



e-LEAN[®]

e-LEAN[®] for the Graphic
Communication Industry

**A Process for
Graphics Workflow
Excellence**



INTRODUCTION



e-LEAN[®] for the Graphic Communication Industry

www.ipa.org/eLEAN

A Process for Graphics Workflow Excellence

Achieving the desired growth and profitability for today's graphic solutions provider who is involved in creative, prepress, premedia, and printing workflows requires a highly automated and efficient digital graphics workflow.

This workflow efficiency has a significant impact on our *customers'* ability to:

- ✓ achieve **their** communication objectives;
- ✓ provide **them** shorter time-to-market;
- ✓ improve **their** graphics and printing consistency;
- ✓ reduce **their** costs; and
- ✓ achieve an improved ROI for **their** graphics campaign results.

Over the past several years, "lean manufacturing" principles have demonstrated a profound impact on industries and companies worldwide, including those in the traditional manufacturing and printing industries. Maximizing the efficiency of human and technical resources goes to the heart of the graphic communication industry's ability to achieve positive results for their customers.

IPA's e-LEAN[®] program...

Includes a comprehensive educational system consisting of:

- ✓ **webinars**
- ✓ **handbooks**
- ✓ **personalized coaching**

to help graphic communication companies improve their workflow speed and efficiency for faster delivery to their customers.

Today's leading graphic solutions providers address more than just printing; their services encompass creative, prepress, premedia and all forms of content delivery. As a result, process improvement of digital workflows requires more than just the traditional machinery based principles of lean manufacturing.

Advances to Digital Workflows Have Raised Customer Expectations

Over the years, advances in digital technology have “amplified” the inefficiencies of an integrated digital graphics workflow.

Turnaround - An industry leader put it well, “Our customers’ job turnaround expectations are much higher these days. When this was a non-digital, film based environment we had an excuse for slower production. Now in the digital workflow environment, customers assume our production is nearly instantaneous; and, as a result, their delivery expectations have grown exponentially.”



Speed - The “need for speed” pushes many graphic solutions providers to engage in the necessary, but often wasteful, practice of beginning work on their clients’ graphic campaigns before the requirements of the final output product has even been defined. Will the job be for press, billboards, Web, packaging, or multimedia applications? Jobs must get started earlier in the communication process, often at the expense of repurposing or reworking the job for alternate means of delivery. The customer may not have yet defined the medium, but their expectations are for your company to begin graphics preparation in anticipation of their final instructions.

Quality - Graphic communication professionals face a surprising set of quality issues. One market segment continues to require exacting quality standards while another is willing to accept “good enough” (i.e. substandard) graphic quality. Digital advances have allowed increased variability of input of graphics files to the service provider. As one professional recently said, “In earlier times, we would get art boards. We could then shoot the art board on camera or scan it in. This allowed us to maintain complete control of the quality and graphics process. In today’s world, non-professionals (i.e., product managers, administrative assistants, etc.) are assuming the role of “creative designers.” As a result, we get a variety of file types and questionable input quality that is inconsistent and fraught with errors.”



Inaccurate color management in the creative process (e.g., photography) and software incompatibilities contribute to a job’s complexity, thereby causing eventual delays that result in slower job turnaround. Customers’ value propositions for the final product are often expressed in terms of “good-enough” quality replacing craftsmanship. This results in low commodity pricing that eventually erodes profitability for the graphic solutions provider.

e-LEAN® for Digital Graphics Workflow Improvement

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them,” said Albert Einstein.

The traditional machinery manufacturing process improvement techniques don’t necessarily apply in a digital workflow environment. New technologies require new innovative problem solving techniques.

IPA’s Team of workflow experts have upgraded traditional “lean” manufacturing principles and have now applied them to the digital world of graphic communications.

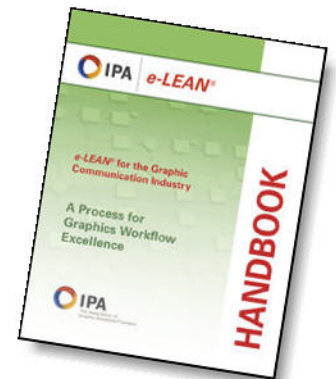
e-LEAN® for the Graphic Communication Industry

IPA's comprehensive new program offers education, tools and support for implementing workflow efficiency across the complete digital supply chain.

To be **e-LEAN®** is to process and deliver graphic solutions without wasting time, materials, creativity and essential human resources. The decision to transform from a mass producer to an **e-LEAN** producer is a “declaration of war” on waste and inefficiency. **e-LEAN** tools are designed to identify and remove waste and to prevent it from ever returning.

IPA’s **e-LEAN®** tools were developed by combining traditional lean manufacturing principles with real-world analysis of IPA member companies who have opened their digital workflow to the IPA **e-LEAN** Team. These companies are already achieving increased levels of efficiency, growth and profitability utilizing IPA’s **e-LEAN** tools and support.

