

KAIZEN RESULTS

Staff-driven improvement:

Transformed process would tame the mail juggernaut in half the time

IN BRIEF: Every year, the BMV takes in more than 100,000 pieces of mail relating to driver license suspensions and reinstatements. Included are various forms and documents from drivers, courts, law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, and others. BMV staff use this incoming information to ensure that a driver has submitted their “reinstatement requirements,” after which they can reinstate the driver and get them back on the road and to work as soon as the law allows. With the process involving so much mail, so many work areas, and so much variation, it had become a classic example of workplace complexity – and an ideal candidate for Kaizen.

TRUE TRANSFORMATION: A Kaizen team went on to transform the process, not just tweak it. The proposed redesign streamlines the process from 56 process steps to 20 (a 64% reduction), from 13 delays to 2 (85% reduction), and from 9 handoffs to 4 (60% reduction).

HALVING THE TIME: Process time would be reduced up to 50%, according to team projections – from the current 10-22 days to 6-11 days once all improvements are in place.

PAPERLESS SAVINGS: The team estimated an annual savings of \$14,000 in reduced printing and mailing, once phased-in IT enhancements are in place allowing for online submission of certain form information.

CLOSING THE DISTANCE: Some mailed-in documents were traveling a full half mile within the building before reaching the appropriate work unit. The redesigned process would pull this way back to a max of 46 feet – a 93% reduction in walking distance.

Kaizen Event RESULTS SCORECARD	BASELINE	PROJECTIONS	
	Key process measures gathered before the Kaizen event	Projected measures once all improvements are in place	PROJECTED CHANGE
PROCESS STEPS	56	20	64% reduction
DECISION POINTS	10	1	90% reduction
DELAY POINTS	13	2	85% reduction
HANDOFFS	9	4	56% reduction
Overall Mail Processing Time	10-22 DAYS	6-11 DAYS	4-11 DAYS

Up to a 50% reduction in processing time

DETAILS

For Ohio drivers who are under a license suspension, the Ohio BMV fills the key role of restoring driving privileges. The driver must submit the required “reinstatement requirements,” which differ from person to person depending on the type of license suspension, along with a reinstatement fee. Following the suspension end date, and after the submitted information is reviewed and processed, driving privileges are fully restored.

The process sounds simple on paper. In practice, however, it can get complicated. Reinstatement requirements often call for various BMV forms to be submitted by courts, law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, and others. The exact forms that are required depend on the type of license suspension – which means that there’s a wide variation in the incoming mail.

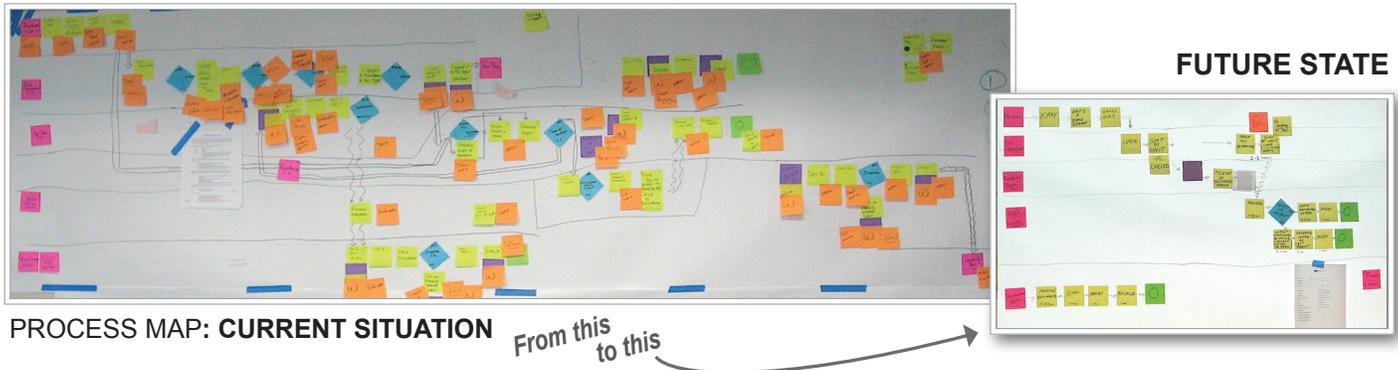
The volume of incoming mail is substantial. In 2011 alone, the BMV processed 791,764 administrative and court-mandated license suspensions. The agency served some 350,000 citizens who were seeking license reinstatement. They collected more than \$30,000,000 statewide in reinstatement fees. They took in an estimated 116,686 pieces of mail related to license suspensions and reinstatements – from 195 deputy registrars, 1,098 law enforcement agencies, 1,380 courts, insurance companies, and others.

