



9th Annual Lean Continuous Improvement Summit

Monday, October 7, 2019

7:45	8:30	Registration and Continental Breakfast Foyer Sign up for Gemba Tours (space limited to 10 per tour) Visit our Poster Showcase			
8:30	9:15	Opening Plenary - Auditorium Matt Cornwell, Lean Customer Value Associate Vice President, American Family Insurance Poster Flash Talk – Poster Session Representatives			
9:15	9:30	Break and Meet Speed Networking in Foyer			
9:30	10:25	Understanding the Customer: Customer Empathy Interviewing (session repeated at 1:00 pm) A2142	Communities of Excellence 2026: Transforming the Work of Leaders A2152	The People Side of Process A2141	
10:25	10:35				
10:35	11:30	Developing and Maintain a Continuous Improvement Culture A2142	Strategylink: using data for decision making A2152	Lean Leadership for Transformation and Beyond A2141	Gemba Tours 1 & 2 Preregistration required Meet in A2151
11:45	12:45	Networking Lunch			
1:00	1:55	Understanding the Customer: Customer Empathy Interviewing (repeated) A2142	From Imagination to Results: A 20-year vision for Community Growth and Organizing A2152	A Case Study in Change Management: The Merger of Two Organizational Effectiveness Offices at UW Madison A2141	Gemba Tours 3 & 4 Preregistration required Meet in A2151
1:55	2:10	Refreshment Break			
2:10	3:05	“Life is like a bead bowl -- You never know what you’re gonna get” – Data Collection in Quality Improvement (QI) A2142	Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders A2152	Building a Culture of Quality A2141	Gemba Tours 5 & 6 Preregistration required Meet in A2151
3:15	4:00	Summit Wrap Up - Auditorium Where next? What Next? How Are We Getting There? Join conference presenters and attendees in an interactive session to encourage accountability in applying what you learned today.			

Networking and Poster Sessions

Learn about exciting, impactful, and creative continuous improvement projects completed during the last year, and network with the people who made them happen.

Opening Plenary

American Family continues a cultural and digital transformation to bring its traditional customer focus to a whole new level through collaboration, experimentation, empowering people closest to customers and processes to create an agile culture of experimentation and innovation.

With over 12,000 people in the enterprise, and operations spread across the country, American Family has had many successful local process improvement and innovation efforts that never scaled into a coordinated enterprise-wide effort. Matt Cornwell will share how the company is changing that through their Ignite program.



Matt Cornwell, Ignite Associate Vice President, leads a team of lean coaches who support the company's cultural transformation efforts through the implementation of the American Family Lean System.

His team's purpose is to help the organization: empower employees closest to the customer, experiment, increase agility, and become more customer driven. Through coaching, the Ignite team helps their business partners implement a management system for all of AmFam that drives both incremental and sustaining innovation of current business model to make products, services, processes, and customer experiences significantly better for the future. In his fourteen years at American Family, Matt has held leadership roles in continuous improvement, enterprise strategy, corporate planning,

change management, and executive administration functions. Matt started his career as an industrial engineer and earned a six-sigma black belt before joining American Family

Kristy Rogers, Ignite Manager, currently leads a team of Lean coaches who support the company in achieving results through the implementation of the American Family Lean System. Prior to coming to American Family, Kristy spent 20 years of her career working in the public sector. Her experience ranges from "in the field" environmental work to leadership roles including Continuous Improvement Director and Division Administrator at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Kristy is a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and played a pivotal role in launching the State of Wisconsin's Lean Government Program.

Poster Flash Talks

Relax, get comfortable, and get the highlights of some of this year's posters as exhibitors present their posters in rapid-fire flash talks. Make note of the posters you find intriguing for follow up conversations. We salute these pioneers who are party of our first ever poster conference, and hope they serve as an inspiration to you all!

Breakout Sessions:

Gemba Tours:

Back by popular demand: Join us at the Gemba for a chance to see the American Family Lean System in action and interact with teams that are implementing it. Six sets of Gemba tours will be offered during the conference, each with a maximum capacity of 10 people per tour. Please register for a tour when you arrive!

