

The Key Roles of a Kaizen Event



Kaizen events are being used in Ohio state government to dramatically improve and streamline core processes, cut costs, and increase customer satisfaction.

While state government has practiced various process improvement methods in the past, a Kaizen event is notably different.

- During a Kaizen event, the team meets for an entire week, starting Monday afternoon and making a final presentation Friday.
- The Kaizen approach is action-oriented. Implementation begins immediately. The process is not about simply making recommendations.
- As a Kaizen event unfolds, team members use Lean and Six Sigma tools to identify value added steps in the process, to remove waste and variation, and to build a simplified process that benefits customers and the bottom line.

Before, during, and after the Kaizen event, there are key roles that must be filled. Below is a summary of who does what.

Senior Manager

Before the Kaizen event: The Senior Manager is aware of and supports moving forward with the Kaizen event.

During the event: Shows his/her support for the event by attending and speaking at the event opening on Monday. Senior Managers are also encouraged to stop by any time during the event to see how the team is progressing and to show their support. They also attend the final report out Friday and share their thoughts on the team's accomplishments.

After the event: Is updated regularly on the team's progress. Attends 30-, 60-, and 90-day progress checks. Addresses any issues that neither the team leader nor the team sponsor can. Recognizes the team's efforts and accomplishments.

Sponsor

The sponsor indirectly oversees the process. This person may also be the Senior Manager.

Before the Kaizen event: Ensures the people and resources are available for the event. Approves scoping document.

During the event: Holds brief meetings with team lead and facilitator(s) during or after each day of the event. Addresses and removes barriers and secures resources as needed.

After the event: Attends all follow-up meetings, addresses any issues as needed, and provides team recognition.

Key Roles, continued

Team Leader

This is the person who owns the process.

Before the Kaizen event: Coordinates logistics, including reservation of facilities, procurement of supplies and equipment, etc. Communicates with the union(s) leadership. Invites process owners and customers to participate on the team. Identifies subject matter experts. Works with the facilitator to clarify the scope of the project, to identify and collect data and other background information, and to finalize the scoping document.

During the event: Participates as a team member. Keeps pulse of team for assisting in setting daily direction/agendas with facilitator. Communicates with the team sponsor. Contacts subject-matter experts as needed.

After the event: Tracks team history and archives any materials/documentation. Schedules follow-up progress-check meetings at 30-day, 60-day, 90-day, and one-year intervals.

Team Members

A Kaizen team is made up of people who do the work, customers, and outsiders. This ensures that the team brings together three key elements: process expertise, input from the people being served by the process, and a fresh perspective from those with no process knowledge.

Before the Kaizen event: Communicates with the team leader about logistics and purpose. Raises any concerns and looks to participating in team environment. Attends any pre-event meetings, as necessary.

During the event: Participates as a team member as an active/engaged participant bringing their direct knowledge or fresh perspective to the event concerning the process. Follows ground rules and shares desire to attain change.

After the event: Attends any post-event meetings as necessary, and follows up on any assignments as designated for the team's continued success.