



Washington State Government  
**Lean Transformation  
Conference**



# *Practical Innovation in Government Transformation Happens Together*

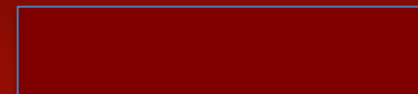
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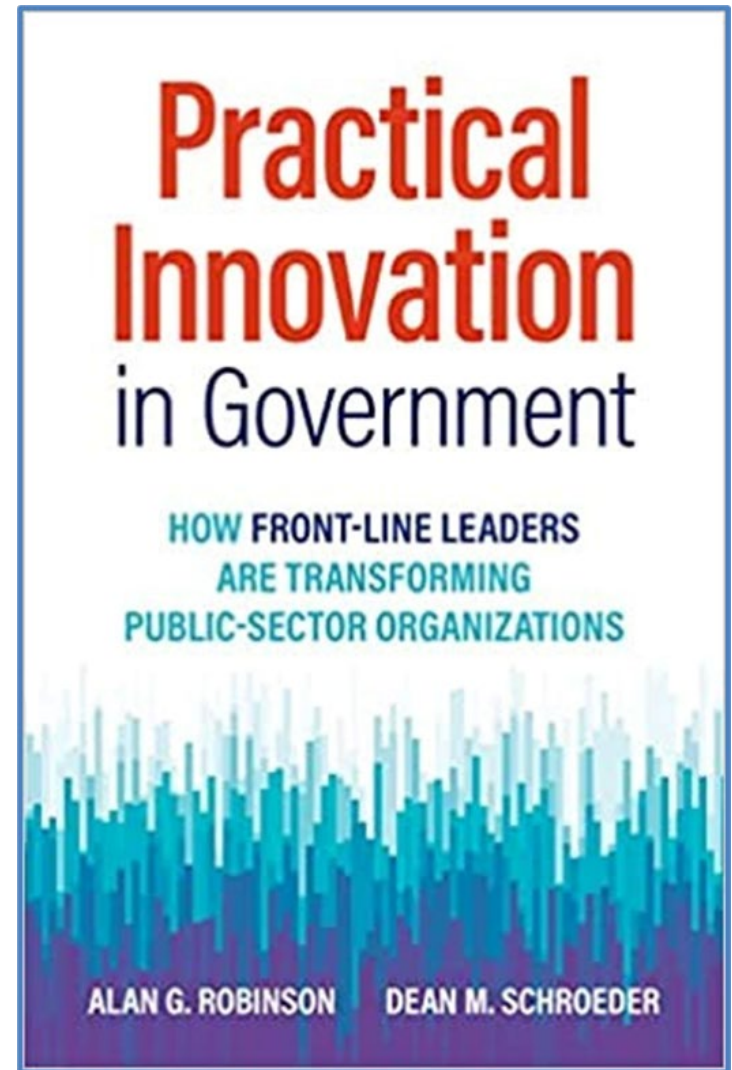
**Senior Research Professor, Valparaiso University**

*What different about  
continuous improvement (CI)  
in government?*

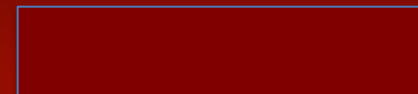


# The Study

- Six-years
- 77 Government Units
- Five Countries
- Over 1000 Interviews
- Contrasted high and low performers



- *Some business approaches to CI work well in government*
- *Some need to be modified*
- *Some don't work well at all*
- *And some **novel** approaches work very well.*



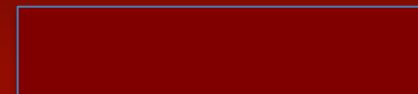
# Why?