Understanding the Customer: Customer Empathy Techniques

American Family Lean Innovation Coaches, Kyle Smith and Bill Murray

To improve and innovate we must understand our customers, their problems, what drives value for them, and how they will adopt any solutions we design. In this session American Family Lean Innovation Coaches will lead us through Deep Customer Empathy interviewing techniques. You will generate observations through these interviews and turn your observations into insights, customer personas, and hypotheses for future experimentation. We will go beyond traditional Voice of Customer techniques in this practical, hands on workshop. This session will be repeated in the morning and afternoon

Kyle Smith is a Product, Innovation and Lean-Agile coach at American Family. With a fascination for balancing human-centered design, empathy and experimentation, Kyle coaches teams and business units to navigate uncertainty to identify and deliver new value for their customers and stakeholders. Kyle is a Madison-native, husband, father of a rambunctious 1 year old, and life-long musician.

An accidental entrepreneur most of his adult life, **Bill Murray** leveraged his B.S. in Biology from UW Madison and M.S. in Aquaculture from Auburn Univ. to focus on the insurance industry. First with Aflac for 14 years, working up to state recruiting and training director, then taking a “real job” in the marketing department at Amfam, later moving into an innovation role there in 2013.

His current role is in coaching leaders and search teams to de-risk assumptions by connecting real customer problems and outcomes to solutions that drive new value. A passionate proponent of the immeasurable importance of deep customer empathy, he is a behavior junkie and encourages the teams he coaches to spend at least as much time observing customer behavior as they spend listening to what customers say. Understanding the “say-do gap” is where innovation begins!

When not coaching, Bill runs several online education businesses and does some consulting work in whatever spare time is left. He’s a married father of three and lives in Sun Prairie, WI.

Developing and Maintaining a Continuous Improvement Culture

Kevin Wilkinson, EdD, Assistant Professor of Operations and Management in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Management; and Andrei Ghenciu, Associate Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science, UW Stout

UW-Stout has created and maintained a culture that engages employees, values their input, and relies upon their contributions. Processes used at UW-Stout provide a model for other organizations, agencies, and departments for how to establish and adapt a continuous improvement culture that endures and grows.

Kevin B. Wilkinson, EdD, is an Assistant Professor of Operations and Management in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Management at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Kevin received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Plymouth State University in 1994, a Master of Business Administration from the University of New Hampshire, in 1999 and a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership from Argosy University in 2016. He has held Quality Management and Operations Leadership positions in various industries for more than 20 years.

Andrei Ghenciu, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science at University of Wisconsin-Stout. Andrei received a Master of Arts in 2000 from the National School of Political and Administrative Studies, in Bucharest, Romania and his PhD from the University of North Texas in 2006. Since 2006 he has held faculty positions for University of Alaska Fairbanks, East Central University, in Ada, Oklahoma and University of Wisconsin Stout. He was a long-term Visiting Faculty for Hochschule Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, in Darmstadt, Germany.

The People Side of Processes

Kristin Polywacz, Manager, Center for Operational Excellence & Organizational Development, Madison College

The people on a team are the biggest factor in a project's success or failure. It's not enough for them to know improvement techniques. They also have to believe in what they're doing and feel valued as well. In this session, participants learned how to embed practical approaches to help people embrace process improvement. Part of the learning came from the book, *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*, by Chapman and White.

In her professional life, Kristin has been a nationally certified sign language interpreter, training liaison to area businesses, process analyst, manager, and is currently the Director of Learning & Organizational Development at Madison College. What led her to these professions were her studies and passion for language, culture, innovation, and leadership. She is proud to be a Badger and UW Madison Alum - class of '94 in Communicative Disorders. She has also studied a variety of topics at UW-Milwaukee, Madison College, and Stanford.

Kristin considers herself a solidly average singer, but a slightly above average volleyball player. She hates to run and yet is running in the Haunted Hustle this month. #easilyinfluencedbyfriends

Communities of Excellence 2026: Transforming the Work of Leaders

Kim Halfhill,

Excelsior Springs Communities of Excellence Steering Team

Beginning in 2010, a small group of leaders developed the hypothesis that a systems framework - the Baldrige Framework - could be adapted to transform the health and wellbeing of residents in communities. In 2017, community leaders from Excelsior Springs, Missouri joined the first cohort of the national learning collaborative and began their Communities of Excellence journey. This session will explore key concepts of the Communities of Excellence framework as well as the lessons learned from implementing them. Come learn more about Communities of Excellence and how it's begun to transform the work of leaders in Excelsior Springs.

