

LEAN GOVERNMENT SUMMIT

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025

The Lean Government Summit is an international forum for public service leaders and change agents to exchange learning and best practices to increase the positive impact of Lean on the work of government and the broader Public Sector.

This 13th edition of the Summit is a virtual event using Microsoft Teams. Breakout activities have been planned to allow participants to spend time together to compare notes and provide chances to build a network of fellow Lean practitioners.

Objectives:

- Keep current on the latest thinking from Lean, Systems Thinking, Agile/Scrum and Service Design in government to deliver knowledge and service work better.
- Cultivate a community of Lean government improvement professionals to share knowledge and experience to help each other improve how we improve for citizens.

Public servants only please.

Virtual via Microsoft Teams
\$ 295.00 CDN + HST

AGENDA (All times Eastern Standard Time (ET: UTC/GMT-5)

8:20 - 8:30

Welcome

8:30 - 9:20

Session 1: Engaging Leaders in the Lean Transformation

Craig Szelestowski, President & Founder, Lean Agility Inc.

You can make considerable improvement without active leadership support. However, before long, you can only go as far as your leadership group lets you. Often transformations fall short because leaders aren't sufficiently engaged in the change initiative.

In this practical talk, Craig, who spent years as a public sector leader and executive, and who coaches leaders to optimize their transformations, will share:

- Common reasons why leaders might not buy-in and support a Lean transformation
- What you can do as an individual change agent to engage them
- Critical, specific, roles for leaders to play to amplify the transformation

Craig is a thought leader in applying Lean to the work of government. As a public sector executive leading the Royal Canadian Mint's Lean turnaround, he helped it move from precarious financial losses to profitability, and poor morale to being the first public sector organization in Canada being named to Top Canadian Employers lists. Founder of Lean Agility, he has developed this public sector practice into one of the most effective providers of training and consulting in North America. He teaches several programs at the University of Ottawa's Telfer Centre for Executive Leadership, including Lean Strategic Planning.

9:25 - 10:10
(concurrent session)

Session 2A: Thinking for (More) Inclusive Strategy Development

Lex Schroeder, Lean Coach and Communications Leader in Tech

No tool creates an inclusive work environment, but some organizational processes are more inclusive by design. Dubbed “Toyota’s Secret” by MIT’s Sloan Management Review, the A3 report is one of the most powerful tools for organizational effectiveness, creativity, and leadership at work. Learn how to use it to work with the full strength of your team’s collective intelligence. Solve problems and seize opportunities with a strategy alignment process that can (more) fully invite and leverage the brains, perspectives, and contributions of your team.

Lex is a Lean coach and communications leader who helps organizations solve problems and navigate the future of work. Lex got her start at The Lean Enterprise Institute where she was founding editor of The Lean Post and co-designed and led communications for LEI’s Lean Product and Process Development Initiative under Jim Morgan, former head of product at Ford. At Twitter, Lex was a senior program manager on Twitter’s operational design and effectiveness team where she used Lean thinking and practice to create a safer platform and help Twitter deliver on its original mission of advancing the public conversation. At Ryder System, Inc., she led continuous improvement, learning and culture, and internal communications initiatives to build teams and strengthen Ryder’s digital product development processes.

Lex writes for Harvard Business School’s Race, Gender and Equity Initiative and is the editor of numerous books including Change Questions by D. Lynn Kelley with John Shook, Moving Money for Impact: A Guide to Gender Lens Investing by Tuti B. Scott; and Follow the Learner: The Role of Leader in Creating a Lean Culture by Dr. Sami Bahri.

9:25 - 10:10
(concurrent session)

Session 2B: Succeed with Agile Practices Outside of Software

Pawel Mysliwiec, Professional Kanban Trainer, Lean Agility / ProKanban.org

Agile/Scrum is usually associated with the development of software and digital tools, but it is a powerful method for developing any kind of complex “product”, including the ones often found in government: reports, strategies, and policies, etc.

