

“When high impact leaders are tasked with making things happen, they simply ask for a team. When low impact leaders are tasked with making things happen, they desperately seek a position of authority.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 4: Defining Influence: Influence trumps authority.

- When it comes to influence, moral authority will always trump formal authority.
 - What is moral authority? Why do we respect leaders who lead with moral authority more than those who don't?
 - How can a leader intentionally increase his/her moral authority?
 - What prevents leaders from leading with moral authority?

*“The extent of your influence depends on the depth of your concern for others.”
~ John C. Maxwell*

Ch. 5: Make It Happen: Managers make a plan; high impact leaders make it happen.

- High impact leaders take responsibility; low impact leaders transfer responsibility.
 - What behaviors do responsible leaders exhibit?
 - Why do some leaders transfer responsibility?
 - Why do some leaders blame their team when things go wrong?

*“Delegate authority but maintain responsibility...
If you contrast this to corporate America, you'll find that most bosses do just the opposite:
They delegate responsibility but maintain authority.” ~ Jon S. Rennie*

Ch. 6: Leading Up: Results increase influence above.

- High impact leaders leverage results to develop 360° influence.
 - Why do leaders trust and respect those who consistently deliver results more than those who don't?
 - How does a leader's lack of influence impact their team?
 - One leader will find a way to make things happen while another leader will make excuses for why things didn't happen. What's the difference in these leaders?

“When people are trusted and have more information, discretion, and authority, they're much more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results.” ~ Kouzes & Posner

Ch. 7: Develop Yourself: It's not about you, but it begins with you.

- The byproduct of growth and development is belief and confidence. The byproduct of belief and confidence is success.
 - What's the difference between someone who only does what is required and someone who does more than is required? How does it impact their influence?
 - How will consistent and intentional personal development impact your career in 1 year, 5 years, 10 years? As your career progresses, how will you compare to those who don't develop themselves intentionally?
 - Why do many people choose to avoid personal development? Explain.

“Your success in your career will be in direct proportion to what you do after you've done what you are expected to do.” ~ Brian Tracey

Ch. 8: Develop Others: The best leaders go slow to go fast.

- High impact leaders focus on helping their team, not on being helped by their team.
 - How does a leader's intention impact their influence with their team?
 - How has your leader helped you beyond what is required of their position?
 - If your team was interviewed today, what examples could they provide of you intentionally helping them beyond what is required of your position?

“High impact leaders don't want to spend their time directing others, so they invest their time developing others. Low impact leaders won't invest their time developing others, so they must spend their time directing others.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 9: Righting the Wrong: Lean is not about two pillars; it's about two foundational layers.

- Respect for the people provides the foundation for continuous improvement.
 - Would developing the people be more or less likely to engage them in process improvement efforts? Why or why not?
 - What message does developing the people send to the people?
 - What does it mean when leaders focus on the process and not the people?

“First of all, virtually all organizations embrace Lean solely to improve quality and profitability. Second, people see the tools but miss the larger opportunity to listen to the people who know how to do it better.” ~ Bob Chapman

Ch. 10: Continuous Improvement: Leading yourself and others through change.

- Focus on changing what needs to be changed, not on what is easy to change.
 - Which is easier to change character or competency? Explain.
 - How will your character maximize or minimize your competency?
 - How does the character of a leader influence the output of their team?

“For real change to occur, we must go from knowing to doing. It’s at this point that transformation becomes difficult.” ~ John C. Maxwell

Ch. 11: Respect for the People: Leaders who respect the people develop the people.

- High impact leaders respect and develop the people because they value them as people with untapped potential.
 - When people feel valued and respected, what is a natural consequence?
 - Discuss the ways leaders can demonstrate respect for the people?
 - Do the leaders in your organization develop the people beyond what is required? If so, provide examples? If not, how does that make the people feel?

“High impact leaders have high impact followers who respect them. Low impact leaders have low impact followers who despise them.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 12: The Emotional Trust Account: You are either making deposits or withdrawals.

- High impact leaders intentionally build trust. Low impact leaders automatically create distrust.
 - How does trust or distrust impact turnover in an organization? Why?
 - How does trust or distrust impact teamwork? Why?
 - How does trust or distrust impact continuous improvement efforts? Why?

*“For leaders, teams and organizations that operate with high trust, such trust becomes a multiplier—and an accelerator—of their ability to execute the strategy. When there’s low trust, everything takes longer and costs more—or gets derailed altogether.”
~ Stephen M. R. Covey*

Ch. 13: Declare Your Intent: Help the team see and feel the right things.

