



The Classic
Edition

SYS-TAO The News Letter

Staple Your Self To An Order & Go With The Flow

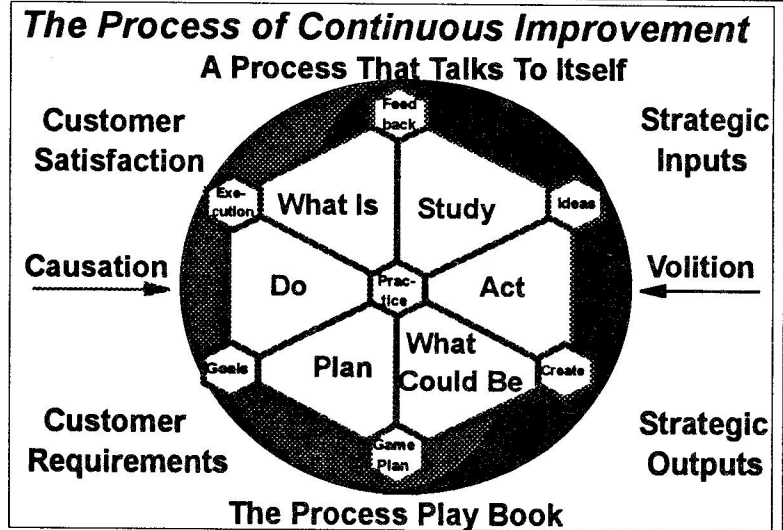
Most Westerners are analytical and pragmatic by nature. A System, "**SYS**", to us is the sum of many separate parts; many functional details which when added together accomplish a purpose. We are specialists by training. We take pride in knowing our part and doing our job. For us, reality is in the results. Coke is it! It's the Real Thing! Always Coca-Cola!

According to the Chinese, the ultimate essence of reality is "**TAO**". The principle characteristic of Tao is the cyclical nature of its ceaseless motion; all developments in nature --those in the physical world as well those in the psychological and social realms-- show cyclical patterns. For them, reality is invisible. Reality is in the process.

This idea of cyclical patterns between the limits of two polar opposites is what they refer to as "Yin" and "Yang". The Yang having reached its climax retreats in favor of the Yin; the Yin having reached its climax retreats in favor of the Yang. According to the Chinese, we must *go with the flow*.

This is not unlike the Deming cycle of "Plan, Do, Study, Act". "Plan" and "Do" are similar to the Yang, while "Study" and "Act" are more like the Yin. Yang is the more physically active concept--not unlike our Western point of view, the real world of analytical work --"*What Is*". Yin is the more passive concept--more like the world of holistic meditation and contemplation --"*What Could Be*".

All manifestations of Tao are generated by the dynamic interplay of these two polar ideas. Westerners have difficulty understanding that these conceptual opposites do not belong to separated "independent functional" categories but are extreme poles of a single "interdependent cross functional" whole. Nothing is either Yin or only Yang. Everything is relationships. All natural phenomena are manifestations of the continuous oscillation between both poles. The natural order is the dynamic balance between both Yin and Yang. Deming would call understanding of this holistic point of view "profound knowledge".



Change is natural and continuous. Change, in this view, does not occur as a consequence of some force but is a natural tendency, innate in all things and situations. The universe is engaged in ceaseless motion and activity, in intimate interrelationships in a continual cosmic process of creation. According to an ancient text, *Tao* is--the "*Way*":

Tao means how: how things happen, how things work. Tao is the single principle underlying all creation. Tao is--the way.

Tao cannot be defined, because it applies to everything. You cannot define something in terms of itself. If you can define a principle it is not Tao.

Tao is a principle. Creation, on the other hand, is a process. That is all there is: principle and process, how and what.

All creation unfolds according to Tao. There is no other way.

Tao cannot be defined, but Tao can be known. The method is meditation, or being aware of what is happening. By being aware of what is happening, I begin to sense how it is happening. I begin to sense Tao.

To become aware of what is happening, I must set aside my personal prejudices or bias. Prejudiced people see only what fits those prejudices.