Pawel, an experienced change agent in the worlds of both Agile/Scrum and Lean, will share an overview of the principles, routines and tools of Agile/Scrum so that Lean practitioners can apply them to their own complex knowledge work processes.

Pawel’s professional mission is to help organizations and the people within them to find a more humane way of working together and creating awesome, sustainable results. A key thought leader at Scrum.org, he teaches and coaches leaders and teams to apply Agile/Scrum to exceed their goals and sustain their gains. He has deep experience working with both the Public and Private sectors.

10:20 - 11:10
(concurrent session)

Session 3A: Workers of the World, Organize! Creating a Lean Management System to Lighten Your Workload and Improve Results

François Villeneuve, Director, Pension Investments and Treasury, Export Development Canada (EDC)

Experiencing capacity issues? Feeling like you've lost control of your workload? You're not alone. Join François as he explains how he felt the same way, and, in response, successfully created a Lean management system to help lighten the workload and improve the management of EDC's pension investments. He will inspire you to try to implement, in your own workplace, the simple-but-powerful activities, methods, and tools that made his system work so well: documented procedures, task sharing, planning, new employee onboarding, skillset development, digital file organization, and continuous improvement.

In his over 20 years at EDC, François has held a wide variety of leadership roles that involved everything from managing financial risk to managing a group of financial software engineers. Since 2017, Villeneuve has managed the pension investments of the defined benefit and contribution components of EDC's pension plan. Passionate about Lean, he has been remarkably successful in applying improvements to make work easier, better and faster in all the areas he's worked in. He holds a Master of Mathematical Finance from the University of Toronto and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics-Science from the University of Ottawa.

10:20 - 11:10
(concurrent session)

Session 3B: Strengthening Resilience: Tools for Positive Disruption

Jean Marleau, Director, Strategic Planning and Research, Canadian Heritage

The winds may howl, but I will not be swept away.

Isn't that what we all want when facing the winds of challenge and change? There's no miraculous way of avoiding being swept away AND there are also some proven ways of being more resilient to change.

Leading change within the Public Service is a challenging endeavor. Being an "agent of change" requires immense energy, resilience, and a commitment to self-care. Join Jean Marleau, a self-described "positive disruptor," as he shares practical tools to help you strengthen your resilience. Discover strategies to navigate challenges, maintain a positive mindset, and sustain your change effort.

Jean Marleau has over 20 years of experience as a public servant, having worked in departments such as Employment and Social Development, The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and Canadian Heritage, where he is presently. He started on the front lines, bringing services directly to Canadians, and has risen more recently to hold a variety of executive roles. As a dedicated Lean practitioner, he is passionate about continuous improvement and is particularly interested in the human aspects of organizational change.

11:15 - 11:50
(concurrent session)

Session 4A: Fast and Frugal Heuristics: A Counter Intuitive Case for Increasing Quality by Doing (and Knowing) Less

Chris Irwin, Senior Consultant, Lean Agility Inc.

When a patient is rushed to the ER with the symptoms of a heart attack, every second counts. Yet in that critical moment, would you trust a doctor who relies on just three simple yes/no questions over one who analyzes every available test and vital sign? The shocking truth: that simple three-question decision tree can outperform an approach that uses complex statistical information modelling in identifying high-risk patients. Even more surprising? This isn't an anomaly - and it's not some new AI - it's a valuable framework for understanding human cognition and decision-making that's been in use for decades.

Welcome to the world of Fast and Frugal Heuristics (FFH), where less information often leads to better decisions. These powerful tools remain surprisingly underutilized in a range of decision making, including the public sector. Join Chris to explore how one government agency put these principles to work, transforming their complaint handling process to cut decision time by 75% while nearly tripling their resolution rate - all by embracing the power of simplicity.

