

Lean Production and Leadership – Operational Excellence in Japan

Nothing is more inspirational than successful role models.



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Impact of the Learning Journeys Results of the Online Surveys

Lean Production and Leadership – Operational Excellence in Japanese Companies

July 2023

Dr Roman Ditzer

Online Surveys

Objective and questions

We wanted to know more out about the long-term impact of our **LEAN Learning Journeys** to Japan so we conducted a simple survey. The aim was also to find out the extent to which the inspiration from Japan has led to behavioural changes and improvements in daily business back in Germany. After all our Japan seminars are based on one fundamental principle: **Ultimately, the only thing that counts is what is then implemented in your own company.**

The survey consisted of nine questions, formulated in an open manner to ensure that the answers were neither suggestive nor prescriptive. We were eager to receive honest feedback and clear statements. At some points in the survey we follow-up on affirmative answers and ask for more details or examples.

The Results of the Online Surveys **2015, 2019, 2020 and 2023** are presented together below.

Online Surveys

Participants and Response Rate

Participants 2012 to 2015

We contacted **120 participants** of our Learning Journeys of the years 2012 until 2015. **66 participants*** answered the questions and completed the survey in November 2015. **This equates to a response rate of 55 %.**

Participants 2016 to 2022

In further surveys we contacted **190 participants** of the Learning Journeys of the years 2016 until 2022. **85 participants*** took part and answered the questions in October 2019, December 2020 and June 2023. **This equates to a response rate of 45 %.**

Thus the **results are representative and robust.**

** Some questions could be skipped without being answered, hence the total number of answers not adding up to 151.*

Question 1

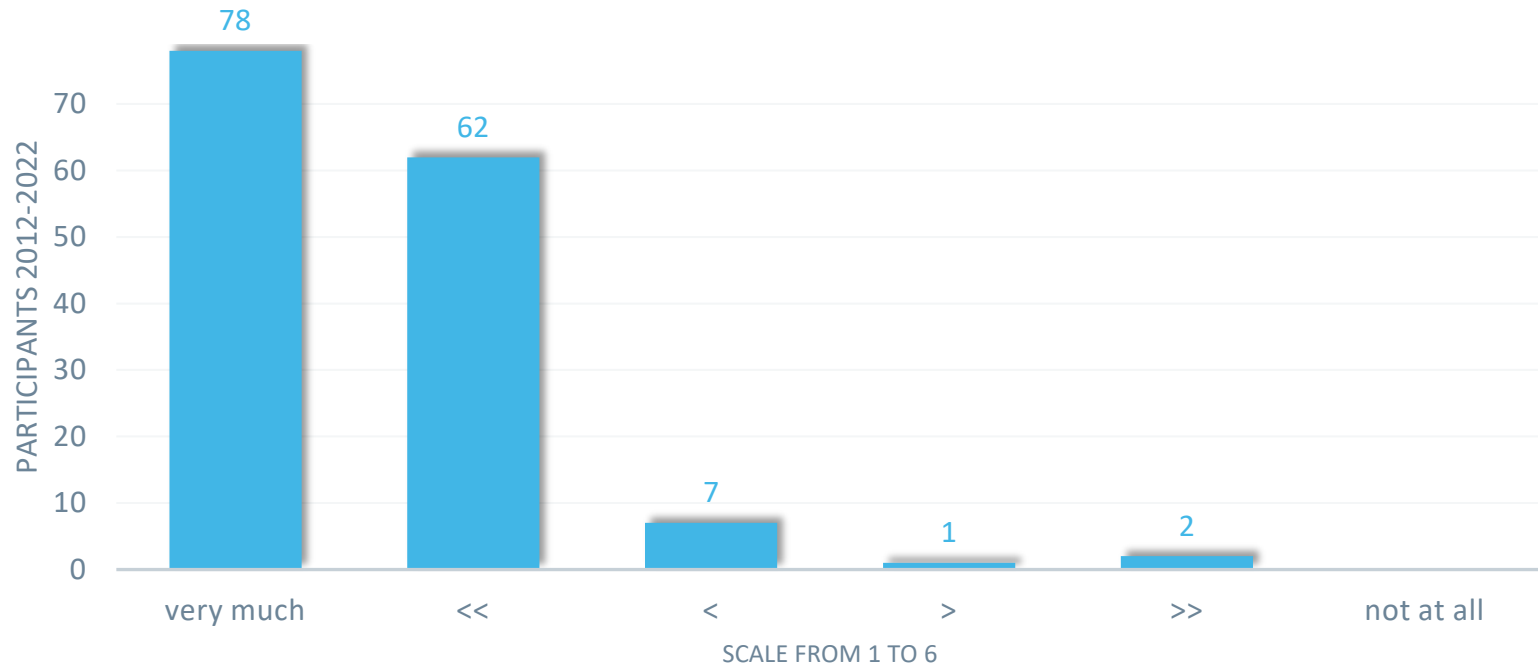
Questions about the impact of the Learning Journey

Looking back, would you say that the Learning Journey was worthwhile for your own personal development?