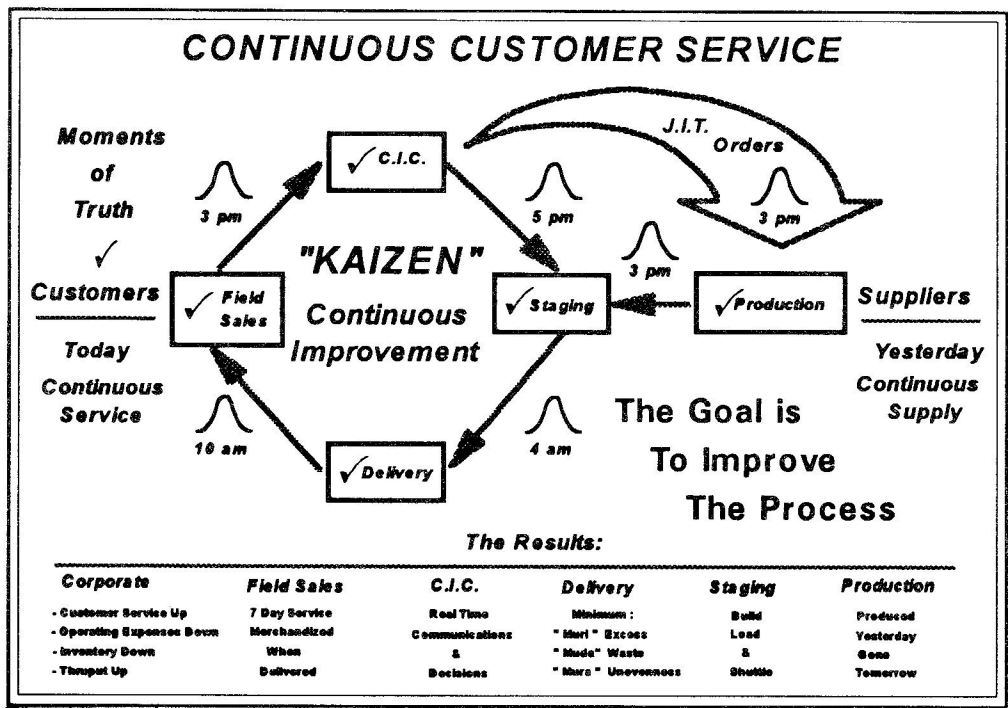
The method of meditation works, because principle and process are inseparable. All process reveals the underlying principle. This means that I can know Tao. I can know the way.

By knowing Tao, I know how things happen.

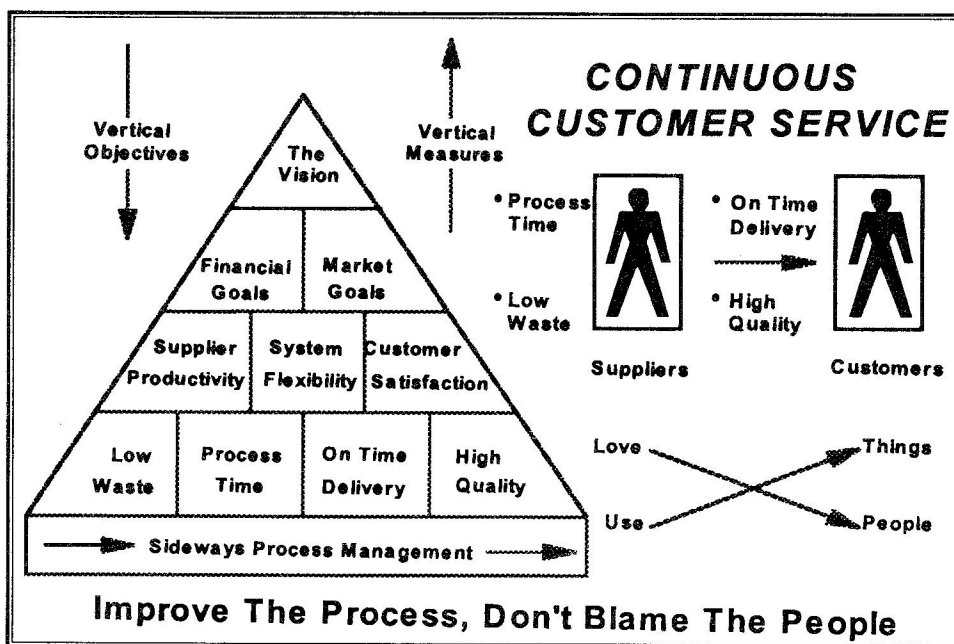
Great Plains is a System. We are all a Chain of Customers. The creative process of Continuously Improving our System and strengthening this Chain depends on how well we know the way. "*Kaizen*" is the Japanese word for continuous improvement of a system. "*Tao*" is the way.

SYS-TAO implies both "*What*" and "*How*". It implies profound knowledge, of our entire process. The Goal of our System is never ending. It is to improve the process of Continuous Improvement of Customer Service. In order to improve our System we must know how. We must know the way.

The Way of our Customers is the way of an order. If you will symbolically, **Staple Your Self-To An Order**, you will quite literally *go with the flow*, and you will find yourself on a tour of our Great Plains System. You will experience "*The Way It Is*". If you allow yourself the opportunity to meditate you will better know how things really happen. You will come to know "*The Way It Could Be*". This is our Goal -- To Continuously Improve our Process of Customer Service.



