

Richard J. Schonberger
Keynote Presentation at Shingo Prize Conference 2008
Dallas, April 2-3, 2008

Title
“The Evolving Global State of Lean—and Lean Methodologies”

Topical Summary

Lean all too easily goes into remission, totally burns out, or never gets started. In this presentation Dr. Schonberger draws on his “leanness studies” (15 or more years of hard inventory-trend data from some 1,260 large companies in 37 countries and 33 industrial sectors), and best-practice lean concepts backed up by company interviews. The results are eye-opening, often out-of-the-mainstream deductions on what it takes to sustain a strong lean effort over the long term—and why so many companies fall well short in that quest. Richard shows that the lean landscape is littered with companies that have lost their way, while numerous others emerge as unsung “stars” of lean. Groupings of individual company data indicate that lean leadership has shifted far away from Japan—and, currently, toward the Nordic countries. Moreover, electronics and distribution are among the sectors with most impressive improvement trends, with pharmaceuticals, textiles, wire and cable, and heavy vehicles among the laggards.

Biodata

Richard J. Schonberger, Ph.D.

Richard Schonberger has delivered lectures, seminars, and advisory services to industrial and business organizations globally since 1981. His latest deeply and broadly researched book is *Best Practices in Lean Six Sigma Process Improvement: A Closer Look . . . With Telling Evidence from the Leanness Studies* (Wiley, 2007). He is originator of the term and concepts of *world-class manufacturing* via his book by that title (1986 in 7 languages), and is author of six other trade books including *Japanese Manufacturing Techniques* (1982 in 9 languages). Schonberger’s 150-plus articles have appeared in a wide range of academic and practitioner periodicals.

Schonberger was a practicing industrial engineer for 8 years, followed by 14 years as professor in management information systems and operations management at the University of Nebraska, during which he was designated George Cook Distinguished (chaired) Professor; and later as affiliate professor, Management Science, University of Washington. His honors include: 1996 Puget Sound Engineer of the Year; Inductee, 1995 Academy of the Shingo Prize for Excellence in Manufacturing; British Institution of Production Engineers’ 1990 International Award in Manufacturing Management; and IIE 1988 Production and Inventory Control Award.

Currently, Richard is director of the “Global Leanness Studies” and the “World Class by Principles” international benchmarking project.

177 107th Ave. N.E., #2101, Bellevue, WA 98004 Tel/fax: +425-467-1143
Email: sainc17@qwest.net Web site: www.wcm-wcp.com