LeanEx℠

The Lean Knowledge Exchange (LeanEx℠)

Hosting Facts / Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How often do I need to host?

A: Once per year if possible. Part of your benefits and responsibilities of LeanEx℠ membership is the on-going benchmarking and exchange of knowledge – some from your peers, some from you. Hosting is a way to showcase your organization and also to gain more in-depth assessments of your operations from others.

Q: When can I host?

A: Any available month that has not been scheduled yet. We try to meet the 3rd Wednesday or Thursday of the month but there can be some flexibility if coordinated early enough.

→ It helps to set a date convenient for you as early as possible (ideally 3 months to 6 weeks out). This will give you and the LeanEx℠ facilitators enough time to get the word out and prepare.

Q: Does the host have to give a formal presentation?

A: No, but hosting is your chance to review what your company does with your member peers and receive some specific feedback to help you improve. You have an hour or so to focus on your burning issues or hot topics. Also see presentation tips below.

Q: What do I have to do? What are my responsibilities as a host?

A: You will handle some basic meeting set-up/preparation and provide meeting space, some basic refreshments, and information on your organization. Specifically:

- Set a date that you can host.
- Decide if you will be presenting:
    o If *yes*, provide title of your topic to the LeanEx℠ facilitators as soon as you can. Work with the LeanEx℠ facilitators for any help you want in preparing your information. Also see the presentation tips below.
    o If *no*, let LeanEx℠ know so that we have time to arrange for a guest speaker or prepare a more in-depth learning or group benchmarking topic.
- Provide host information for announcing the event
- Reserve Room / Meeting space for up to ~20 persons. It needs to be somewhat private to allow open, confidential discussions.
- Arrange for tour of your facility (Optional)
- Arrange on-site access, security, etc. with your organization.
- Provide basic refreshments. (Continental Breakfast, coffee, tea, juice, napkins, etc.).
- Make available some limited equipment and supplies for the meeting. Generally, we may want an LCD-type projector, a screen, and a white board or flip chart with markers. If you do not have them available, the LeanEx℠ facilitators can arrange for them (if given advance notice).

Q: What type of information should I provide in advance?
   A: Several things to help promote the event and make it easy for attendees to find you:

   - A short company description - This is basically a 1-3 sentence description such as what may be on your website.
   - A short title/description of your topic (if presenting).
   - Company website address (www.mycompany.com)
   - Company Logo (optional for use on the website and in promotions)
   - Address, including zip code
   - Directions (especially if map programs are not accurate)
   - Any special parking, entry, &/or security requirements for visitors to your facility
   - Optional – A paragraph or so to tell your peers about you or provide any other information you want to share about your company.

Q: What type of presentation do I need to do?
   A: It can be formal with a specific overview to showcase or benchmark some aspect of your operations or more informal, such as a facilitated review of issues and topics that concern your organization.

Q: How much time do I have to present?
   A: You have about an hour to an hour and a half, depending on if you plan a tour of your facility and how long it would take. If you want more or less time, just talk to us about the agenda and timing. We want you to have enough time to receive enough input from your peers but don't expect you to do spend weeks preparing a talk! Allow a $^1/_3$ to ½ of the available time for questions and discussion.

Q: I'm not a professional presenter. Is that a problem?
   A: No, remember that LeanEx^{sm} provides a safe place to learn and interact with your peers from other companies. You can give a formal presentation or be more informal and show some information about your practices and lead a discussion on areas where you want suggestions.

PRESENTATION TIPS

*Hearing **your experience*** is the *most important* information for the attendees. They want to hear what worked, what didn't, and why. They also want to hear what you want from them, where their experience can help you.

Your peers generally expect to hear about:

- Your organization – How you started, where you are heading, etc. Briefly describe your company in general. Consider including things such as:
    o How it started out, where it is today, and why.
    o Major customer segments or target markets
    o Core product families and how those products are produced, sold and distributed.
    o How you are organized: size, divisions, shifts, sales organization, key personnel, ownership, etc. You may want to mention what challenges or benefits result from that structure.
    o Overall, what your company does best (competencies, areas of focus).
    o Why people work there - the rewards, environment, incentives, bonuses, challenges.
    o Current issues and concerns.

- Your product development process:
    o Your company's current new product development processes.
    o Your company's market opportunities and new product development resources.
    o How do you assess the strengths and weaknesses of your current new product development practices?
    o Your new product development plans and goals, how you will reach them, what stands in the way, how do you prioritize projects, and how will you be measured.
    o Your key processes, functions, and equipment; any special engineering or technical challenges.
    o Recent new product launches; what went right and wrong.
    o Communications - Key challenges and typical communication methods within your team and between different business functions (engineering, operations, marketing, sales, executive team, etc.). Do you predominantly use meetings, huddles, email, newsletter, etc.? Are the communications effective?
    o Specific issues or areas on which you'd appreciate feedback or suggestions.
    o A brief "chalk talk" to diagram the development process and/or the "voice of the customer" influence.

People learn best when both visual and audio stimuli are used. If possible, use overheads, videos, internet, power point, or slides as appropriate. Product samples, graphs of performance, or key employee or application photos/brochures may be used.