Leading and Focusing Improvement

CHALLENGES

Challenge

What are you striving to achieve?

Why is it important for this to be clear?

True North:

"The USA will be the undisputed world leader in space exploration and technology."

Challenge:

"I believe that this nation should commit itself, to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon, and returning him safely to the Earth."

Context: On May 25, 1961

- The USA had a total of 15 minutes of manned space flight experience. (The world had 105 minutes.)
- 25% of rocket launches blew up.

- Lots of people had been working on "space" since the 1950's.
- Lots of people were working on lots of problems.
- What did setting the challenge accomplish?

- What problems had to be solved? What had to be learned?
 - Can we build a spacesuit and work outside the spacecraft?
 - Can one spacecraft find and dock with another?
 - Can people survive for two weeks in space without serious problems?
- And we had to design and build a really big rocket, and a place to launch it from.

- What problems did not have to be solved?
 - Can we construct a rocket in orbit?
 - Can we build a rocket big enough for "direct landing and ascent?"
 - Can we construct a base on the moon?
 - Can we develop an air-breathing booster?
- While interesting, none of these problems was an obstacle to meeting the challenge. They could wait.

"True North" - Vision of the Ideal



Guides the general direction.

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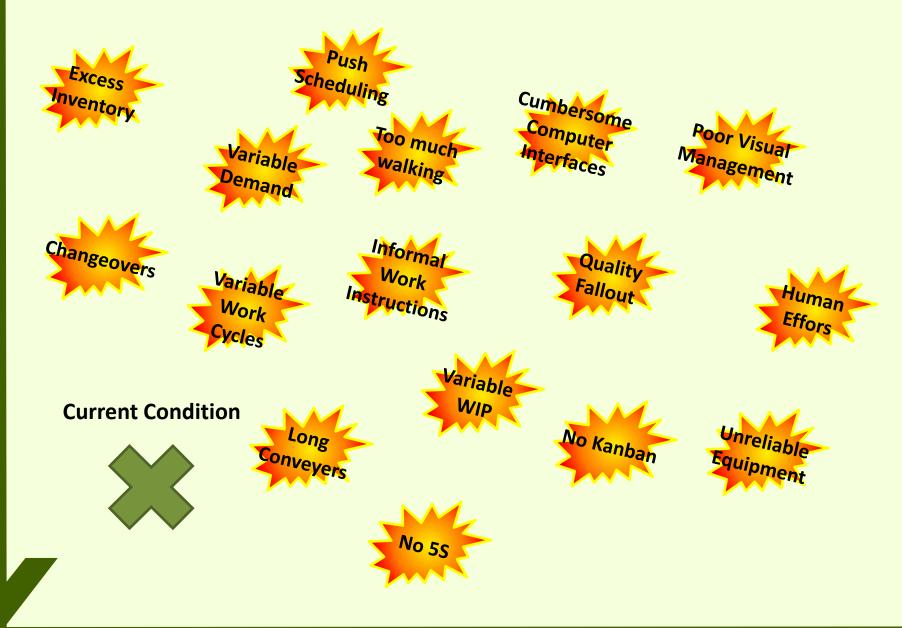
Guides the general direction.

"Vision" alone is vague, and difficult to action.

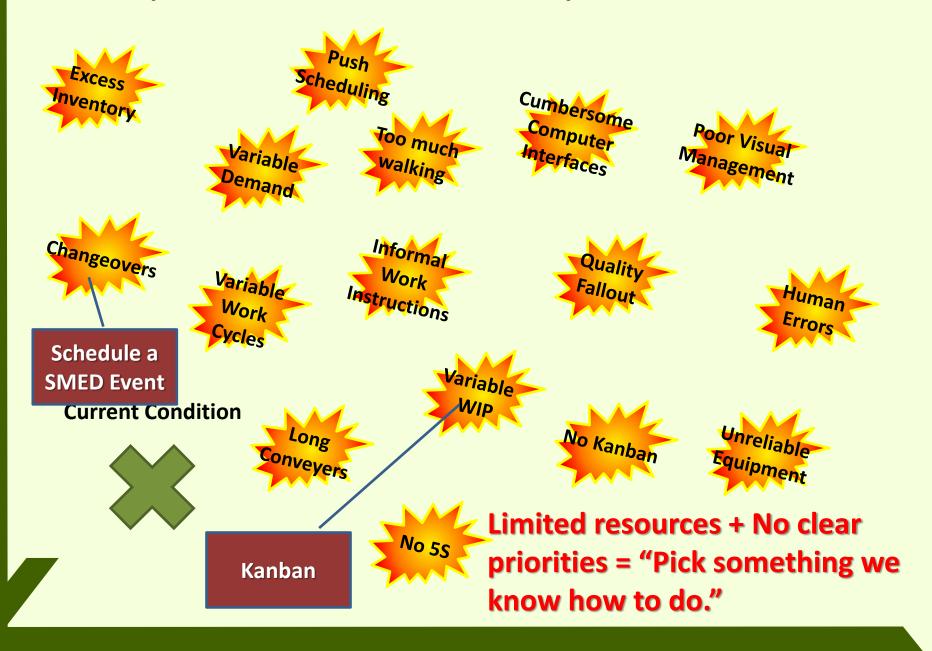
Simply educating people on "the vision" does not give them a direction.

- They will see "problems" and "waste" everywhere they look.
- Which ones are important to work on?

Which problems are most important?



Which problems are most important?



A Challenge Aligns the Effort

- Something important to the organization.
- Might be a hoshin in a more developed process.
 - ...but hoshin planning is not necessary for a challenge.
- "100% On time delivery."
- "Similar product quotes within 2 days."
- "Reduce cycle time by 30%."

"Eliminating Waste" is a result.

- "Eliminate waste" is not the challenge.
- There is no direction or goal.
- Wasteful activities are removed as a result of solving the problems between you and the goal.
- There are too many opportunities to simply "eliminate waste." The effort is dissipated and unfocused.

The Toughest Management Decision

A specific challenge empowers people by giving them permission NOT to try to work on everything.

Question:

If you asked an improvement team *today*, "What is your challenge?"

Or, in plain language – what are you striving to achieve, and how will you know you've done it?

What would they tell you?

Maybe a good homework assignment?