Whether you're leading a hospital emergency department, managing government services, or steering a business through uncertainty, this talk will transform how you think about decision-making. You'll leave with practical tools to identify when and where complexity and overprocessing of information is holding you back, concrete strategies to develop simple but powerful heuristics, and the confidence to champion simpler, faster, and easier decision-making in your organization.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn how less can be radically more in our data-saturated world. Your next critical decision might just depend on it.

Prior to joining Lean Agility as a Senior Consultant, Chris was a director in the Lean Office of the Cabinet Office of the Province of Ontario, providing Lean training and project facilitation to the entire provincial public service. In his time in this role, he co-led the province to become one of the leading North American jurisdictions in Lean process improvement.

11:15 - 11:50
(concurrent session)

Session 4B: Building Better Digital Forms

Iain Boyd, Engagement Lead, UK Digital Service

Online forms. They're either so intuitive you hardly notice you've filled them in. Or they take so long to complete that you just lose the will to live. Or maybe you're the one creating the form and trying to gather the information you need. How can you ask for this clearly and make it easy for people to understand? What happens next? And how do you process all this data?!

These are some of the things the GOV.UK Forms team are dealing with. They are part of the Government Digital Service (GDS) who build and maintain [GOV.UK](#), the UK Government's website. Their goal is to make digital government simpler, clearer and faster for everyone.

Join Iain Boyd, Engagement lead at [GOV.UK Forms](#), who will talk about their journey and why they're designing a form builder platform for government.

Iain is an Engagement lead, specialising in building effective relationships and has worked in broadcasting, renewable energy and government. Currently developing strategic partnerships across the UK Government to make accessing public services simpler, easier and faster by using [GOV.UK Forms](#), an accessible digital form builder. He's passionate about great public services which meet user needs and save taxpayers money!

Previous roles include: linking up the public sector and industry to provide support to extremely vulnerable users during the COVID-19 pandemic; leading engagement for the Government Data Exchange; running the UK's top digital and technology talent program; and promoting cross-sector UK excellence, including technology, with senior business and academic leaders.

12:35 - 13:25
(concurrent session)

Session 5A: Getting Past Ready, Doing, Done: Making Your Kanban Work for You

Heidi Loveall, Strategy & Performance Operations Manager,
Washington State Department of Enterprise Services

Kanban is one of the most powerful tools in the Lean toolkit. It's simple, instinctive, and tremendously effective. So why do we occasionally get stuck or drop using it altogether?

In this session, Heidi will touch on the following topics:

- what gets in the way of using personal kanban effectively
- practical tips for embedding the kanban practice seamlessly into your work
- how to build a system that endures

Even if you have tried and failed at using kanban before, at the end of this session, you should leave with the knowledge and inspiration you need to build a kanban system that truly works for you.

Heidi Loveall is the Strategy & Performance Operations Manager with Washington State Department of Enterprise Services. With over 15 years in government, Heidi is deeply passionate about public service and committed to the vision of making government better for Washingtonians. Her specialty is translating big ideas, principles, or technical tools into practical steps that people can take to make impactful improvements for themselves and their customers. When not at work, she is spending time with her children, planning epic parties, and enjoying the Northwest rain.

12:35 - 13:25
(concurrent session)

Session 5B: The Power of Shielding the Team To Get Results

Alain L'Abbé, Senior Consultant, Lean Agility Inc.

Alain will speak about how leaders who act as “shields” for their staff tend to get better results from them. When team members do not need to deal with unnecessary obstacles while executing their daily work—obstacles such as having to manage unplanned requests, noisy distractions, countless interruptions, excessive workload, and competing priorities -- they are more engaged, focused, and productive.

Alain will draw on his real-world experience in facilitating improvement projects and guiding teams in their day-to-day way of working to provide you with practical tips and tools to help you shield your team...and get better results.

Alain is a Lean government and transformation change agent and teacher/mentor. He is also an accomplished and strategic senior Change Management and Project Management professional with over 29 years diverse (military, public service and consultant) work experience and a broad educational background. He has developed cutting-edge and highly effective approaches to creating and sustaining Lean change in a government setting and managing high performing teams.