Was the Learning Journey worthwhile?

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

On a scale from 1 (very worthwhile) to 6 (not worthwhile at all) ...



Participants 2012-2022 (150 answers)

Average score: **1.6**

Question 2

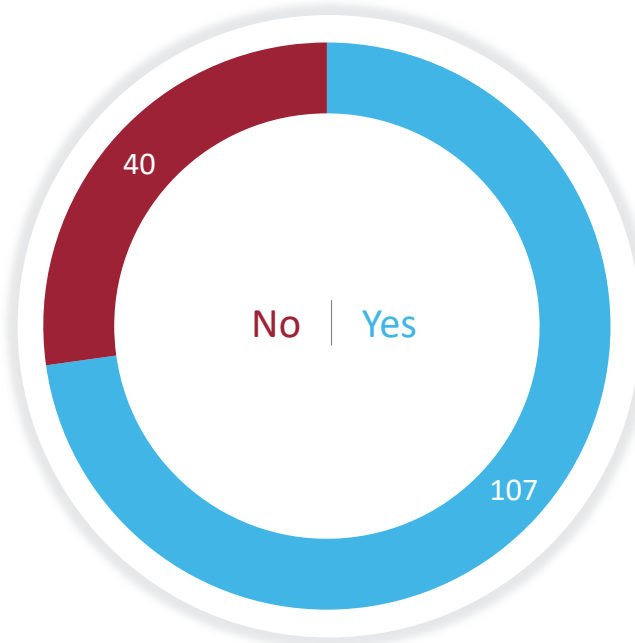
Questions about the impact of the Learning Journey

Did the experience in Japan change your leadership style?

Has your leadership style changed?

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

Did the experience in Japan change your leadership style?



Participants 2012-2022 (147 answers)

73 % of the participants reported
a change in behaviour.

Has your leadership style changed?

Follow-up question

If yes, in what way?

Has your leadership style changed?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"After the trip, my appreciation of the employee has changed. What you invest here, you end up getting back twofold.

It also showed me what advantages a consistent implementation on the basis of a uniform philosophy entails."

Has your leadership style changed?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"I took valuable learnings with me and have identified personal action items based on this learning. This will definitely lead to some impetus on my leadership style. However, to say that the visit has changed my leadership style would go too far (and in my opinion cannot be expected)"

Has your leadership style changed?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"I pay more attention to small steps – not taking on too much, focusing on pragmatic implementation".

"Less deciding on my own → more trusting of employees and motivating them!"

"To greet every employee personally every morning."

Has your leadership style changed?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"Since Japan, I have placed much more emphasis on visualisation and transparency of results. *Go and See* is more important to me than before."

"More discipline, more 'leading by example', more 'go to *genba*', fewer automation requests"

Has your leadership style changed?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

**"Significantly more on-site presence!
I now try to make the world a little bit better every day. One step, 1 yen, 1 second'*. I try to change the things I can influence and spend less time trying to convince boards."**

*'One Step, 1 yen, 1 second' is one of the kaizen mottos of the company KSK, with the message that even seemingly small improvements have value and that no improvement is too small to be considered as such.

Has your leadership style changed?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"The manager's task is to take care of the employees and to use and promote the potential of the employees: Employees take care of their worries and are given the freedom and, if necessary, the means to remedy them".

"Balance between 'left and right brain hemisphere'"

