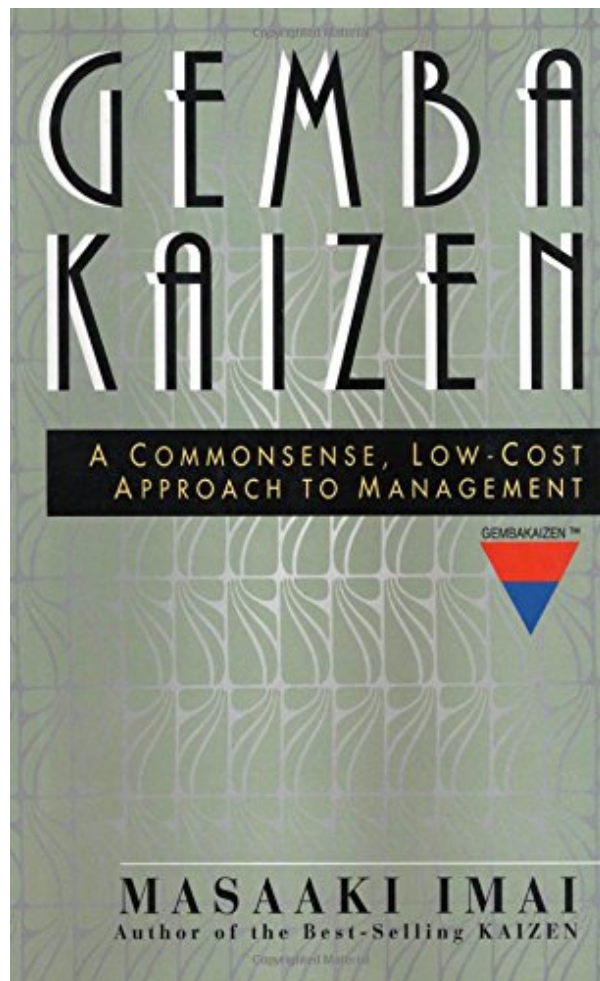
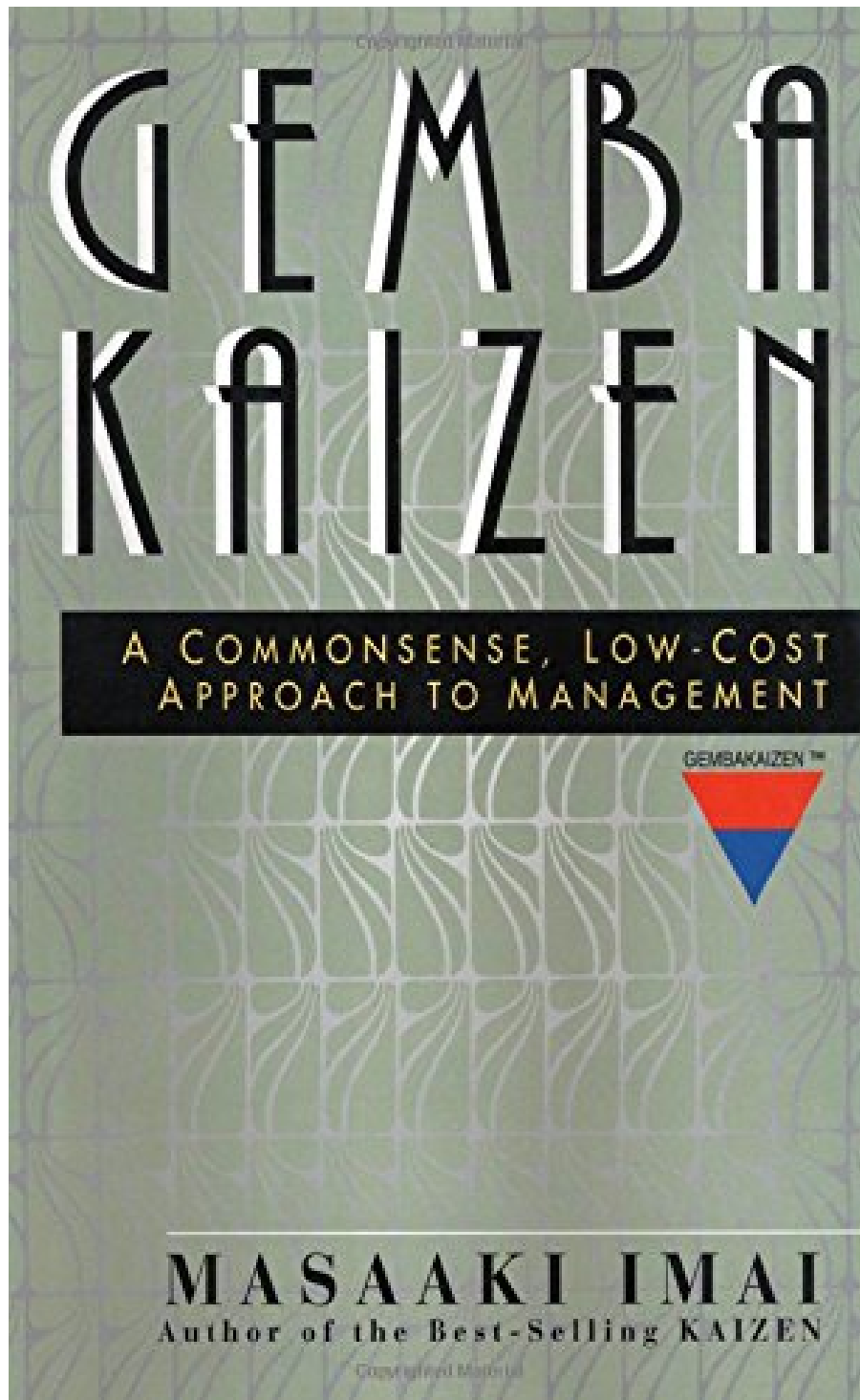