Process Capabilities must Continuously Improve if they are always to exceed forever increasing Customer Requirements. To know the way we must be aware of both the "Voice of the Process" and the "Voice of the Customer". The Voice of the Process can be measured in terms of "Process Time" and "Waste". The Voice of the Customer can be measured in terms of "On Time" and "Quality"



As these measures improve we will approach our goal. In order for these measures to improve we must know the way. We must have profound knowledge of the entire process -- an interdependent and universal system in dynamic balance that includes both Customers and Suppliers.

Whenever we make decisions; whenever we act; we are never just "doing"; we are always "becoming". Life is Change. Growth is optional. We must choose wisely. As our systems become more precise our relationships will become more intimate; as our relationships become more intimate our systems will become more precise. We will become better.

This is how our visions become shared. First we decide for ourselves. We start by pursuing our own personal vision, but as we learn to listen carefully to the vision of others, we see that our vision is part of something larger. This does not diminish our sense of responsibility for the vision. It deepens it, and our stewardship for the vision is what allows us to change our paradigm. The vision ceases to be a possession as in "this is my vision." Instead, it becomes "our calling."

According to George Bernard Shaw, "This is the true joy of life,... being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one ...being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

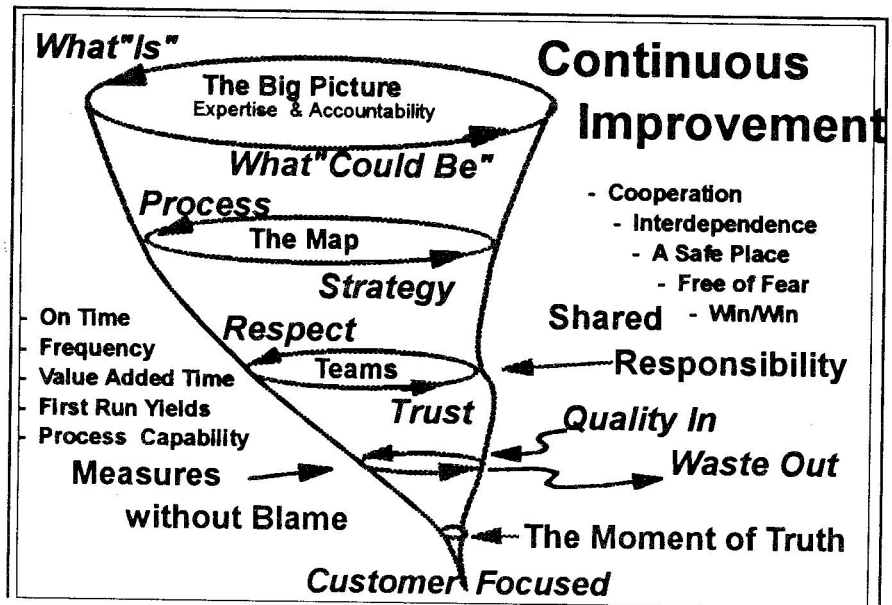
"The master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play, his labor and his leisure, his mind and his body, his education and his recreation, his love and his religion. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence in whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him he is always doing both."

- Zen Buddhist text

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
Staple Your Self To An Order & Enjoy Coca-Cola

Our purpose is to provide Continuous Customer Service. To do this we must Continuously Improve both our vision of "What Could Be" as well as our understanding of "What Is". Continuous Improvement is a journey, and both "What Is" and "What Could Be" are moving along together with us.

Our system is made up of many parts, and we are each accountable for different types of functional expertise. Everyone's understanding of the big picture is essential for our success and happiness along the way.



Every journey requires a map. Our company is held together by the shared vision of our Customer-Focused Processes and Strategies. To the extent we have profound knowledge of these Processes and Strategies, we have a map. We know "What Is." As we improve our Process, we gain insight towards improving our Strategies and vice versa. As we improve "What Is", we gain profound knowledge of "What Could Be." We learn, we grow, and we Continuously Improve together.

Despite our functional expertise, we can never be successful or happy unless we work together as a Team. Teamwork requires Mutual Trust and Respect for everything and everyone. We must share the responsibility and work together inside the Process and through the Strategy. All things are interdependent and we must always cooperate and strive for Win/Win relationships with Customers and Suppliers and with our fellow associates--both internal and external--to our Company.

Growing, Learning, and Improving comes from within and, of course, results must come later. As on any journey, it would be foolish to look only in the rear view mirror. We must look inward -- not

backward -- in order to go forward. As we improve our Process we will put "Quality" in and we will take "Waste" out of everything we do. Naturally then, these are the things to measure.

Finally, Quality is added only when it means something of value for our External Customers, and if it does not add Value for the External Customer, then it must be Waste. When our Team efforts are focused at the Moment of Truth for our Customers, everything we do naturally improve and the power of this force pulls us forward towards "What Could Be". We all become better.