Question 3

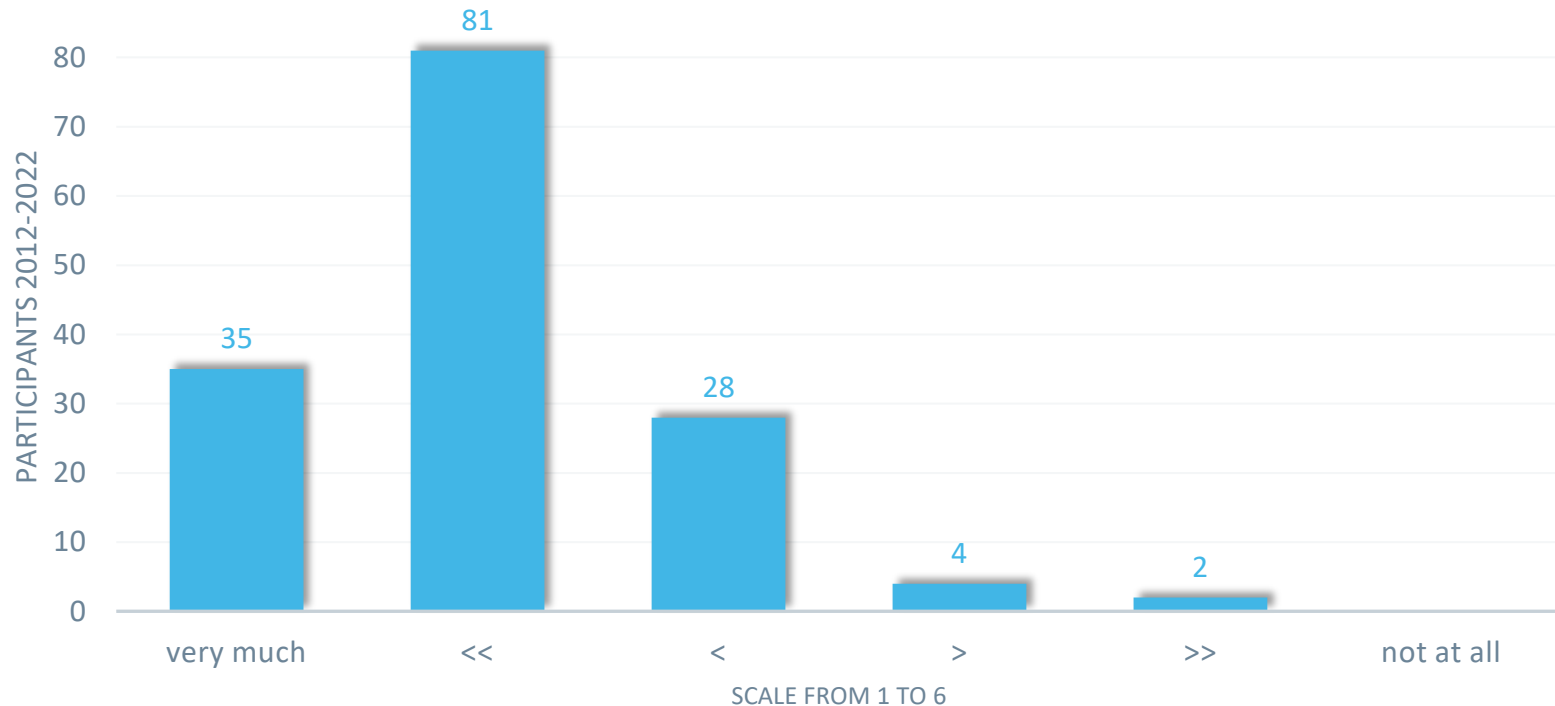
Questions about the cost-benefit ratio

In retrospect, would you say that the Learning Journey was worthwhile for the company that sent you?

... worthwhile for your company?

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

On a scale from 1 (very worthwhile) to 6 (not worthwhile at all) ...



Participants 2012-2022 (150 answers)

Average score: 2

Question 4

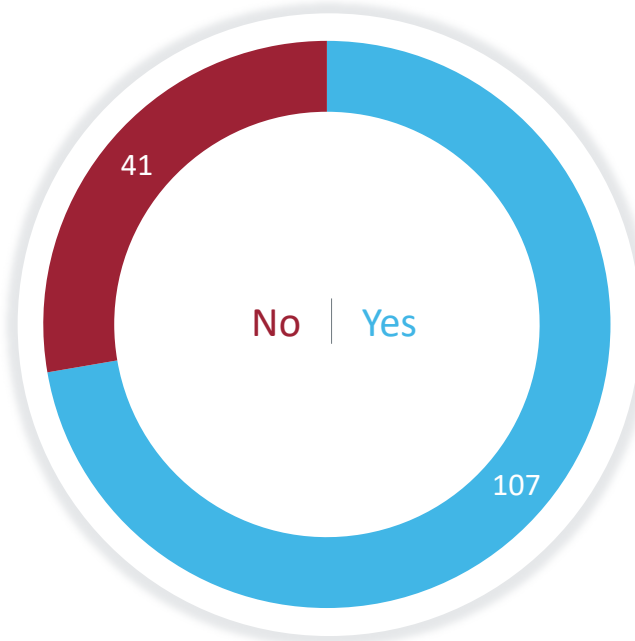
Questions about the impact of the Learning Journey

Are there any specific improvement measures which can be traced back to the ideas from the Learning Journey?

... specific improvement measures?

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

Did the Journey lead to any specific improvement measures?



Participants 2012-2022 (148 answers)

The Learning Journey led to improvement measures for **72 %** of the participants.

... specific improvement measures?

Follow-up question

If yes, do you have any examples?

... specific improvement measures?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"Every participant of the Learning Journey has started (partly already implemented) his own projects in the plant with the knowledge from Japan. The effects in Euros as well as in culture are excellent."

"The focus was put on occupational safety."

"Annual event introduced to appreciate the suggestions of direct employees"

... specific improvement measures?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"One of our participating plants has put some of the suggestions directly into practice."

"Savings programme worth 140 000 EUR started."

