

Lean Quick Wins Checklist

A five-minute self-assessment to find where Lean will deliver immediate impact in your business

How to use this checklist

1. Score each statement honestly — first instinct is usually right.
2. **0 = never true, 1 = sometimes, 2 = mostly, 3 = always true.**
3. Total each section and carry the figures to the scoring table in Part 3.
4. Your two lowest sections are where Lean will pay back fastest.

Part 1 — The eight wastes: quick scan

Tick every waste you recognise in your own operation and note one real example you have seen in the last month.

Waste	What it looks like in your business	Tick	Your example
Defects	Rework, scrap, product returned, out-of-spec batches, corrections to paperwork or orders	☐	
Overproduction	Making more, or earlier, than the customer has actually ordered	☐	
Waiting	People or product waiting on approvals, materials, machines, information or a decision	☐	
Non-used talent	Staff ideas never asked for or never acted on; skilled people doing low-value tasks	☐	
Transport	Unnecessary movement of materials, stock or product between locations	☐	
Inventory	Excess raw materials, work in progress or finished stock; slow-moving or expired stock	☐	
Motion	People walking, searching, reaching or double-handling to get the job done	☐	
Extra processing	Steps, checks, reports or features the customer does not value or pay for	☐	

Part 2 — Self-assessment

Section A — Orders, flow and delivery

Statement	Score (0–3)
We deliver on time, in full, to our customers without expediting or firefighting.	
I know our current lead time from order received to product despatched.	
Work moves through the business in a steady flow rather than in peaks and panics.	
Bottlenecks are known, measured and actively managed.	
Late orders are logged and the root cause is reviewed, not just fixed on the day.	
Section A total (out of 15)	

Section B — Standard work and key-person dependency

Statement	Score (0–3)
Our key processes are written down as simple, visual standard work instructions.	
The business runs normally when any one person is on holidays or out sick.	
We have a skills matrix and a plan for cross training the team.	
A new starter can be trained to competence in a defined, repeatable way.	
Two people doing the same task would do it the same way.	
Section B total (out of 15)	

Section C — Quality, rework and problem solving

Statement	Score (0–3)
We know the cost of our scrap, rework, waste and customer complaints each month.	
The same problem rarely comes back twice.	
We use a simple root cause method (5 Whys, fishbone) rather than relying on opinion.	
Problems are raised by the team early, without blame.	
Corrective actions are assigned to a person with a date, and are closed out.	
Section C total (out of 15)	

Section D — Workplace organisation and materials (5S)

Statement	Score (0–3)
Everything has a defined place and is returned to it — tools, materials, paperwork, files.	
Nobody spends time searching for equipment, stock, ingredients or information.	
Stock is rotated correctly and we have no obsolete, damaged or out-of-date material.	
Layout minimises walking, double-handling and unnecessary movement.	
Housekeeping standards are audited regularly, not just before an inspection.	
Section D total (out of 15)	

Section E — Measures, visual management and improvement culture

Statement	Score (0–3)
We track a small number of meaningful daily or weekly measures.	
Performance is visible to the team on a board or screen, not buried in a spreadsheet.	
We hold a short, structured daily or weekly team huddle.	
Staff suggest improvements and see them implemented.	
We have completed at least one measured improvement project in the last six months.	
Section E total (out of 15)	

Part 3 — Your score

Section	Score	Out of
A — Orders, flow and delivery		15
B — Standard work and key-person dependency		15
C — Quality, rework and problem solving		15
D — Workplace organisation and materials (5S)		15
E — Measures, visual management and improvement culture		15
Total		75

What your score means

Score	Where you are, and what to do next
0–25	Firefighting. The business is running you. Gains are biggest and fastest here — expect visible results within weeks from standard work, 5S and a daily huddle.
26–45	Inconsistent. Good people are compensating for weak processes. Target your two lowest sections with one focused improvement project.
46–60	Stabilising. The basics are in place. Move to flow, changeover reduction and measured productivity gains.
61–75	Improving well. Focus on sustaining the gains, building internal Lean capability and extending improvement to suppliers and customers.

Indicative example — a small food business

Indicative illustration only. The business described is a composite drawn from typical small food manufacturing operations, and the figures show the order of improvement commonly achieved. Results in any individual business will vary with scale, product mix and starting point.

The business: An artisan food producer with 14 staff, making chilled sauces and soups for retail and foodservice customers. Production runs five days a week, with orders picked and despatched daily to two distributors. The owner completed this checklist in under five minutes.

How they scored

Section	Score	What was behind the score
A — Orders, flow and delivery	6 / 15	Two to three late despatches a week; lead time never measured; the filling line was the obvious bottleneck but nobody tracked it.
B — Standard work and key-person dependency	4 / 15	Recipes and cook times lived in the head of the production supervisor. When he was out, yields and consistency dropped.
C — Quality, rework and problem solving	7 / 15	Batches occasionally reworked for viscosity and seasoning; complaints logged for HACCP, but root causes rarely investigated.
D — Workplace organisation and materials (5S)	5 / 15	Ingredients stored by delivery date rather than use; staff searching for scoops, labels and allergen sheets; monthly write-off of expired stock.
E — Measures, visual management and improvement culture	3 / 15	No daily measures; performance reviewed only when the monthly accounts arrived; team ideas never captured.
Total	25 / 75	Firefighting — highest and fastest return on effort.

Their first Lean project — and the result

The two lowest sections were **B (standard work)** and **E (measures)**, so that is where they started. One eight-week project, run alongside normal production:

1. **Standard work:** one-page visual instructions for the six highest-volume recipes, laminated at the vessel.
2. **Cross-training:** a skills matrix on the wall and two extra operators trained on cook-off.
3. **5S in the ingredient store:** shelves labelled, first-expired-first-out rotation, allergen sheets at point of use.
4. **Daily huddle:** ten minutes at a whiteboard showing output, on-time despatch, waste and issues.
5. **Batch sizing:** soup scheduled against confirmed orders rather than vat capacity.

Measure	Before	After 8 weeks	Impact
On-time, in-full despatch	88%	98%	Fewer credit notes and complaints
Batch rework / product loss	2 batches per month	Under 1 per quarter	Ingredient and labour savings
Expired stock write-off	€1,400 per month	€350 per month	Approx. €12,600 per year
Line start-up delay	40 minutes daily	10 minutes daily	Approx. 2.5 hours capacity per week
Checklist score	25 / 75	47 / 75	Moved from firefighting to stabilising

Figures are indicative and rounded, offered to show the typical scale and speed of return rather than a guaranteed outcome.

No new equipment. No capital spend. Just waste removed and work made standard.

Your next step

1. Your total score: _____ / 75
2. Your two lowest sections: _____ and _____
3. One quick win you could start next week: _____
4. How you will measure it, and who owns it: _____

If you want support turning that into a first Lean improvement project — with the measures, the standard work and the team engagement in place — [book a call](#). Lean works, and it starts with one conversation.

Book your free Lean discovery call

Bring your completed checklist to the call and we will agree your first improvement project in 30 minutes.

[Book a call with MJH Project Advisory](#)

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