GEMBA KAIZEN: A COMMONSENSE, LOW-COST APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT BY MASA AKI IMAI



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In this sequel to his popular business/quality management book, *Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success* (1986), Imai offers a step forward?continuous improvement (kaizen) applied to the concept of continuous improvement in the workplace (gemba). The book reflects a definite operations bias. Indeed, Imai advocates the removal of all those peripheral things (muda) that cloud the focus of an organization. Some of the principles, such as the need for good housekeeping, seem simplistic, but Imai is on solid ground, demonstrating the practicality of gemba kaizen with a number of abbreviated case studies. The one weakness is the lack of adequate recognition of precedent setters: F.W. Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* (1912) and the work of W.A. Shewhart, W.E. Deming, J. Juran, etc. All in all, essential for business collections.?Steven Silkunas, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority, Philadelphia
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When it comes to making your business more profitable and successful, don't look to re-engineering for answers. A better way is to apply the concept of kaizen, which mean making simple, common-sense improvements and refinements to critical business processes. The result: greater productivity, quality, and profits achieved with minimal cost, time, and effort invested. In this book, you discover how to maximize the results of kaizen by applying it to gemba--business processes involved in the manufacture of products and the rendering of services--the areas of your business where, as the author puts it, the "real action" takes place.

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- 354 pages

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Every manufacturing and service professional should read it.

By William A. Levinson

Gemba is the place where value-adding activities take place. Decisive results can be achieved by focusing improvement activities in gemba. The author encourages managers and professionals to spend time in gemba to see what is happening and to encourage the front-line workers. General George S. Patton could easily be described as a gemba man: he encouraged officers to go to the scene of the action instead of trying to "lead" from a headquarters in the rear. He also recognized the role of the frontline worker (soldier) in achieving

results. As a result, the troops under Patton's command won amazing and seemingly impossible victories. Companies that want to hold their market share and capture their competitors' must understand this lesson. (Imai does not discuss Patton, but the historical parallel is obvious.) My books "The Way of discuss General Carl von Clausewitz' "friction" in a workplace context. Friction includes seemingly minor inefficiencies and problems whose combined effects degrade the organization's performance. Imai uses the word "muda" (waste), and stresses the need to suppress it. Tom Peters says, "The accumulation of little items, each too 'trivial' to trouble the boss with, is a prime cause of miss-the-market delays." (from "Thriving on Chaos.") Muda is essentially the same thing as friction. Imai also mentions "muri" (strain), which arises from inadequate training, poor ergonomic design, and inadequate preventive maintenance. Muri is another form of friction. Imai also discusses tools like 5S-CANDO (CANDO = clearing up, arranging, neatness, discipline, and ongoing improvement). 5S-CANDO is another tool for reducing friction. Imai discusses Just-in-Time (JIT) as a tool for reducing inventory and improving product flow. Readers of Eliyahu Goldratt and Jeff Cox's "The Goal" will appreciate this section. Synchronous flow manufacturing (SFM) is treated in detail in "Leading the Way to Competitive Excellence: The Harris Mountaintop Case Study". The idea of JIT/SFM is to produce goods in response to customer demand, not to keep people and equipment busy. Imai discussess a mattress factory that uses this approach: it not only keeps inventory down, but it can offer far more product lines. This is a key tool for going after niche (small, specialized, customized) markets. William A. Levinson

23 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Gemba -- Place where action happens

By A Customer

As a practitioner and instructor of lean and six sigma, I recommend this book a lot. Gemba is a vitally important concept that often gets overlooked or gets overshadowed by our data, especially in an increasingly e-driven world. Gemba Kaizen is especially useful for engineers and supervisors, who may not have extensive TPS experience, who need a practical guide for applying lean principals in their workplace. It has a nice glossary at the beginning. It has good sections on visual management (5S) and standard work. In addition to the 10 Rules for Gemba Kaizen, the following Imai quote is one of my favorites: "A lack of the five S's in gemba indicates inefficiency, muda, insufficient self-discipline, low moral, poor quality, high costs, and an inability to meet delivery terms."

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Brief and to the Point

By Elijah Chingosho

This is a delightful little book that provides important insights into how an organization can be successful by continuously looking at improving its operations, enhance efficiencies and refining operations. This would result in improved quality, productivity and ultimately profit for an organization but without the upheavals and pain associated with the likes of business process reengineering which is advocated by some people.

The author advocates the adoption of lean manufacturing principles, just-in-time processes, and Kanban, which should result in increased company profitability without adversely impacting employee morale and trust. The concepts highlighted in the book are well-known and the author consolidates these in a small book that makes easy and fast reading and a convenient reference guide for practitioners.

The book is recommended reading for managers involved in the implementation of lean manufacturing and Kaizen principles.

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