"1. stronger focus on analysing the causes of malfunctions and deviations as a basis for implementing sustainable corrective/preventive measures.

2. raising awareness of the cumulative effect of small issues".

... specific improvement measures?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"Training series on lean for DB Systel employees; development of a team in this direction; impulses for the daily thinking behaviour of employees, e. g. through Brownbag sessions."

"Setting up learning islands at DB LEAN Lernfabrik ['learning factory'] Leipzig"

... specific improvement measures?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

**"CIP* processes – processing on the shop floor,
LCA** tool developed, integrated into purchasing
considerations ...**

**Various projects within the framework of
kaizen@Gaggenau accompanied."**

**"More comparable numbers, e. g. hours that
employees get for *kaizen* activities ...
This structured information will help."**

*CIP: Continuous Improvement Process

**LCA: Low-Cost Automation

... specific improvement measures?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"OEE* improvement (+10 %) targeted in an area through workplace analysis and *kaizen* changes → project is underway and should be completed by the end of this year.

Exactly arrange the work on a line of two employees (through time analysis), optimise and drastically improve the plant OEE for small batch sizes → project is ongoing

→ all topics are discussed every second week through our 'Coaching Meetings' (2 h fixed meetings)."

*OEE: Overall Equipment Effectiveness

Question 5

Questions about the cost-benefit ratio

From your company's point of view, would you recommend that colleagues also participate in a Learning Journey to Japan?

... recommend the Journey to colleagues?

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

From your company's point of view, would you recommend the trip to colleagues?



Participants 2012-2022 (149 answers)

97 % of the participants would recommend the Learning Journey.

Question 6

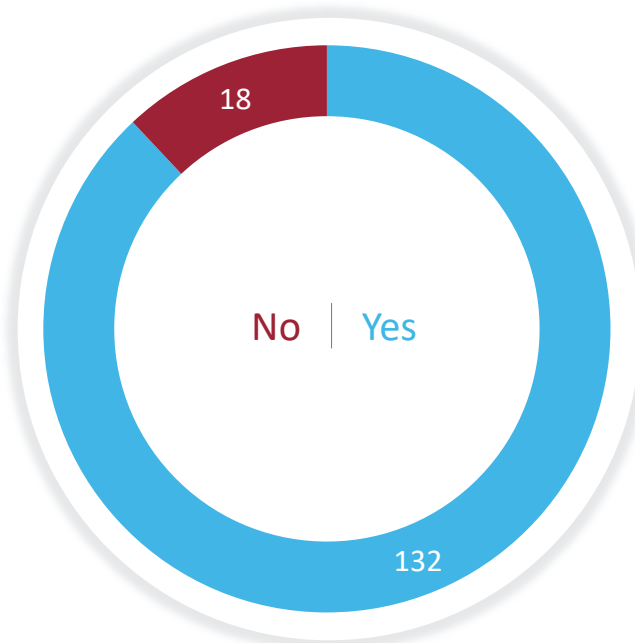
Question about the programme event with long-lasting effect

Is there a company visit or programme event that you remember as **particularly positive**?

Highlight of the Journey?

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

Is there a company visit or programme event that you remember as particularly positive?

