



**INSTITUTE FOR LEAN CONSTRUCTION**  
**EXCELLENCE (ILCE)**

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## **Lean Construction v/s Project Management**

*There is a frequently asked question (FAQ) that Lean Construction is at variance with usual Project Management and as such not compatible.*

*True enough, there are some differences but each compliment each other.*

*The Author Mr. Tony Jacob, Consultant in a brief note below explains the benefit of Lean Construction to Project Management.*

## **Lean Construction Enhances the Power of Project Management**

There are many places Lean concepts can accelerate the Construction Project Management. To start with let us see how lean compliment 3 key concepts of Construction Project Management:

- 1) 'Initiation', 'Planning' & 'Monitoring/controlling'
- 2) 'Process management'
- 3) 'Quality Management'

The project management lifecycle, IPECC – Initiation, Planning, Execution, Controlling (monitoring) & Closing is applicable in every stage of construction including the execution phase. Using Lean following additional benefits can be brought into the Initiation, Planning and Monitoring of execution phase.

- The 'Pull Planning' methodology from Lean will bring collaborative planning among the stakeholder.
- Lean Construction compliments the project management efforts with visual management of information and common understanding of deliverables.
- Lean ensure the continuous flow of activities by 'Making Ready' the information and resources required to perform the same
- Target based cost/budget monitoring will align the objectives of stakeholders and bring synergy between the goals of participating organizations.

- Projects happen as network of commitments between clients, designer, vendors and contractors are fulfilled; Lean Construction helps to monitor these commitments very closely and continuously improve the performance of parties.

Process is commonly used word in construction project. The processes can be business process or construction process and Lean plays a key role to improve the efficiency of processes, increase the productivity and reduce the bottlenecks.

### Let us see how Lean Construction compliment the project management with process improvements,

- Collaboration among team members will help to identify appropriate process in particular project which is critical in nature and create bottlenecks to achieve the targets.
- Some process like design approval, PO release, Bill certification etc. (Business process based) & Construction slab cycle, toilet tiling, interior ceiling closure etc(activity based process) are critical in nature and contribute highly to the delay and rework in today's construction can be improved with lean construction methodologies.
- Tools like Value Stream Mapping & Pull Planning will help the project management team to closely monitor the steps of each process and improve the efficiency by eliminating the wastes observed.

All knowledge areas are equally important but quality plays key role in successful project closure and reference-ability of execution team. Lean brings value addition in ensuring the quality execution of projects as described below

- Lean construction helps the execution team to move away from 'Snag/punch syndrome' (Attitude of everything to be taken care if listed in snag/punch list) to first time right, self certification, 'Andon System' etc.(Workers empowered to stop the work when defect is detected or future problem is expected)
- Lean give importance of quality at every stage of construction and consider the owner of next activity as internal customer.
- Lean bring all related stakeholders together and helping to gain common understanding of deliverable thru mock up/ first piece inspection.
- Lean prepare each worker, team to work critical eye to identify and eliminate waste which causes delay and quality issues

*This is just beginning; we can find great synergy between the project management activities and lean construction efforts to ensure successful completion of projects.*

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***ILCE invite a discussion forum on above  
Reader are requested to contribute.***