- Government performs a different role with a more complex mission
- Unique set of checks and balances
- Answers to a more diverse constituency with conflicting interests
- Different nature of leadership
- Different structure, culture, and workforce
- ... and more reasons



# *Finding (1)*

*Lower tier managers and front-line employees working together were the ones driving improvement in the high-performing government units.*



# Denver Department of Excise and Licenses



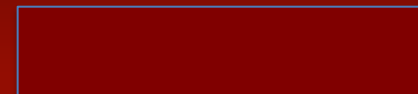
Stacie Loucks

*Reduced the wait time for licenses from an average of **1hr 40min** to less than **7min**.*



Melissa Field

**Predominantly with small employee ideas!**





# Washington State Patrol Garage

Problem: The average retirement mileage on patrol vehicles was over 150,000 miles.





# *The Challenge*

*How do we convert more new vehicles to patrol cars without increasing the size of the garage and its workforce?*

# What Happened?

- Three-year backlog of new vehicles
- Conversion rate of was 12 vehicle per month
- Lean training from Boeing
- Set vision/goal of 20 per month in 2.5 years.
- Achieve 36 per month
- Retirement mileage dropped to 110,000

*How did they do it?*

# A Sample of Installer Ideas

- Pre-kit the conversion parts on special carts.
- Organize the key storage.
- Queue the new vehicles next to the garage.
- Use a template to align decals.
- Use pre-made wire harnesses rather than cutting and stringing some 50 wires.
- Have brackets pre-drilled.
- Use laser-measured plastic seat covers over the back seats rather than swapping them out.

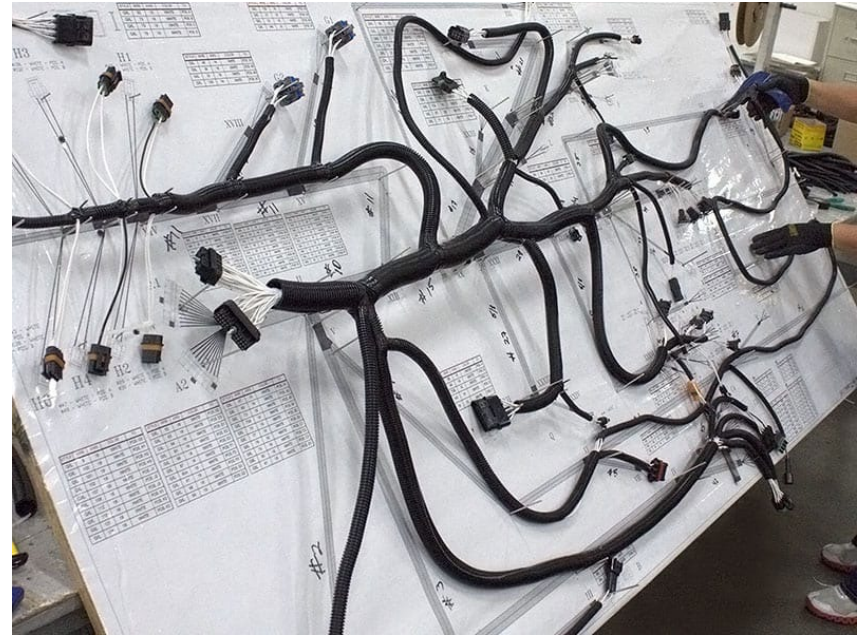
# But they didn't stop there!

*Four years of  
retired patrol  
vehicle needed  
decommissioning.*



# But they didn't stop there!

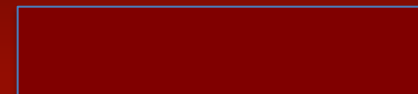
*Moved making of  
wire harness into  
the garage.*



*Can small front-line ideas  
really transform an  
organization?*

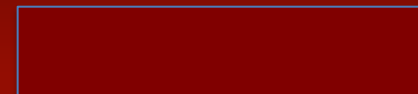
# Small ideas have a lot of advantages

- *Quick and easy to implement;*
- *Very low risk;*
- *Anyone can come up with them;*
- *Don't need much in permission and resources to implement; and*
- *They fly under the radar!*





