

Cracking the Cage Flow & Efficiency Issues

Using Lean: A Layman Approach

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Cage Distribution Problem

- Animal care staff: “We do not have enough clean cages supplied, we cannot get our work done on time”
- Cage wash staff: “We are working hard and doing our best”
- This is how the problem presents
- Where and what exactly is the problem?



Problem Identification

- Do we have enough cages?
- Facility census 8000 static. Need 2000 per day for a 4 day change out/week
- Yes, we had more than required cages.
- Started with review of cage wash operations.
- Backed up every day – They come early hoping to get the cages supplied for techs.
- Well it was not working!



Cage Wash Operations



- Upon our review – We felt that cage return from the animal care techs was not organized.
- Often times dirty cages are returned around 3pm just before the cage wash staff left for the day creating the backlog problem.

Animal Care Staff Work Flow - Review

- Animal care staff had specific responsibilities (work loads were not transparent)
- No bench mark for efficiency
- No guidelines for cage changing process during the day
- Created lack of organized supply leading to technicians accomplishing the cage changing at their wish during the week
- Most often clean cages were taken on first come first served basis



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Approach to Solution

- Cage changing should be performed by all technicians every day for 4 days
- Cages should be distributed to all daily as per the required numbers
- Cage wash team should know what and how many to be processed
- Supervisors should monitor the required numbers and work out the flow during the week

Did it work?

- Well it did not work out as we thought
- Cages were distributed as per plan
- However, cage wash is still backed up
- Even with less cages to change, dirty cages were not returned early enough
- Understanding bottle necks





Holy cow
Crabby & moody

Tweaking the plan

- Established benchmark – 50 cages per hour
- Mandatory cage changing in the morning. First drop off at 8.30am
- Cage wash gets head start with the machines
- More transparent and inefficiencies addressed



September 12-16	Monday		
	Cages/ day	8:30	Second drop off
Experimental			
Leo	173		
Mary	162		
Samantha		Off	Off
B-1			
Richard	166		
Jessica	166		
Tabitha	165		
Carrie	150		
B-2/Biohazard/ D006			
Jennifer		Off	Off
WW/Dhall			
Danielle	156		
Mike	177		
Barrier			
Desiree	152		
Isatu	209		

- Workloads are transparent
- Every technician's efficiency is monitored
- No blame – Culture for inefficiencies
- Accountability as a religion



