

# How to Succeed with Continuous Improvement

## Cultural Pitfalls Analysis

This is a tool for self-reflection and discussion. Using it and answering the “provocative pitfall questions” below is challenging and really benefiting from it demands courage, openness and insight. But, when this tool is used in such an environment it will build stronger teams and catalyze the development of a high-performance continuous improvement culture.

*You are recommended to read a complete descriptions of the five cultural pitfalls before you start your analysis. All pitfalls are described thoroughly in the last chapter of “[How to Succeed with Continuous Improvement](#)” and a few of them are described briefly in blogposts at [www.SucceedwithCI.com](http://www.SucceedwithCI.com).*

### 1, The Low-Hanging Fruit Trap – Where are you and your colleagues?

*Are you truly giving your colleagues the chance to prove their capability or are you afraid it will turn out that they are just as capable as you are?*



**What you might hear others say or notice yourself thinking when you are stuck here:**

If you want it done correctly you better do it yourself.

There is no point in asking for ideas around here, people don't have any anyway."

No point giving suggestions around here, nobody listens anyway.

Why should I take part in the improvement work? What's in it for me?

### 2, The Reality Illusion – Where are you and your colleagues?

*What's your first reaction when you see a colleague behaving oddly, disbelief and irritation or compassion and curiosity?*



**What you might hear others say or notice yourself thinking when you are stuck here:**

Nobody understands me.

I only did what we agreed on. I can't see why they are disappointed!

Why can't people just do as I tell them? What's their problem?

They are not as smart as I am. I wish they could think the way I do.

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## 3, The Emperor's New Clothes – Where are you and your colleagues?

*Are you prepared to point out the purposeless things you do or do you rather continue window dressing to avoid being the negative one?*



**What you might hear others say or notice yourself thinking when you are stuck here:**

Don't be negative! It's not that bad.

Why are you questioning this? We've always had this meeting.

The improvement board must look nice for the audit tomorrow.

We need to submit more ideas to avoid looking bad.

## 4, The Efficiency Paradox – Where are you and your colleagues?

*Do you trust your ability to find smarter ways to the extent that you give yourself time to reflect or do you rather rush to the next assignment to avoid appearing unproductive?*



**What you might hear others say or notice yourself thinking when you are stuck here:**

Ship it to final assembly. What they do with it is their problem.

Don't just sit there, do something!

There is the bell. Time to get back to work.

Keep the machine going! Don't you know what it cost us to buy this thing?

## 5, The Friendship Fallacy – Where are you and your colleagues?

*Do you have the courage to demand of your colleagues to be the best they can be or are you afraid of ruining your cheerful relationship?*



**What you might hear others say or notice yourself thinking when you are stuck here:**

Don't pressure him, if he doesn't want to take part he doesn't have to.

There is no energy in our meetings any longer.

Maybe we need to increase the bonus to get people motivated?!

That's alright. Do you think you'll make it until next week instead?