



**PFINGSTEN  
PARTNERS LLC**  
Building Better Businesses

## TCI WORKS

Using team-based continuous improvement to drive value

Every company can benefit from creating and fostering a culture that generates ideas and drives positive, value-creating behavior. One proven way to accomplish this is to utilize a team-based continuous improvement (TCI) operating model that involves everyone in the organization in the idea generation, problem-solving, communication and decision-making processes.

This model can help a company become more nimble, more responsive and better able to anticipate customer needs and market dynamics, thus building a better business while increasing shareholder value.

### TEAM-BASED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Team-based continuous improvement is a comprehensive and integrated program that leverages the capabilities, experience and ideas of the work force to help identify and implement process improvements in an efficient manner. This approach empowers employees to improve product quality, customer service and ultimately, profitability through enhanced participation and communication and a better understanding of the value of individual contributions.

No matter the challenge, a company will invariably arrive at a better, more innovative solution through collaboration than it would through solitary effort. From on time delivery and reject rates to production line flow and call center response rates, TCI can help strengthen performance in every aspect of a business.

### COLLABORATIVE AND CROSS-FUNCTIONAL

A continuous improvement operating model involves everyone in the organization - managers and employees alike. This is achieved through cross-functional teams that include members from various departments and disciplines in order to maintain a holistic view of the organization's needs.

The teams may be ad hoc or permanent. Team participation is often voluntary, but in some cases, employees with the specific knowledge

and skills relevant to a given project may be asked to join a team.

### DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING

Many companies rely on subjective information when evaluating organizational issues. In a TCI environment, however, one of the keys to success is accurate, reliable, timely and complete data.

TCI is a data-driven methodology that strives for perfection in the organization's entire value chain. Each cross-functional team must be instructed on the data collection techniques needed to establish a data-driven base line. Additionally, teams must be equipped with a sequential, organized process to help analyze the data and implement changes necessary to address the issue under consideration.

### CONTINUOUS AND ONGOING

In a TCI environment, every employee - from upper management to the cleaning crew - is encouraged to come up with small improvement suggestions on a regular basis. This is not a once-a-year or monthly activity - it is continuous.

It also involves setting standards and then continually improving those standards in order to create steady growth and improvement. It does this by keeping a business focused on its goals and priorities. Although continuous improvement is incremental by definition, the cumulative improvements can produce quantum leaps when they work together synergistically.

### COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT

To be successful, team-based continuous improvement must also adhere to specific principles designed to drive results:

- A management team committed to empowering employee-led teams
- Buy-in and involvement from a high percentage of employees
- Proper training in the techniques and tools used in the TCI process



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- Goals that are quantifiable and clear to all team members
- Proper reward and recognition systems
- Focus on a few top priorities (too many can diffuse effort, energy and resources)
- Customer inclusion in the TCI process

The answers to most of a company's business challenges lie within its own walls and the minds of its employees.

TCI is a powerful tool to help management address these challenges in order to create a larger, more profitable, more competitive and strategically significant business. TCI accomplishes this by creating a well-defined and synchronized improvement strategy that empowers employees and provides both immediate and long term improvement.

With TCI, management and employees work together to build a superior company. The results benefit customers and employees, as well as shareholders. ■