



Town of Gravenhurst

GATEWAY TO MUSKOKA

**From Good to Great:
The Town's Continuous Improvement Journey**




Introducing the Town of Gravenhurst

Gravenhurst, Ontario, Canada, is a historic town located at the south end of Lake Muskoka in the Muskoka Region. Known as the Gateway to Muskoka Lakes, it is the first incorporated town in the area and a popular outdoor destination. With a population of 13,175, Gravenhurst combines a rich heritage with a modern lifestyle for its community.

The Town's commitment to its citizens is demonstrated through its dedicated workforce of about 110 employees including full-time, part-time staff and 50 volunteer firefighters. It also promotes youth development by hiring on average 20 summer students annually for summer operations.

Operations are organized into seven (7) and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. Together, these departments oversee all services, programs and activities offered by the Town:

-  Human Resources
-  Recreation and Culture Services
-  Financial Services
-  Legislative Services
-  Infrastructure Services
-  Development Services
-  Fire and Emergency Services



Maximizing Efficiency: Lean Deployment in Action

The Town of Gravenhurst is one of the first to implement a formal organization-wide Lean program in the District of Muskoka and engaged Leading Edge Group to provide Lean support.

BACKGROUND

The Town recognized the need to enhance customer service and optimize operational processes. The Lean program aimed to involve employees in proactively identifying and realizing continuous improvement opportunities. Leading Edge Group was engaged to provide the necessary support.

A holistic approach to continuous improvement was planned, capturing ideas from all levels of the organization. This approach combined top-down project identification with valuable insights from the bottom-up. By implementing Lean principles, a systematic approach was established, fostering innovation and empowering staff to drive ongoing improvements for the benefit of operations and the community.

APPROACH

The Town initiated a comprehensive Lean training program for all staff members in September 2020, spanning three (3) years. The objective was to provide every employee with awareness training at the White Belt level of Lean. Subsequently, employees had the opportunity to enroll in more advanced training at Green and Black Belt levels.



The Power of Transformation: Overall Improvement and Results

In two (2) years, the Town has trained **20 Green Belts and 89 White Belts**, with **12 continuous improvement projects** completed. This has exceeded the original 3-year objectives for 12 Green Belts, 75 White Belts and 12 projects.

Key overall benefits are as follows:

- 4,407 hours in annual capacity saved or \$275,822 equivalent
- \$174,740 in additional absolute savings and revenue recoveries
- Total cumulative savings to date of \$450,562
- Significant improvements were made in reducing errors and rework; eliminating non-value-added steps in workflow processes; reducing customer wait times for service and inquiries and mitigating workplace injury risks

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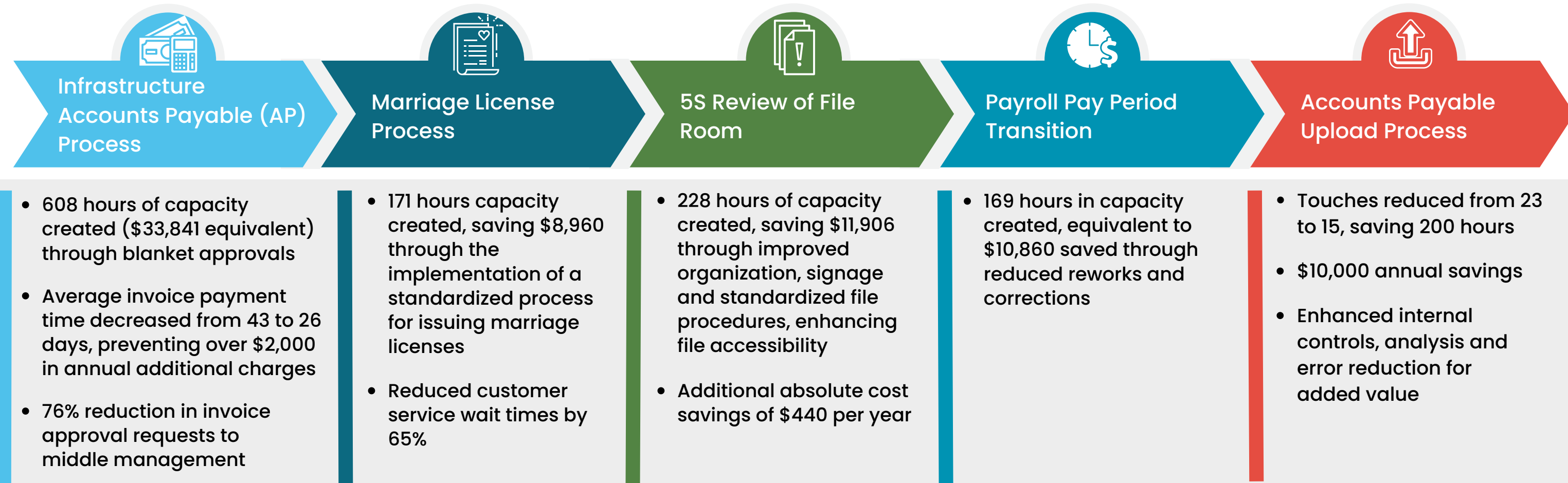
We adopted the approach of capability building as we wanted to successfully develop a Lean culture. We wanted to create a corporate culture where continuous improvement is entrenched, creativity is encouraged and acknowledged and employee engagement and morale is enhanced. Our employees who do the work every day are the experts. They are the best people to identify waste and inefficiencies while adding value to our customers.

It's been exciting to build capability, see our staff and our organization grow and improve and to see the "spin-off" projects that staff have worked on.



Elaine Harkiss-Laird
Senior Manager of Human Resources

Driven by Action: Green Belt Project Examples and Impact



At the Town of Gravenhurst, my Lean training gave me the opportunity to dive into a process to discover and eliminate waste and to future proof it. The training framework gave us the time and space to thoroughly evaluate our current process identifying opportunities to understand the problem, minimize bottlenecks (flow and process mapping) and mistake proof (Poka Yoke). It also helped us to look at the organization through a new lens; to keep an eye out for other ways we can identify waste and make improvements throughout the organization.

Building a culture of continuous improvement through Lean empowers employees, elevates morale and builds strong, resilient teams.



Amanda Northey
Purchaser/Financial Analyst

Achieving Results and Sustaining Progress

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At the end of our second year, the results and the enthusiasm have far surpassed our original expectations. We had set a target of 12 Green Belts and 75 White Belts and 12 continuous improvement projects after three years. After two years, we have trained 17 Green Belts with 3 more in progress, 89 White Belts and have already conducted 12 continuous improvement projects.

Those projects have identified 4,407 annual hours freed up in capacity or an equivalent of \$275,822 in time value. In addition, there were other absolute savings and revenue recoveries of \$174,740 for a total value of savings identified to date of \$450,562. For a small municipality, that would equate to not having to increase the budget by 2.5%. What it has done for the corporate culture is harder to measure, but we will feel that it took a good culture and made it even better.



Ross Jeffery
Director of Finance



The Town remains dedicated to advancing Lean training and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Through ongoing training and project implementation, the organization will drive positive change and deliver greater value to the community.

Furthermore, the senior leadership team has gained the ability to prioritize and allocate Lean projects to fulfill crucial strategic objectives.



About Us

Leading Edge Group helps Canadian municipalities to achieve operational excellence and increased quality of services through tailored training and consultancy programs, delivered by Lean for Municipalites experts.

Our programs provide options to suit municipality staff at all levels across all functions of the organization.

Contact Us



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