Kim Halfhill serves on the Excelsior Springs Communities of Excellence Steering Team. She is the founder of KH Consulting and has more than 15 years of professional experience in the nonprofit sector. Kim is a graduate of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. She completed her Master's degree at the University of West Florida, where her studies culminated in a research project on volunteer engagement. Kim's passion is helping nonprofit organizations become their very best in order to do the most good in our world. A Florida native, she now lives in Excelsior Springs with her husband and daughter. Kim serves on the Board of Directors for ACT Missouri, volunteers as a Tiger Buddy mentor, and is an active coalition member of Excelsior Springs SAFE, a DFC funded coalition. She loves all things pumpkin and has a particular fondness for a certain mouse from Florida.

Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders

Pam Haats

*MIPRO VP Business Development, Public Sector & Midwest
Hennepin County Continuous Improvement Manager (retired)*

Every day, 10,000 baby boomers are retiring and by 2020, 48% of the workforce will be millennials.

**All statistics are from Brandon Hall's State of Leadership Development 2015: Time to Act is Now*

Hennepin County's traditional senior leadership programs are outstanding but have limited capacity. County Administration explored options for addressing the growing need for future leaders by developing the Action-Based Leadership Experience, or ABLE, to provide opportunities for less experienced leaders to learn and use new skills over the course of 18 months. The program involved top leadership, managers, supervisors and subject matter experts as mentors to those in the ABLE program. This program was in such high demand that another version, ABLE Light, was created to allow even more interested employees to participate. Learn how the ABLE principles can help your organization prepare for the next generation of leaders.

Pam Haats, MIPRO Vice President of Business Development, Public Sector and Midwest, and former Hennepin County leader for over 35 years. Pam brings significant experience in Leadership Development, Change Management, Performance Measurement (certified by Kaplan/Norton: Palladium), Continuous Improvement, Innovation, Business Intelligence, Human Resources, Human Services and is a master facilitator. Pam is currently working on her master's degree in Organizational Leadership and a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt.

Lean Leadership for Transformation and Beyond

Travis Piotrowski

Vice President, Business Transformation, MiPro

Many organizations are undertaking some form of transformation today with Lean being one of the key methods to improve performance. Transformation requires a multi-dimensional undertaking that requires aligning Purpose, Process, People and the Customer. Yet, there is an attraction to focus narrowly on tools rather than building a holistic transformation approach. While the overly focused tool approach initially produces results, this narrow focus never leads to ongoing sustainable change.

As MIPRO is leading the lean community out of the Tool Age and into the Era of holistic “Sustainable Prosperity Management”, we invite leaders to explore why achieving “Sustainable Prosperity” is so difficult and what leaders can do to improve your organization's success.

Travis has over 25 years of transformational leadership experience in back office operations and technology. Prior to MIPRO, he was an executive for a Fortune 200 financial services organization. Over his career he has effectively applied Lean, Agile, and Design Thinking tools and mindsets to build multifaceted solutions that are empathetic, effective, and functional in the long-term. He has driven several large-scale transformation efforts encompassing people, process, and technology and has a passion for helping leaders build capabilities to create sustainable organizations through proprietary insights.

“Life is like a bead bowl -- You never know what you're gonna get” – Data Collection in Quality Improvement (QI)

Kathleen Caron, Performance Management and QI Coordinator

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Meet Beyoncé the Bead Bowl and join us for a fun exercise on data collection in QI. Kathleen Caron, Performance Management and QI Coordinator at the WI Department of Health Services, will facilitate an exercise demonstrating the impact of sample sizes in QI. Come join us to learn about the differences between sampling in QI and research. Discover the answer to that eternal question -- “Do I really need to collect a ton of data for my QI project?”