13:30 - 14:20
(concurrent session)

Session 6A: You've Got Performance Measures, Now What? Navigating the What Works Cities Certification Process as a Small City

Dale Markey-Crimp, Assistant to the City Administrator,
City of Issaquah, WA

The Bloomberg What Works Cities (WWC) certification program helps local governments use data and evidence at scale, to tackle their most pressing challenges and improve residents' lives. But nearly every city with a WWC certification has a population of over 100,000. Larger cities with large staff and bigger budgets might have the capacity for innovation, data analytics, and continuous improvement, but what can smaller cities do? Trying to become a data-driven city with only 0.5 FTE allocated to managing performance measurement can seem next to impossible.

Come join Dale as she tells the story of how her small city of Issaquah, WA (pop. 40k) launched a multi-year strategy to achieve WWC certification and become a “data-driven” organization. She will describe how the City of Issaquah built up data literacy across its staff, enhanced the analysis of its performance measures, integrated data and evidence into its public communications, and set up routines to ensure there was appropriate executive commitment and governance. Additionally, she will talk about the change management techniques the city used to make it all happen...and how you can use these lessons to make your own organization more “data-driven” as well.

Dale is the Assistant to the City Administrator for the City of Issaquah, WA. She has worked in public administration for 5 years, having led successful initiatives in the areas of data and evidence-based project and program planning, strategic planning, and organizational change management. Prior to her work in local government, she worked in the K-12 education nonprofit sector and as a middle school English Language Arts teacher. She is passionate about using data to solve complex problems, communicate with residents, and improve the city's capacity to deliver services for the community. She holds a BA in political science and psychology from Williams College and a master's in public administration from the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Washington. In her spare time, she likes to spend time outside in the beautiful Cascade Mountains hiking, mountain biking, backpacking, and cross-country skiing.

13:30 - 14:20
(concurrent session)

Session 6B: Continuous Improvement Leadership Development: Setting Your Continuous Improvement Effort Up for Success

Kristi Hoagland, Director of Operational Excellence, Shannon Boswell, Continuous Improvement Specialist and Project Manager, Alenka Fields, Project Manager and Change Practitioner, Snohomish County, WA

Using Continuous Improvement in government can be exciting for teams. Empowering and engaging the front-line team members is valuable and can unleash some great ideas and countermeasures. However, coaching from the middle has challenges. Executive leaders, Directors, Division Directors, Elected Officers as well as middle and front-line leadership need to understand their role in Continuous Improvement. Leader behaviors impact the success of projects and their sustainability. Some of these Lean behaviors may be different than are found in traditional leadership models.

To address this gap, we created an interactive CI Leader Program. Our goal was to develop leaders as coaches to transform their teams and team culture. We developed a set of tools and resources to support leaders in promoting team engagement in innovative and creative solutions for improving their work.

Kristi, Shannon, and Alenka will share:

- Why a CI Leader Program is important for leadership development, supporting the efforts of the front-line team members, and ultimately creating a culture of continuous improvement across the organization.
- The journey of discovering what was needed and the framework for building the curriculum
- Our lessons learned and next steps for this program including advancing opportunities for certified leaders

Kristi Hoagland, Director of Operational Excellence at Snohomish County, draws upon 23 years of experience in Lean Leadership. Her healthcare leadership background includes overseeing revenue cycle, clinic, and hospital operations, where she successfully implemented and sustained a Lean Management. Kristi's passion for Lean drives her mission to build programs that cultivate Lean leaders who champion innovation, empower staff, and foster a continuous improvement mindset for the benefit of both employees and residents.

