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Science of Business Goldratt Implementation Group US

Knowledge Jolt with Jack

[« TOC ICO, TOC and Traditional IT | Main | TOC ICO, TOC software »](#)

TOC ICO 2006, Conference Day 1

The first two days of the conference were the workshop with Eli Goldratt. The second two days are more like your regular conference with a number of speakers and parallel speaker tracks. The Monday speakers were an Air force implementation of CCPM; a discussion of Organizational Transformation; a new way to think about the TOC Thinking Tools; an example of the Solution for Sales in action; and a description of disturbing TOC implementation issues. Read on for the details.

The opening keynote from Kenneth Percell, the executive director of Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, described the wonderful results that the Air Force has had at their C-5 repair depot, where they have received several management awards ([2006 Franz Edelman Award for Achievement in Operations Research](#), [2006 Shingo Prize for Excellence in Manufacturing](#)) to recognize their improvements. The depot receives planes to be stripped and completely overhauled. When the planes arrive, they have only the vaguest idea of what needs to be repaired and replaced, leading to a large amount of uncertainty in planning. The basic results: five years ago the Air Force capped the number of planes at 16, which created a default choking process that pulled excess WIP from the system and helped them drop to 12-13 planes at a time. One year ago, they implemented Critical Chain Project Management and within six month dropped the number of planes to 7-8. For the Air Force, this means there are more planes available to work in the combat theater.

The next plenary presentation was from Christine Shinn Latona of [Greatness Unlimited](#) on the topic of organizational transformation and leadership. It was a nice departure from heavily TOC-focused discussions. Latona talked about styles of leadership and how leaders (throughout the company) can impact any change effort.

The final plenary came from Oded Cohen of Goldratt Schools (part of [Goldratt Marketing Group](#)), who described a new way to think of the TOC Thinking Tools: The U-Shape. A "U" has a pivot at the bottom, and he suggests thinking of the tools building to the pivot and then growing from it. Low performance, Undesirable effects (UDE's), the Core conflict, and the Current reality tree come down the left side of the "U." These describe what to change. The theory of constraints acts as the pivot that takes you to a new reality. It builds from this pivot through The injections, the future reality tree, the desired effects and high performance. Cycling through this system creates the process of ongoing improvement (POOGI). It's a handy way of looking at the thinking tools, but I am not sure it introduces new knowledge by itself. Cohen talked about using this view of the tools in training new TOC application experts to help them see how the tools fit into the larger picture of TOC solution implementations.

In the smaller sessions, I went to the talk by Bill Rhind of [Viable Vision, LLC](#) (aka TOC Center) on the impressive performance they have been able to get in the sales funnel. They improved production to the point where it could reliably deliver to the market, and they created a sales process that focuses on the ability of the company to guarantee delivery of its products. This is a focus on things that their customers need, rather than the typical focus on quality and features that all their competitors provide as well. The results? They are getting over 80% hit rate on their sales efforts.

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Finally, for the day, I attended the talk on "Disturbing implementation issues" by Mickey Granot of [Goldratt Consulting](#). I first read this as "distribution" issues, and was pleasantly surprised by the difference. Granot's main concern was on the problem he sees where TOC consultants are not using the tools that TOC consultants should have. He walked through several real-life cases that prove his points and then genericized them to some common principles about which we (TOC practitioners) had better be aware:

- Understand the situation.
- TOC is about simplicity, and Simplicity is not that easy.
- There are some guidelines that can help in effectively dealing with these issues.
- Complexity out, Simplicity in.
- Do your homework. Be prepared.
- People have a valid reason to be where they are.
- Changing the solution is not the way to change an implementation problem.

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