

INTERVIEW

Power to the people

Shared Service Centers (SSC) enable extraordinarily efficient administrative processes. When launched, processes are usually reorganized and automated, often by using Lean methods and tools. But what happens after the launch? Csaba Bereczki, expert in developing SSCs, explains how they remain successful in the tremendous, worldwide competition.

by Zsolt Szabó-Jilek

How can SSCs stay competitive in the long run?

Csaba Bereczki: They need to prepare for continuous change and development. Companies have to understand how an SSC creates value for them and that a transition of the processes to SSCs does not cause a loss in performance. Another key factor is to develop and retain employees for the long run.

What is more important for further development, Lean or automation?

Csaba Bereczki: There has to be a balance between the tools. Lean tools are used for detecting causes and understanding processes. It makes sense to turn to automation only after completing the improvements.

And what are the most useful Lean methods for indirect processes?

Csaba Bereczki: For Lean it is value stream, problem-solving tools, like fishbone, visual management, standard work and management standards. Looking at Six Sigma; the techniques of dealing with and evaluating huge amounts of data are important. In this respect, I think the must-have item is the »plan-do-check-act« cycle: its regular use will enable the company to develop its employees continuously and more sustainably, encouraging them to take over more responsibility.

How do you measure the quality of processes?

Csaba Bereczki: Through service level agreements and key performance indicators. But it can lead to wrong conclusions if we measure only one part of the process. It can also happen that despite perfect department performance, customer satisfaction decreases due to collaboration issues.

What are the success factors of SSC?

Csaba Bereczki: An IT system is very important, but the key success factor remains the people. If employees see that they can shape and influence their work, and they are developing, they will mobilize additional energy. Nobody will remember what tools were used, but everybody will remember how they did what and how they succeeded or learned. Involving people in a development process will help them understand and enable them to deal with more complex problems later on. ●



Csaba Bereczki is an international process development professional, a Six Sigma Black Belt and an active member of the Lean Enterprise Institute, Hungary.