Alenka Fields is a Continuous Improvement Specialist, Project Manager and Change Practitioner for Snohomish County. She has over 20 years of Lean transformation experience as a coach and consultant for a variety of organizations in Healthcare and Insurance, within the US as well as the UK and Canada. Alenka has a passion for coaching and guiding leaders and teams. On her deck overlooking the sound with her husband and doodle is her Zen place.

Shannon Boswell is currently a Continuous Improvement Specialist/PM at Snohomish County as of January 2023. Shannon brings over 20 years of hands-on Lean experience in healthcare as well as consulting in organization transformation and change management. Pairing Lean concepts with practical experience, she works with executives, frontline staff, and everyone in-between in the implementation, adoption, sustainment, and realization of successful Lean management.

Session 7: Lean Clinics: “Book Club” Edition

These clinics are intended to smaller-group, informal discussions amongst Lean and continuous improvement practitioners. To get the discussions going, each of the Lean Agility consultants has chosen a book or article that has inspired them personally in their improvement careers and practices.

Come join them to hear more about why they chose the text they did and what their three biggest take-aways were. Do you have a favourite book, video, or podcast that inspired you in your own Lean practice? Come share yours and join the conversation!

Session 7A: Ken Eakin – This is Lean by Niklas Modig and Par Ahlstrom.

Our conventional understanding of “efficiency” is incorrect; when organizations focus too much on utilizing resources—that is, keeping people busy-- it actually increases the amount of work there is to do, making the organization as a whole less efficient. Modig and Ahlstrom call this the “Efficiency Paradox”. They explain, with simplicity and clarity, how Lean organizations break away from this conventional notion of efficiency by focusing much more on flowing value to their clients.

Session 7B: Alain L'Abbé – Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less, by Greg McKeown.

The art of saying “no” to the trivial many, to reserve time for the Critical Few; prioritizing to avoid overwhelm.

Session 7C: Tim Francis -- What's the Point If We Can't Have Fun?

An article by David Graeber. Just as scientists struggled to justify animal play through purely rational explanations, we may be overlooking the vital role of experimentation, social interaction, and apparent inefficiencies in our workplaces. Through this lens, we'll explore how Lean thinking might evolve by understanding that not everything valuable can be measured in terms of immediate productivity.

Session 7D: Chris Irwin – Thinking in Systems by Donella Meadows.

Many problems we face cannot be solved by quick fixes in isolation; see the whole system and reach deeper to the structures and mindsets that are at play.

Session 7E: Craig Szelestowski – Atomic Habits by James Clear.

Evidence-based strategies to create new and sustained habits, particularly useful in helping teams sustain new flow-creating behaviours.

15:05 - 15:55

Session 8: Clear Vision, Clear Results: Transforming University HR Processes Through Value Stream Mapping

Tim Francis, Senior Consultant, Lean Agility

Maria Chirico, Continuous Improvement Specialist, University of Calgary

When processes slow down, complexity and waste multiply. Team members get pulled into endless status updates, data grows stale and needs refreshing, and scope creeps inexorably outward. But what if there was a better way?

In this engaging session, learn how University of Calgary teams are using Value Stream Mapping to shine a light on process bottlenecks and hidden inefficiencies. You'll discover how this powerful Lean tool helps teams invest the right effort in the right places - leading to dramatic improvements and results. For instance, the university's Human Resources and contracting teams drastically reduced its time-to-hire while also reducing their amount of work effort. Similarly, administrative units eliminated weeks of delay.

Join us to learn practical techniques for eliminating the "process tax" that slow work imposes on your team and organization.

Tim Francis is a creative Lean process transformation specialist with industry-leading strengths in technical, analytical, and human dimensions of change in government. Prior to joining Lean Agility in 2022, he led successful process improvement projects while working at Veterans Affairs Canada and Infrastructure Canada.

Maria Chirico has worked with the University of Calgary's Human Resources department since 2006. In 2021, she took on the role of Continuous Improvement Specialist. She successfully completed her Green Belt certification with Lean Agility in early 2024 and subsequently went on to transform many other processes within the University's HR area.