- High impact leaders help their team members understand their intent up front.
 - Why does a leader's intent matter?
 - Why would a leader avoid declaring their intent?
 - How does a team feel when their leader is transparent with them? Why?

“Intention is the foundation of trust. Intention is about motivation and manipulation. If someone believes there is mutual benefit, they feel motivated and trust is built. If they feel they are not benefiting, they feel manipulated and distrust is created.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 14: Connect First: Communication is about information; connection is about inspiration.

- High impact leaders connect first and communicate second.
 - Explain the difference between communicating and connecting?
 - How can a leader intentionally connect with their team members?
 - How does a team perform when they feel a connection with their leader? When they don't?

“Waste elimination alone isn't inspiring; inspiration comes when people... are truly listened to and engaged in the process.” ~ Bob Chapman

Ch. 15: Waste Doesn't Motivate: Eliminating frustrations gets everyone involved.

- High impact leaders help people identify and eliminate their frustrations.
 - Which is more likely to motivate a team? Focusing on eliminating wastes or eliminating frustrations? Why?
 - What's the best way for a leader to identify frustrations? Why?
 - Why does eliminating frustrations lead to buy-in? A boost in morale?

“Frustration occurs when we want something to happen, but it doesn't. Or, when we want to prevent something from happening, but we can't.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 16: Listen to the Voices: Take the time it takes, so it takes less time.

- High impact leaders seek first to understand others then to be understood by others.
 - Why do some leaders listen only with the intent to reply?
 - How does understanding the team first help the leader?
 - How does truly feeling understood impact a team member? Will they be more or less likely to listen to others once they feel understood? Why?

“When different people with different experiences sharing different opinions all sit at the table with the same objective, you can produce extraordinary results.” ~ John C. Maxwell

Ch. 17: The Key to Buy-In: Learn to leverage the meeting before the meeting.

- High impact leaders know without buy-in, there will be resistance.
 - Why does the “meeting before the meeting” reduce or eliminate resistance?
 - How can the “meeting before the meeting” increase the leader’s influence?
 - Is a “meeting before the meeting” a waste? Why or why not?

“When you generate buy-in, resistance will diminish allowing you and your team to move forward more effectively and efficiently as team members begin to align themselves behind the unifying purpose.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 18: Be a Leader: Processes and things don’t think and feel, but people do.

- High impact leaders say they can’t afford not to develop the people. Low impact leaders say they can’t afford to develop the people. Both are right. Why?
 - Discuss the difference between managing people and leading people?
 - Why are many people promoted into leadership positions without ever being given leadership development training? Does that demonstrate respect? Does it help them or hurt them?
 - What makes you want to follow a leader? What makes you want to avoid a leader?

“The most meaningful and important way that you can take charge of becoming an exemplary leader is to make learning leadership a daily habit.” ~ Kouzes & Posner

Ch. 19: Prime the Pump: Prepare the team for the dream.

- High impact leaders make character development a part of every team event.
 - How does character development prepare the team to work together? Explain.
 - Which team is more likely to succeed? A team that values developing their character before it is needed or one that waits until they need it? Why?
 - What's the difference between a leader who prepares their team in advance and a leader who doesn't? Which would you prefer to follow? Why?

“There are no short cuts. It's always the mediocre teams that blame the conditions and the losing teams that blame each other. The winning teams eliminate their faults before the battle begins.” ~ Patrick Mockridge

Ch. 20: Questions Transfer Responsibility: Lead with questions not directions.

- High impact leaders focus on asking their team questions. Low impact leaders focus on giving their team directions and answering their questions.
 - How does asking a question transfer responsibility?
 - Why is a team that takes responsibility more likely to sustain the gains?
 - What happens when a leader doesn't trust the team and makes all of the decisions for the team?

“The best leaders are great listeners. They listen carefully to what other people have to say and how they feel. They ask good (and often tough) questions, are open to ideas other than their own, and even lose arguments in support of the common good.” ~ Kouzes & Posner

Ch. 21: Avoid Answering Questions: Don't make decisions; facilitate decision-making.

- High impact leaders know the best way to influence people to start thinking for themselves is to stop answering their questions.
 - Asking a question provokes thought? Why is this important to a leader?
 - What are the benefits of asking questions?
 - When is providing an answer to a question the right thing to do? Why?

*“Leadership isn't about making all the decisions. It's about making sure all the decisions get made by the right people in a timely manner.”
~ Andy Stanley*

Ch. 22: High Impact Delegation: Delegate results not methods.