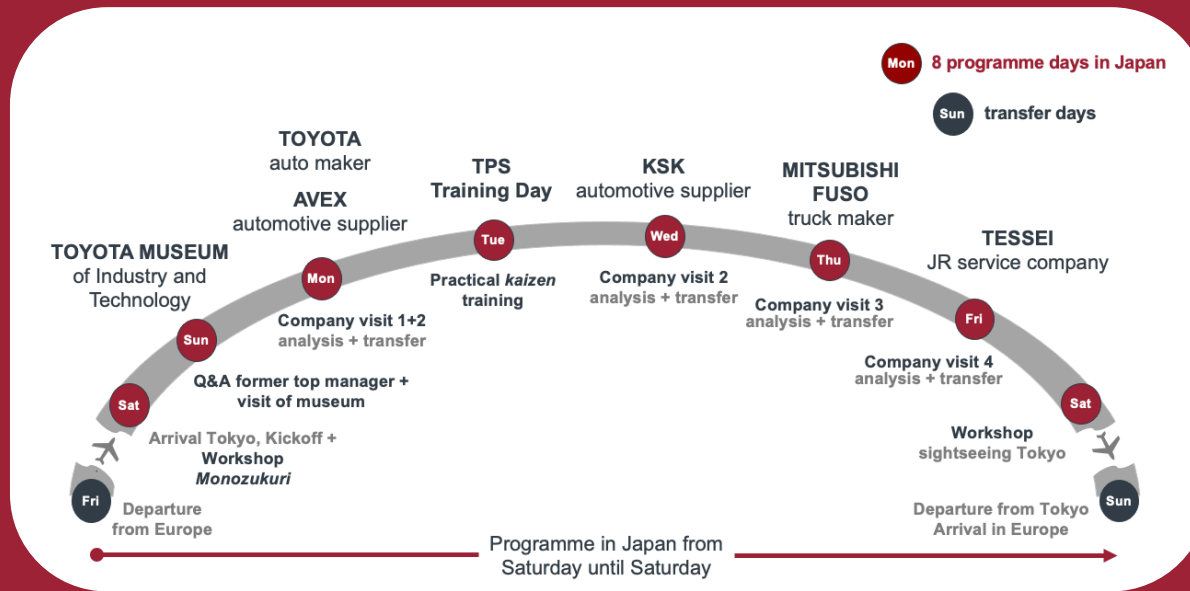


Participants 2012-2022 (150 answers)
88 % of the participants recall
a personal highlight.

Highlight of the Journey?

Follow-up question

If yes, what was it and what was the reason?

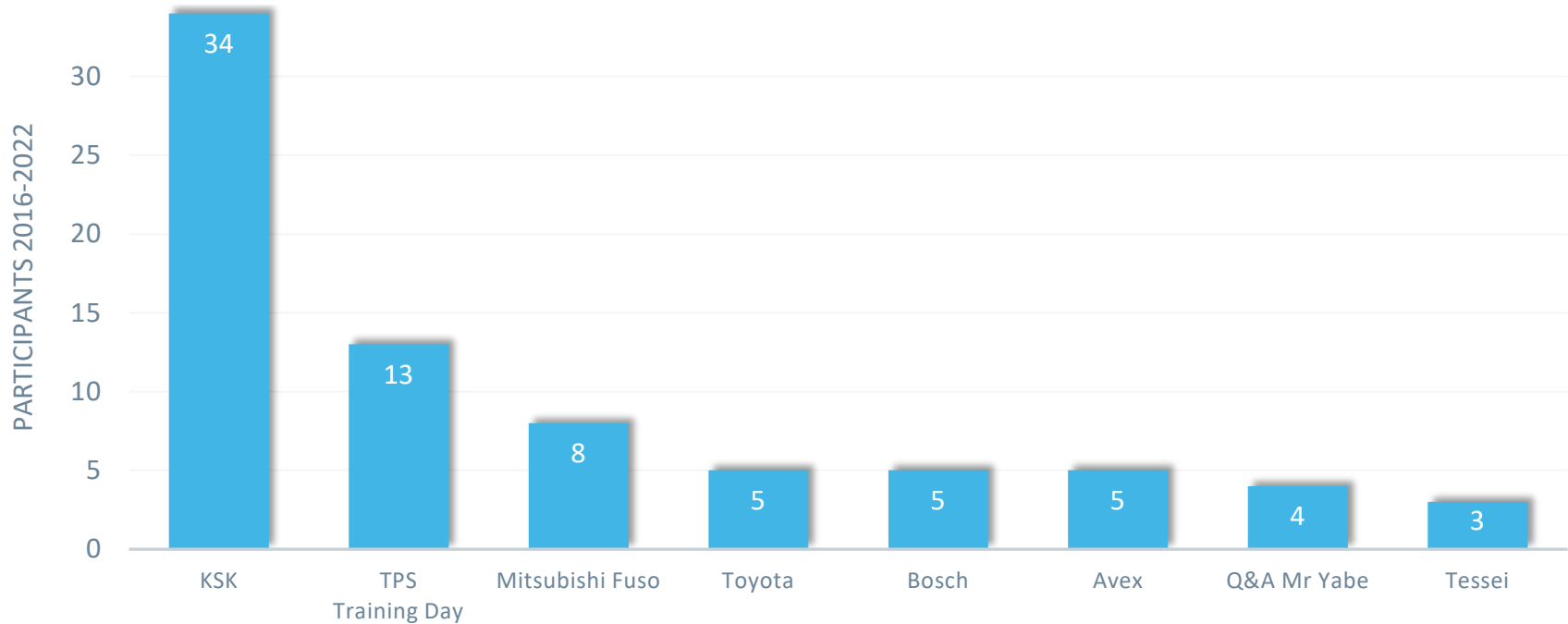


*The programme overview is an example.

Highlight of the Journey?

Highlights of the Learning Journeys from 2016 to 2022

Is there a programme event that you remember particularly positively?



Answers of Participants 2016-2022 (multiple answers possible)

Further: JR-EAST (2), DENSO (2), SUMITOMO WIRING (2), Lecture Masaaki Matsuo (2) as well as MURATA, Toyota Museum, *Monozukuri*-Workshop (knife sharpening), *Kaizen* Matrix, hot springs and Nagoya Castle

Highlight of the Journey?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"KSK: all 'evolutionary stages' from manual to fully automated production. *Kaizen/LEAN* was highly visible there."

"KSK and the classic CIP approach and implementation shown there were an eye-opener for me with regards to what is really possible by utilising CIP."

