A photograph of an iceberg floating in the ocean. The top part of the iceberg is visible above the water surface, while the much larger bottom part is submerged. The sky is blue with some clouds, and the water is a deep blue. The iceberg is white and jagged.

tools, programs,  
language, behavior

shared beliefs, values  
and assumptions

(adapted from Dr. Edgar Schein)

HOP is not a program...

...it is an operating philosophy.

To adopt the philosophy, **HOP**  
**principles** need to become **commonly**  
**held values...**

**...the tools emerge** from the new  
organizational beliefs

(not the other way around)

*“Firms picked up the visible tools, but they had not understood what the tools were for...it is not enough to imitate the distinctive techniques of these front-running leaders, to mistake the means for the ends.”*

(Steven Spear, The High-Velocity Edge)

# Learning Teams

---

A Learning Team is an operational learning tool that brings those that are closest to the work together to describe how work is actually being accomplished in the field.

The goal of a learning team is to reveal the complexity of the system to leadership while simultaneously empowering those closest to the work to take what actions they can locally.

The resulting operational intelligence creates more accurate understandings of system weaknesses and informs better system design.

“What we have is a data input problem...”

– Conklin

# Is it a trade off?

Learning is a **deliberate strategy**...

...but, it is **not in competition with operational resources or strategy.**

Your resources are already in place...

...we are only making adjustments to which lens (which biases) is influencing how we gather operational intelligence information.

We need to shift the focus of our learning from the conditions we strive tirelessly to control (but can't) to the elements of our system we can control and manage.

A learning strategy shifts us away from the incorrect belief that we can “cure” the human condition (the inevitability of error, the influence of context, the drift toward efficiency)

Departure from this flawed thinking relieves us from a subset of pervasive operational inefficiencies we have all been laboring under and refocuses that energy on sustainable change....

Easy insertion points:

- Investigations
- Kaizen events
- Strategy sessions
- NPI
- Inspections
- Pre-investment meetings
- High risk operations

# Learning Teams and employee engagement

---

Learning teams create a snowball effect of employee engagement.

Operational Learning:

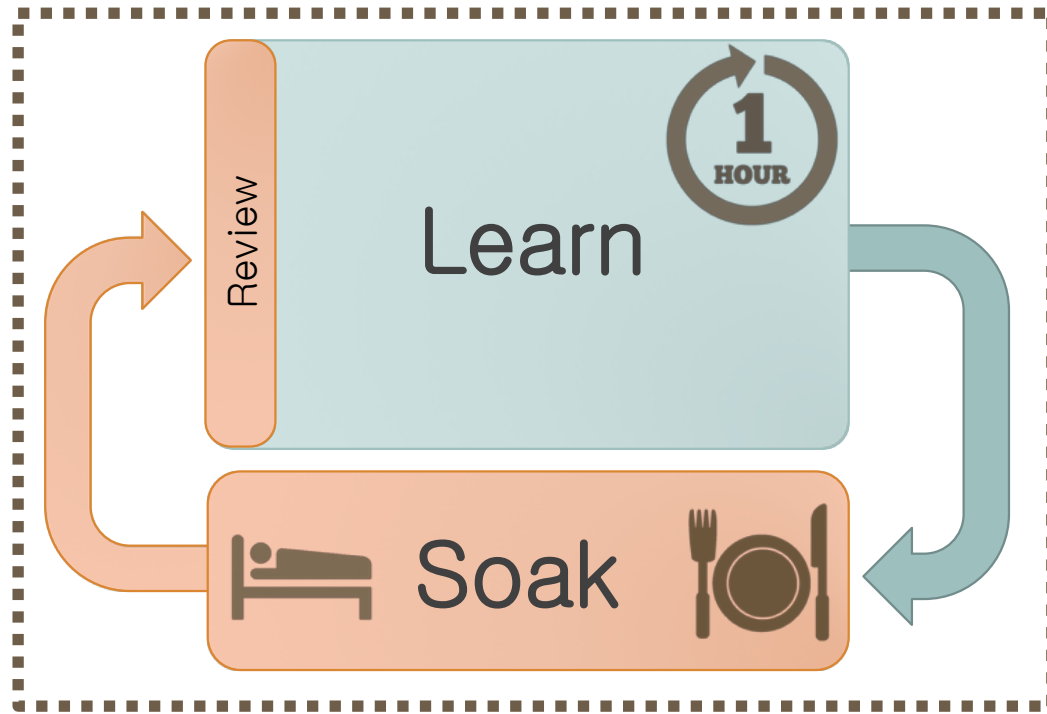
- Catalyzes a cultural movement that **elevates the value of the worker** by demonstrating that leadership 1) recognizes the complexity of the work their employees are undertaking 2) understands that employees create success in spite of that complexity and 3) appreciates the inevitability of error and mistakes.
- Is a deliberate demonstration that leadership is **humbly** seeking to understand how normal work is performed
- Signals a **system centric** (rather than person centric) response to failure, which allows for more **open communication**. This is especially effective when learning teams are used in scenarios that may have previously been met with a “knee jerk” reaction.
- Increases **employee engagement** in the identification of **system weaknesses** and **improvement options**
- Teaches leaders at all levels how to ask **better questions**



## Leader's Role

## Prepare

*Help free up the resources*



*Set the tone: give permission to speak freely  
Anticipate complexity and "bad news"*

*Protect soak time*

*Support additional learning sessions as needed*

*"Combat breath"*

*Let the team try-storm  
Remove roadblocks  
Remember there is real value in the information alone*

*Tell the story*

*Pass on operational intelligence  
Use it to inform decisions*

(Baker) **Communicate & Take Action**