- High impact leaders often delegate results and seldom delegate methods. Low impact leaders often delegate methods and seldom delegate results.
 - Why should leaders avoid delegating at Levels 1 & 2? What happens if they do?
 - How does a leader use Level 3 to transfer responsibility? Why is this important?
 - When you delegate methods, who is responsible? Why? When you delegate results, who is responsible? Why?

“While delegation is intellectual, entrusting is visceral—it’s something you feel. When people don’t learn to extend trust, they don’t become ‘leaders’ in the full sense of the word—either at work or at home.” ~ Stephen M. R. Covey

Ch. 23: Where’s the Problem? Go see, demonstrate respect, and ask questions.

- High impact leaders always want to speak to the people closest to the problem.
 - Why do many leaders avoid including those closest to the problem when looking for a solution? What does this say about the leader?
 - Why should leaders always include and listen to those closest to the problem?
 - When those closest to the problem are included in developing a solution to the problem, how does this impact buy-in to the solution? Why is this important?

“For every thousand people hacking at the leaves of evil, there is one striking at the roots.” ~ Henry David Thoreau

Ch. 24: The Power of HOW: The best leaders ask the best questions.

- High impact leaders don’t just ask questions. They ask the right questions in the right way at the right time for the right reason.
 - How can questions be used to shape people’s thinking? Give examples.
 - How can questions be used to uncover hidden concerns? Give examples.
 - How can questions be used to get people to take action? Give examples.

“If you don’t ask questions, you may find yourself teaching the wrong people the wrong things at the wrong time for the wrong reason.” ~ John C. Maxwell

Ch. 25: Lead the Team: Unleash the team's potential.

- High impact leaders develop high impact individuals and build high performance teams.
 - There are no bad teams, only bad leaders. Explain.
 - The team's performance is a reflection of the leader's performance. Explain.
 - The team is always exactly where the leader has led them. Explain.

*“Where there's a will, there's a way; where there's a team, there's more than one way.”
~ Rex Murphy*

Ch. 26: Leverage the Team: Focus on strengths; develop weaknesses.

- High impact leaders know there is an “I” in team. Each “I”ndividual is an “I”.
 - Why should leaders focus on developing strengths relative to competency?
 - Why should leaders focus on developing weaknesses relative to character?
 - When teams aren't working well together, is the root cause more likely to be related to character or competency issues? Explain.

*“The collective wisdom of a team is always greater than the ideas of one manager.”
~ Jon S. Rennie*

Ch. 27: Expand the Team: Harness the influence of the team to gain support for the team.

- High impact leaders know that everyone on the team has influence with different people in different areas who can potentially help the team.
 - How can relationships expand the team's influence?
 - How can you intentionally leverage unknown relationships?
 - What role does trust play when it comes to team members sharing their influence with the team leader?

“When there's a unifying purpose, a shared vision, and a shared mission, your competency will allow you to convert your character-based relationships into meaningful results and success for the team and the organization.” ~ Mack Story

Ch. 28: Leverage the Leaders: Maximize the influence of the leaders who support you.

- To lead leaders, you must first lead yourself at an exceptional level.
 - Provide an example of how a leader who wasn't on your team helped your team accomplish the mission?
 - When you develop meaningful relationships and influence with leaders throughout the organization, you also gain indirect access to their followers. Why is this important?
 - How can you use the "meeting before the meeting" to gain support in advance?

"Every time you develop people and help them become leaders, you not only gain their ability and put their horsepower to use in the organization, but you also engage the abilities of everyone they lead." ~ John C. Maxwell

Ch. 29: The Key to Success: High impact leaders must know the way, show the way, and go the way.

- High impact leaders know high impact leadership is more caught than taught.
 - What character traits do you value most in a leader? Why?
 - When things go wrong, why should a leader focus on what's happening in the mirror instead of what's happening through the window?
 - Describe how you feel about leaders who don't live what they teach?

"Authenticity is the new authority in leadership." ~ Mark Batterson

Ch. 30: Sustain the Gain: When you invest in the people, they will invest in the process.

- When buy-in goes up, resistance goes down.
 - People buy-in to the leader before they buy-in to the leader's vision. Why?
 - When a team aligns around a set of unifying principles, buy-in increases. Why?
 - What are the most important things a leader should do to generate buy-in? To sustain the gains?

"Hoping for sustained organizational performance in a low-trust culture is like expecting to keep harvesting fruit from a dying tree." ~ Stephen M. R. Covey