"Sumitomo Wiring ... people management"

*CIP: Continuous Improvement Process

Highlight of the Journey?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"AVEX: Most impressive in terms of technical standardization. Strong learning transfer possible to our business."

"In general, the combination between theory in the seminar room and practice in the companies. The truck production at MITSUBISHI FUSO was particularly impressive."

Highlight of the Journey?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"TPS Training Day": Because it helped sharpening the focus on careful root cause analyses (e.g. Five Whys)."

"Toyota Old Boys* [TPS Training Day]": Very vivid demonstration of how relatively easy it is to bring about improvements when you take your time and look at things from different angles."

*'Toyota Old Boys' refers to the trainers at TPS TRAINING DAY.

Highlight of the Journey?

Selected Answers of Participants 2016-2022

"BOSCH: Very structured company, insane love of order, super logistics. Toyota, KSK, Fuso, *Shinkansen*, the Nagoya castle, Nagoya, Tokyo, traditional hotel, guided city tour on the 52nd floor, Metro, the team of Dr Ditzer (perfection) ⇒ everything awesome and a crazy experience!"

"In general, the trip in the group was perfect for exchange!"

Question 7

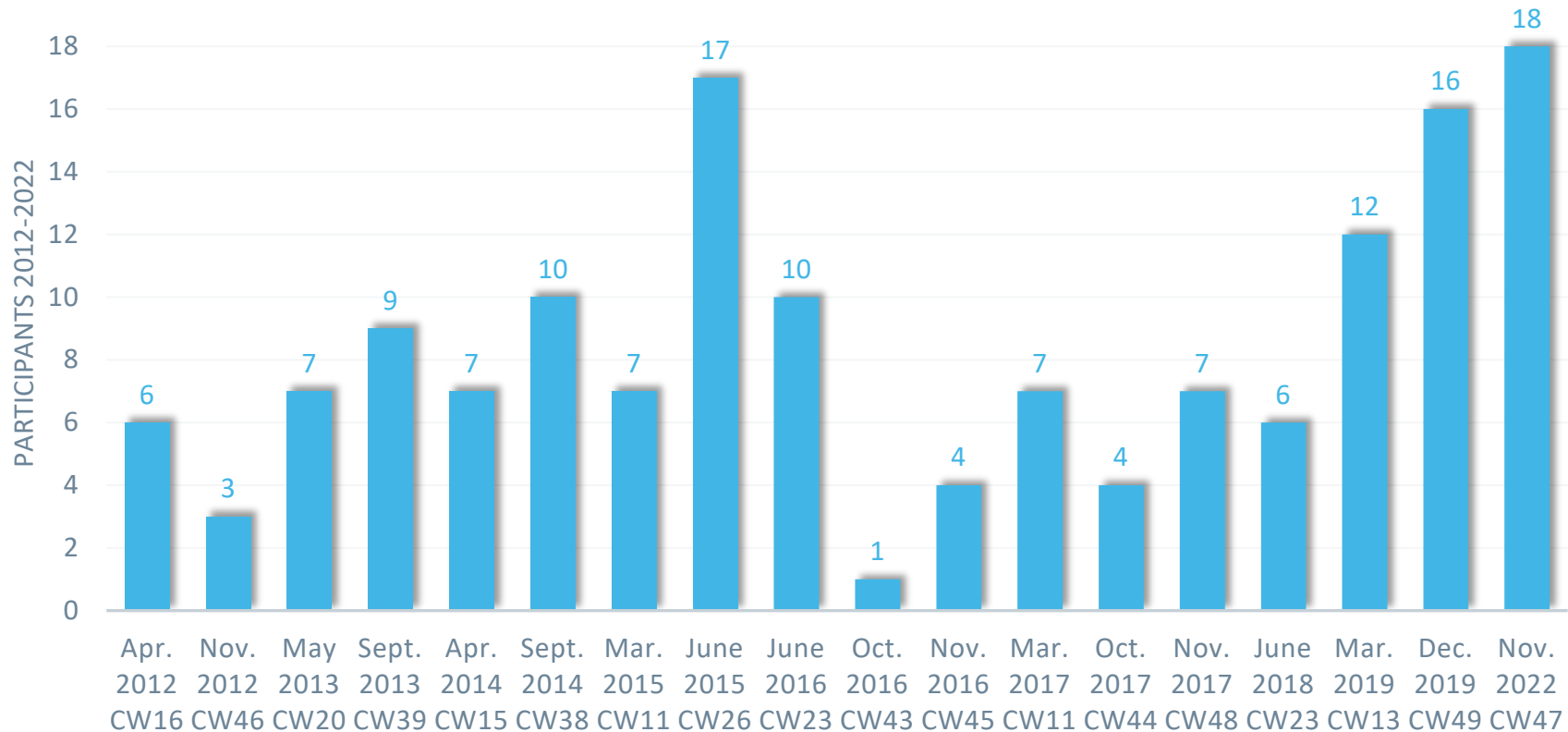
Questions about the survey participants

Which Learning Journey did you participate in?