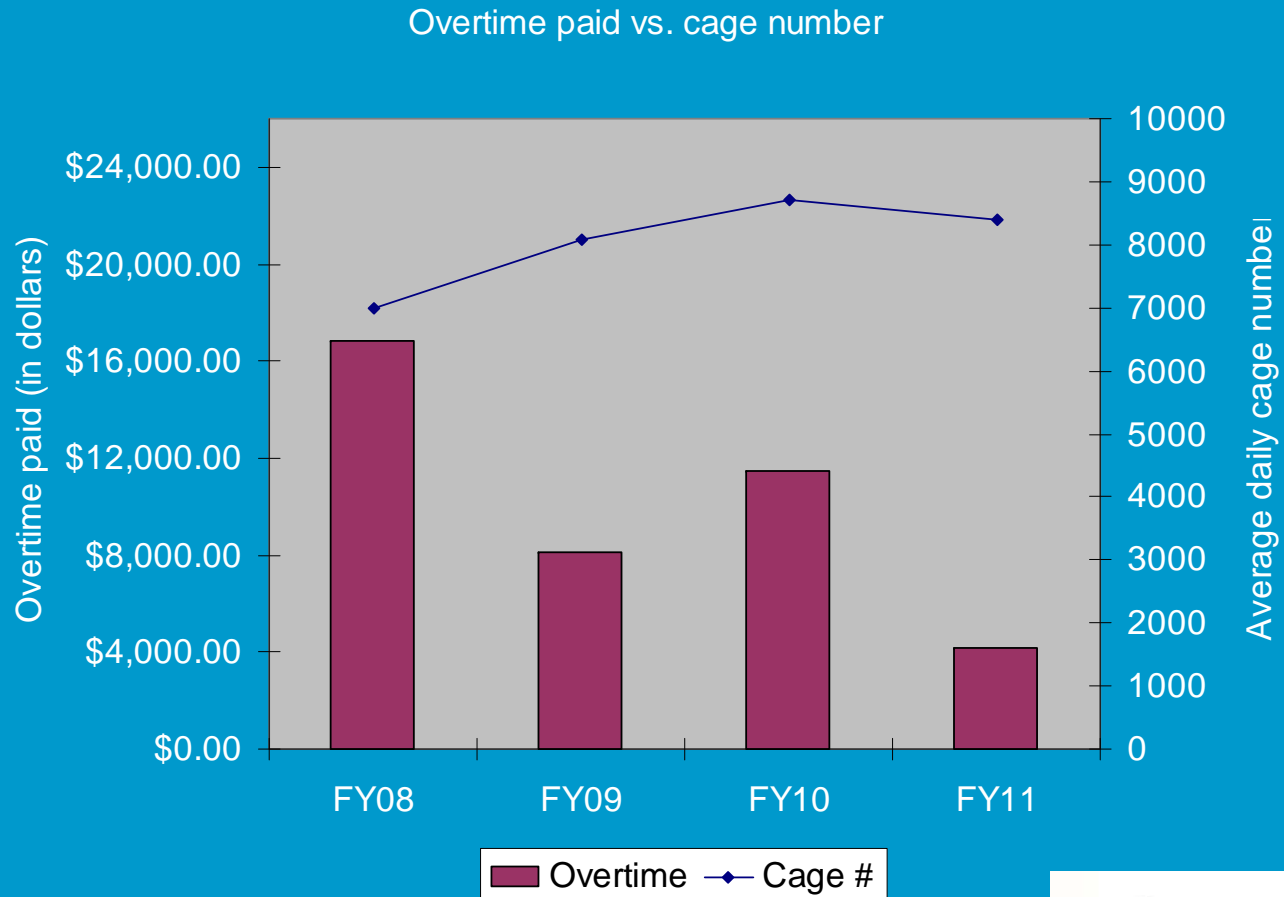
Organized Flow → Efficiency

- Cage changing was completed in the first 3-4 hours of the day
- Steady supply of cages to dirty side helped with bottle necks
- No backlog of dirty cages
- 3-4 hours of additional time per technician for other projects
- Saved 3FTEs and reduced overtime despite increased cage numbers
- Transparency and benchmarking contributed to improved morale



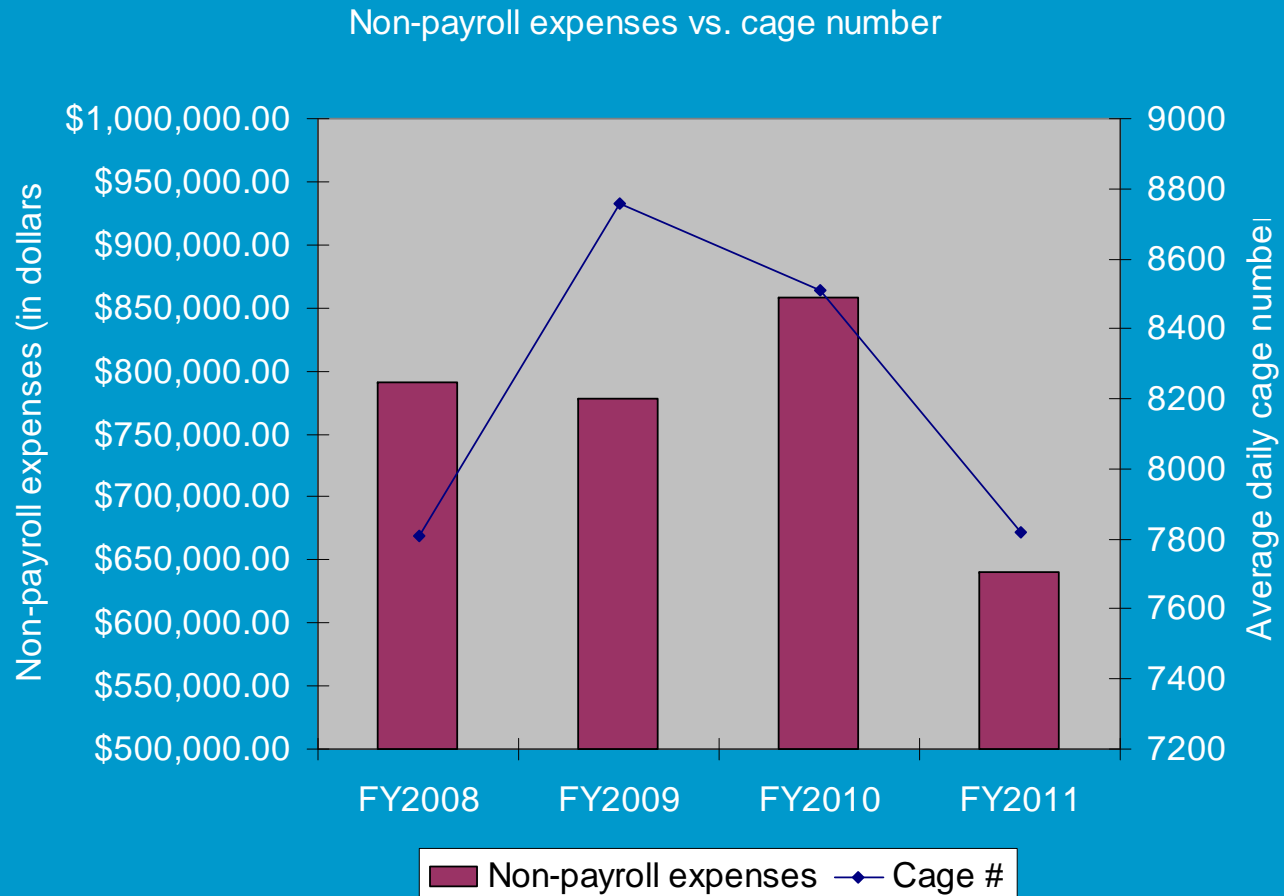


Why Efficiency & Accountability Matters?