*Small ideas may be  
tiny, but they can  
pack a surprisingly  
large punch!*





# Denver Department of Excise and Licenses

*Problem: Applicants interrupting Service Technicians because of confusing software.*

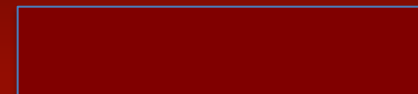
*Idea: Create a clear instruction manual.*

*Saving: (5 minutes) X (36 interruptions per day)*

*750 hours per year!*



*The sheer quantity of small front-line ideas means their cumulative impact can be enormous.*

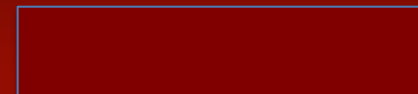




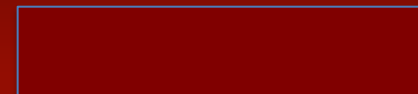
## 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue MVD Service Center

*12 implemented ideas per employee per year*

**Moved customer wait-times from 73 min.  
average with peaks of 3 hrs. plus – to 75%  
being served in under 15 minutes**



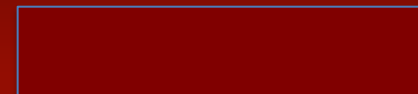
*Small incremental improvement  
is the key to creating a culture  
of improvement.*



# Small ideas are the Rodney Dangerfield of improvement

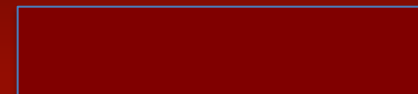


*They get no respect!*



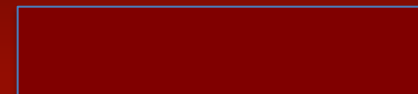
## *Finding (2)*

*A full spectrum of improvement tools and techniques is needed to address all the different types of problems you have.*



# Levels of Improvement Approaches

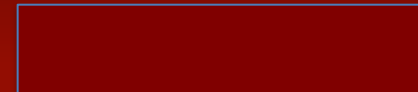
1. Approaches to handle large numbers of smaller front-line ideas quickly and efficiently.
2. Approaches to mid-sized process-level problems that require coordination.
3. Approaches to handle complex, system-level issues that take significant time and effort.





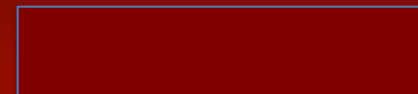
# Levels & Approaches

- *Deliverology*
- *Value-stream mapping*
- *Lean Six Sigma*
- *Rapid Improvement Events*
- *Waste Walks*
- *Daily Management*



## *Finding (3)*

*Improvement activity at all levels took advantage of front-line knowledge and expertise.*



# How does a front-line leader get started?

1. Develop a shared local vision with measurable goals.
2. Set up a simple system to capture and track improvement ideas.
3. Develop your team into good problem solvers.
4. Make improvement part of everyone's job.

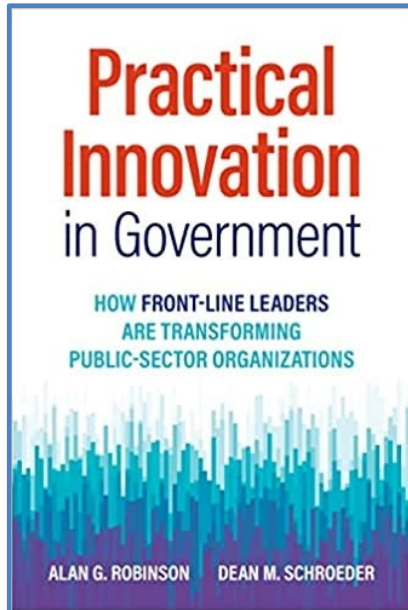
*“Never underestimate the power of  
a small group of committed people  
to change the world.”*

*Margaret Mead*

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