About the participants of the survey

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

Which Learning Journey did you participate in?



CW = calendar week

Question 8

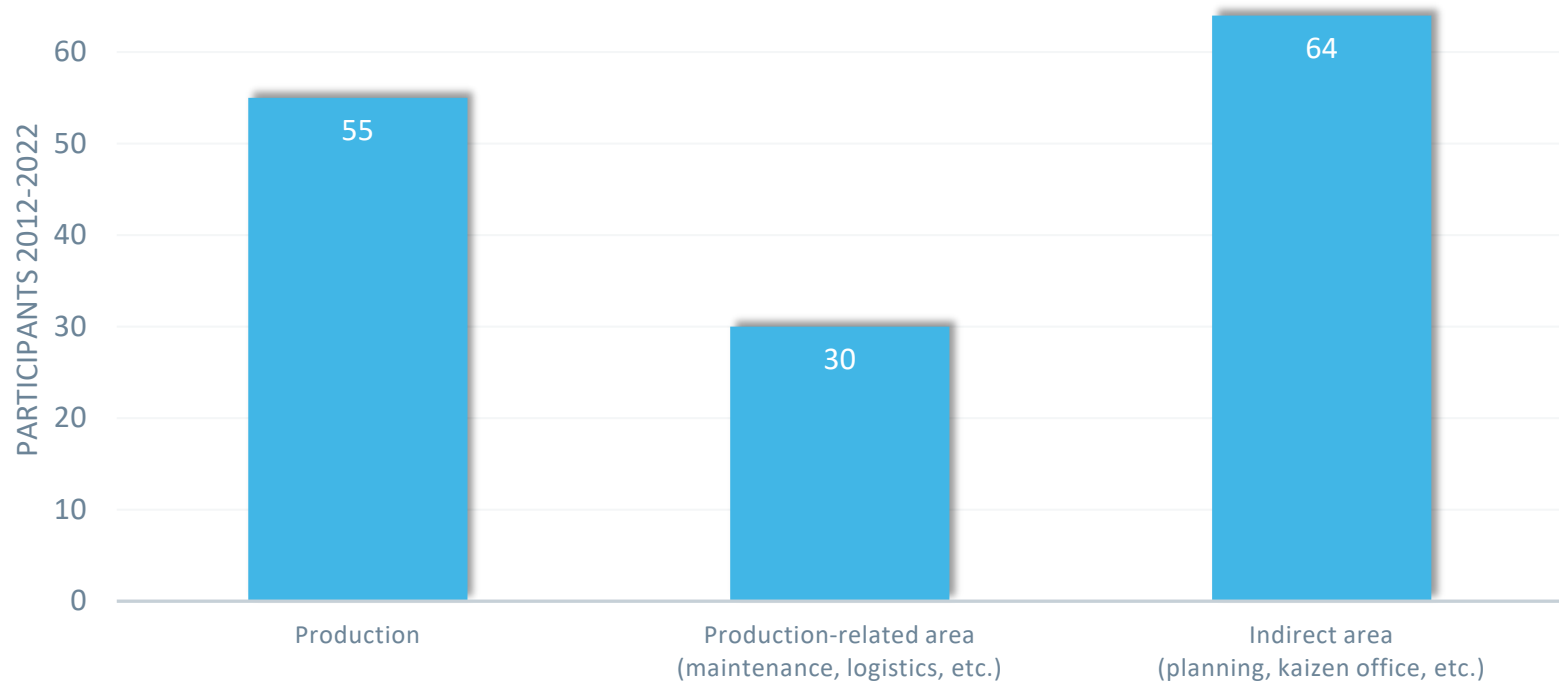
Questions about the survey participants

In which division of your company are you currently working?

About the participants of the survey

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

In which division of your company are you currently working?



Participants 2012-2022 (149 answers)

43 % of the feedback came from participants working in **indirect areas**.