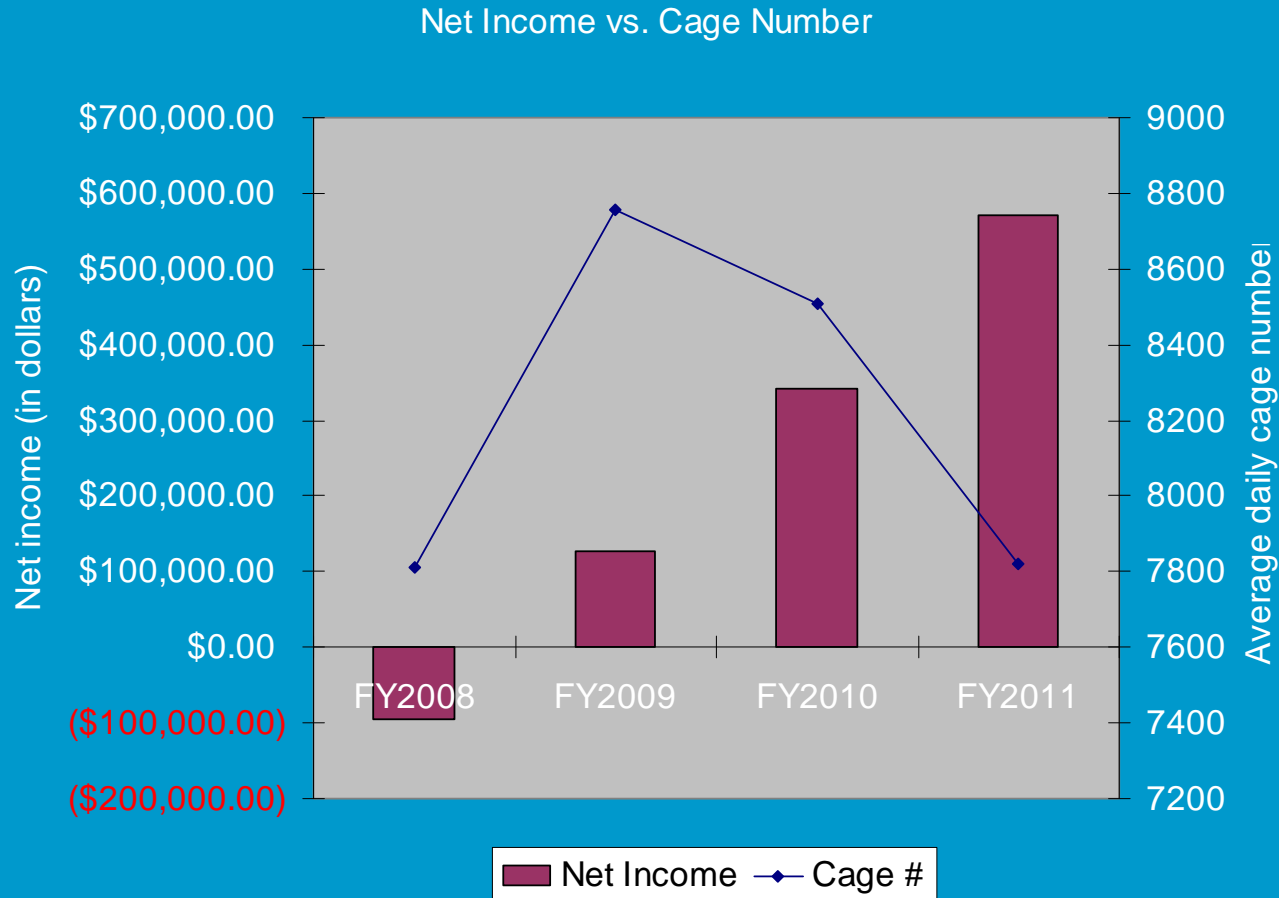


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How is LEAN related?

- Value added actions → Process only what is required
- Identify bottle necks → Organize flow to make most of the bottlenecks
- GEMBA walks → Constantly seeking information and changing plan to get the end result
- Collaborate & team effort → Communicating and navigating the resistors for the change we need

Thinking of LEAN !