The IPA **e-LEAN®** program includes a series of **e-LEAN** educational webinar programs, a detailed implementation handbook and personalized consulting and coaching opportunities. All tools include a description of real-world implementation case studies of the **e-LEAN** principles (though actual company anonymity is protected.)



The case studies in the **e-LEAN®** program are presented under the banner of a fictitious graphic solutions provider called Knoture Graphics Company. The quotes, data, and workflow solutions attributed to Knoture Graphics Company are derived from real-world examinations of graphic solutions providers who have implemented traditional lean and **e-LEAN** manufacturing principles in their operations.

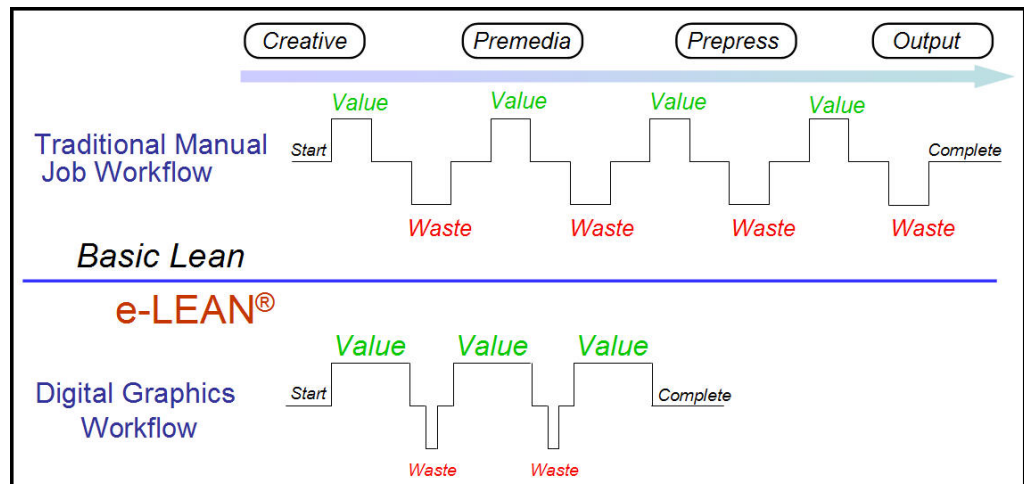
Getting e-LEAN®

We get e-LEAN® by simply drawing a value stream workflow starting from the origin of creativity to when the final job is output and payment received. Every activity along that workflow is defined and categorized as to “adding value” or contributing to the waste of time, money, and resources.

In an e-LEAN® analysis, we will quickly see how an order is idle 90% of the time as it moves through the graphics workflow process. This idle “waste” is caused by:

- 1) production errors,
- 2) internal and external delays,
- 3) unnecessary duplication of effort,
- 4) unnecessary movement of digital information or physical materials,
- 5) unclear and confusing internal and external communications,
- 6) incorrect inventory of digital information or physical supplies.

All of these causes result in a decrease in production capacity, an increase in production costs and eventual lost customer opportunities.



The impact of eliminating these waste sources on final products and services means:

- a) higher quality to the customer;
- b) significantly faster delivery to the customer; and
- c) improved profitability to the producing organization.

Dynamic market changes and international competition have necessitated the requirements for higher quality and new value-added services to retain business at fixed or declining prices. Applying e-LEAN® principles and practices puts the graphic solutions provider in a continuous improvement mode, always striving for lower costs and higher efficiencies, both of which will always be needed to remain competitive for the future.

“Knoture Graphics Company” - Case Study

In the IPA e-LEAN[®] Handbook, we will review a case study about Knoture Graphics Company that is a typical model of a progressive company embarking upon implementation of the e-LEAN[®] process.

We will describe the pain and the rewards available to your company by examining Knoture Graphics Company, which has all of the strengths and weaknesses typical of today's graphic solutions companies.

Our sample company is also easy to talk about. Why? Because it's “not your” graphics company, it's the other guy's company; it just happens to be called “Knoture Graphics Company.”

We'll see how the motivated Knoture Graphics' Leadership Team learns the necessary tools to begin the e-LEAN[®] journey and applies these tools to their creative, prepress, premedia, and printing operations.

We'll examine how they:

- ✓ use *parallel* e-LEAN[®] value workflow mapping techniques for both traditional manufacturing and digital graphics workflows and understand how these parallel paths complement each other to improve efficiency and quality.
- ✓ assemble administrative, sales, production and digital information personnel to complement each other in a “Kaizen e-LEAN[®] event” as they identify sources of waste and solutions to assure their non-recurrence.
- ✓ define “standardized e-LEAN[®] workflow practices” that will ensure consistent quality and timeliness of delivery of final graphic products to customers.
- ✓ Analyze and improve both the traditional lean physical workflows complemented by the more important e-LEAN[®] digital workflows.

Kanban
SMED
OEE
5S
TPM
Kaizen
Value Stream Mapping
Mistake Proofing

for complete details about getting e-LEAN[®]
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