Question 9

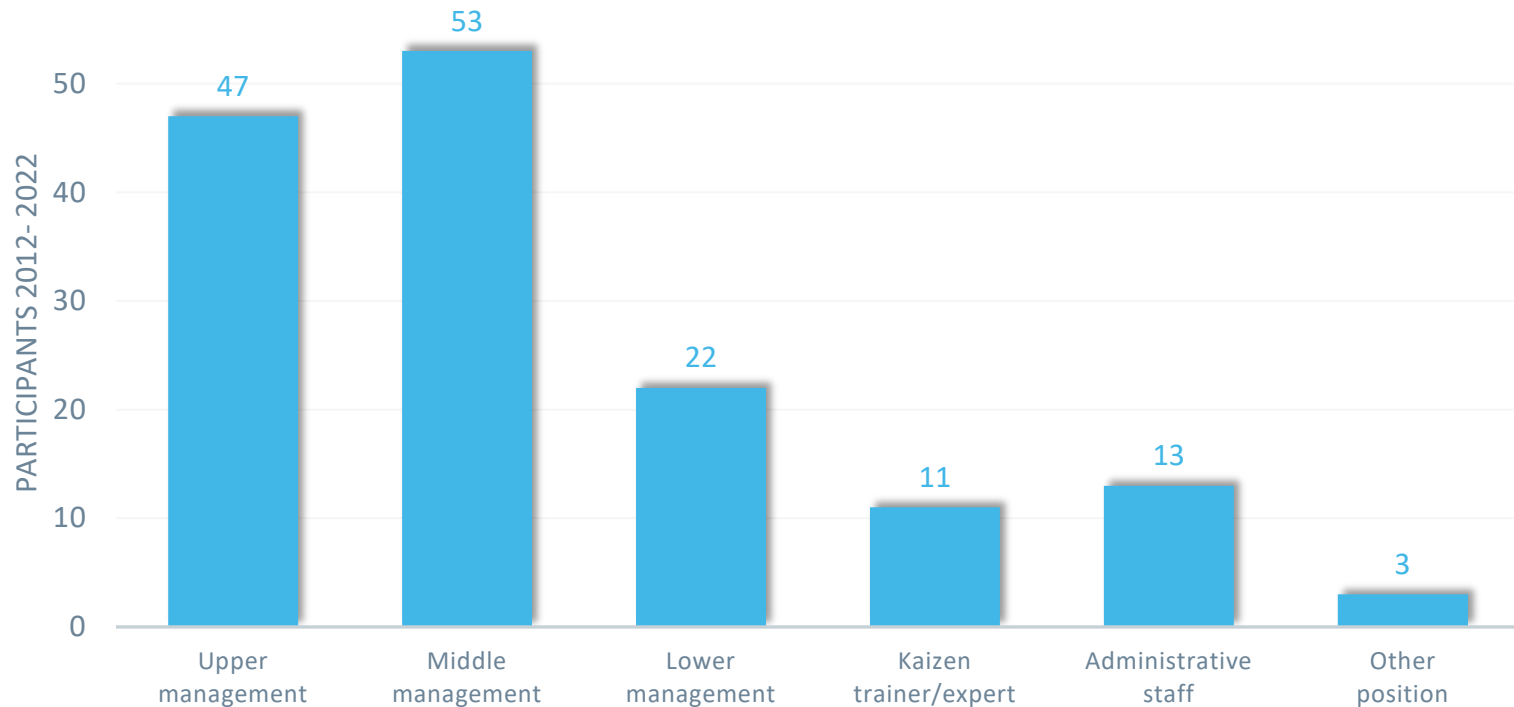
Questions about the survey participants

What is your current position in the company?

About the participants of the survey

Results of 18 Learning Journeys from 2012 to 2022

What is your current position in the company?



Participants 2016-2022 (149 answers)

The **great majority (82 %)** of our participants are **managers**.

Conclusion of the Online Surveys

Transfer and implementation of insights takes place.

The Learning Journeys have benefited participants and companies:

- The inspiration from Japan has led to changes in the way the participants think and act. Specific mention was given to:
 - **Stronger integration** and **more communication** with employees
 - More appreciation for **small measures** and **pragmatism**
 - Increased awareness and use of **soft factors ('right brain hemisphere')** in leadership work
- Experiences gathered during the journey were transferred to one's own area. Specific improvement measures were implemented:
 - The consistent transfer and implementations after the return has changed **practices, brought savings** and led to **changes in culture**.
- The participants confirmed: The **cost-benefit ratio for the company is good** and it makes sense to provide this opportunity to other colleagues.
- The participants continue to look back on their personal highlights. Especially the company KSK has been remembered positively by many.

Learning Journeys to the Sources of Excellence

Concept LEAN Learning Journey

Benchmark Training Journeys to Japan:

'Lean Production and Leadership – Operational Excellence in Japanese Companies'

- Preparation in Germany: **in-depth introduction** to the philosophy and management tools of lean production, one-day preparatory seminar
- Eight days in Japan: exclusive **insight into the practice** of selected flagship companies – directly on-site in Japan
- The seminar focuses on two areas: The **application of lean production** and the associated **leadership style**
- Qualified **evaluation** of what has been seen and **identifying the LEAN success factors** via intensive individual and group work
- **Implementation of own projects** after return

Ultimately, the only thing that counts is what you go on to implement in your own company.

Learning Journeys to the Sources of Excellence

Nothing is more inspirational than successful role models.

RD interlogue organises seminar trips on the topics of Lean Management, Lean Production, and *Kaizen*.

For more information, please visit
www.rdinterlogue.com/en/japan_seminar

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Journeys to the Sources of Excellence