All those incoming documents and forms had to be routed to the



Team members: Front row, left to right: Jackie Janowicz, Clerk 3; Lisa Hosterman, CSA 3; Carla Ponder, CSA 2; Nancy Dixon, CSA 3; Collette Napper, CSA 2; Marcia Fisher, Supervisor. Back row, left to right: Karen Rodgers, Chief; Vicky Eaton, Supervisor; Timothy Mathews, CSA 3; Dianna McConnaughey, Chief; James Bell, Clerk 3; Kimberly Ross, Assistant Chief; Lori Kette, Franklin County Municipal Court; Gary Hively, Supervisor; Jan Yates, CSA 2; Jay Wright, CSA 2; Beverly Caldwell, Supervisor.

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right BMV work areas for processing. With 20 internal units touching the reinstatement process in some way, routing had become an enormous job in its own right. Some documents were traveling a full half mile within the building before reaching their destination.

Intent on making the system simpler and better for everyone, BMV leadership assembled a team of staff from all parts of the process – with a charter to analyze the current approach and develop high-impact improvements. The team put in five straight days of intense work, using Kaizen with guidance from LeanOhio facilitators.

It all came together at an end-of-week briefing in which team members explained the recommended changes and projected results. Their message in brief: The complicated, labor-intensive process is in for big changes. Simplicity and efficiency are on the way.

The team began its work with a Monday walk-through, so everyone could see the current process in action. Then team members mapped the process in what sometimes seemed like excruciating detail. The map covered everything: from the point where correspondence arrives in the BMV mailroom (to be x-rayed, scanned, placed into trays, etc.) all the way to reinstatement of the driver license.

From their process map, team members got a cold splash of numeric reality. They found that the process had 56 separate steps, 13 delays, and 10 time-consuming decision points. They counted a total of 49 separate work baskets – into which incoming documents were filed for distribution to work units. They also discovered 50 cover sheets that were used to provide information with incoming mail when it was distributed.

Spring-boarding from their analysis, team members brainstormed specific improvement ideas. Then they reached consensus on a subset of improvements, using these to design a transformed process that takes efficiency to a new level.

The redesigned process consists of 20 steps (a 64% reduction). It includes just 2 delays points (85% reduction) and 4 handoffs (56% reduction). The team estimates that the start-to-finish process time could be cut in half with the new process fully in place – from the current range of 10-22 days to 6-11 days.

These positive numbers are powered by important team-developed changes. For example, the original process had 50 cover sheets, with one of these getting affixed to every piece of incoming mail. The new process would use one universal form, with batching by unit to ensure much greater efficiency. Similarly, the number of work baskets would be cut to 24 (51% reduction). As for that half-mile distance that some

documents were traveling, the team proposed a longer-term change of centralizing many of the operations on one floor – which they calculated would reduce the document travel distance to a maximum of 46 feet.

Meanwhile, suspension notices are being revised so they're easier to understand, with clearer instructions that spell out exactly what people need to provide in the way of forms and other information. This would ensure that all the needed information comes in the door the first time around, eliminating the need for BMV staff to go to the source for whatever's missing. Also, some of the forms that have long been completed in a paper format by court and internal BMV personnel would be made available in an online format that allows for paperless submissions. The change would add convenience, efficiency, and savings – the team estimated annual savings of \$14,000 in reduced printing and mailing.

Team members developed plans that cover all of the improvement bases. The technology plan calls for the purchase of two high-volume scanners and a high-volume letter opener in order to boost efficiency. The communications plan rolls out information to the Courts via regular mail, in-person visits, and the Courts website. Internally, staff meetings are to be leveraged as a way to inform and to get more people more involved in the improvement process.

The training plan schedules a series of sessions all about the new process, with the initial focus on supervisors and lead employees. The facilities plan proposes moving the document management area to another floor so it's right by the mailroom – a move that will require consultation and close coordination with facilities management. The backlog plan, developed with IT during the Kaizen week, set the stage for eliminating the backlog in one week flat.

Following the team's presentation of plans and projections, Tim Fisher voiced what many were thinking: "I am amazed," said Mr. Fisher, who is Administrator of Suspensions & Licensing Services. "Never in a million years did I think we'd get the results that we did (from the Kaizen event)."

BMV Registrar Mike Rankin congratulated the team for a job well done. "My approach has always been, get the front-line employees engaged," he said. "They're the ones who know how to break a process apart and build it back up right."

He also voiced strong support for the tools and techniques of Kaizen. As he explained, "Kaizen doesn't stop after we do this report-out. The report-out is just the beginning. I hope that all of you will incorporate the principles of Kaizen into everything you do." ●