A Case Study in Change Management: The Merger of Two Organizational Effectiveness Offices at UW Madison

Kathy Contezac, Communications Officer and Jim Thompson, Internal Consultant

UW Office of Strategic Consulting

For most employees, the word “merger” elicits an immediate negative reaction and conjures up feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. That was certainly the case for employees of UW–Madison's Office of Quality Improvement (OQI) and Administrative Process Redesign (APR) office when it was first announced in June 2017 that the offices would be merging. The merger decision came closely on the heels of the announcement that APR's founding director would be retiring later that summer—about six months after the retirement of OQI's founding director. What happened next offers lessons in change management and provides a roadmap—as well as hope—for those faced with a similar situation. The new merged office, named the Office of Strategic Consulting, is arguably greater than the sum of its parts. In this session, two of its staff who were part of the transition, Kathy Contezac, Communications Officer, and Jim Thompson, Internal Consultant, share some of the strategies and tools used to manage the transition and help staff move through William Bridges' stages of change from Ending, Losing, and Letting Go—through the Neutral Zone—to a New [and exciting!] Beginning.

From Imagination to Results – a 20-year Vision for Community Growth and Organizing

*Karalyn (Kara) Kratowicz,
Performance Excellence Specialist, City of Madison*

Through the lens of Performance Excellence, City of Madison staff discuss how Imagine Madison, the city's 20-year vision for community growth adopted in August 2018, will be monitored through the developing performance management and outcome budgeting framework, Results Madison.

Karalyn (Kara) Kratowicz is a lifelong Wisconsinite and UW-Madison graduate with work experience at state and local levels in Wisconsin. Kara is a change leader who delivers innovative solutions by incorporating data driven process to monitor service delivery in order to demonstrate measurable progress on the outcomes that matter most for residents. Kara served as the Data Projects Coordinator for four years in the Finance Department at the City of Madison and currently as the Performance Excellence Specialist in Organizational Development where she oversees systems change efforts across the organization to foster continuous improvement and community engagement.

Kara worked for the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families prior to City employment. Kara was a member of the 2014 inaugural cohort of New Leaders Council Wisconsin fellows and currently serves as the Emeritus Director of the board. She is also the Past President of Wisconsin Women in Government and Past President of We Help One Another (WHOA!). She is passionate about addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, eliminating racial disparities, and finding authentic connections who seek to further a shared vision for a more inclusive Wisconsin.

StrategyLink: Using Data for Decision making

*Mike Gratz
Advance Advisors Group*

Linking Strategy to Action Plans Using Data – Organizations struggle to select and sustain improvement efforts. They identify what they want to improve and how they want to improve it. Yet many improvement efforts don't achieve the desired results. Why? Because we fail to link strategy development with implementation using data. Strategylink walks leaders through what, why and how to effectively link strategic objectives with action plans that will deliver results.

Mike Gratz spent 25 years using data to start and grow businesses. Today, he advises small business, government, healthcare and non-profits on their continuous improvement journey. He has a passion for transformational change with a keen understanding of how to balance people, process, and technology through facilitating organizational change and sustainable continuous improvement. Mike is an expert facilitator, with extensive experience leading workshops from strategic planning to problem-solving. Mike has a degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. He serves as an examiner for the MN and WI Malcom Baldrige Award process.

Building a Culture of Quality

*Tracee Burke, Quality Improvement Coordinator
Southern Wisconsin Center*

Are you struggling to get quality improvement off the ground? Do you face resistance trying to implement positive changes? Shift the paradigms and empower your workforce to guide your organization towards excellence. This session dives into the meaning of culture, key quality principles, and offers strategies for leading your organization's culture towards one that embraces change and continuous quality improvement in daily work life.

The Wisconsin Center for Performance Excellence is grateful for the support from [American Family Insurance](#), and [MetaStar Inc](#), and the many individuals and organizations who helped make the 9th annual Continuous Improvement Summit a success.

American Family Insurance is a tobacco-free environment. **Use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes is prohibited in all interior and exterior spaces, including inside your vehicle while on company-property and in [parking ramps](#) and [parking lots](#).** We ask that you refrain from using tobacco products and e-cigarettes while using our facility.