

Summary Biography

M.L. "Bob" Emiliani is a professor researcher, author, historian of progressive management, and executive trainer. He has over 25 years of experience in aerospace, consumer products, and service industries, and has had front-line responsibility for implementing Lean principles and practices in the manufacturing shop floor, supply networks, and in higher education (academics). Bob is a leading figure in the Lean movement and is dedicated to helping people correctly understand and implement Lean management. He has been described as "the greatest advocate for workers and the 'Respect for People' principle."



Born in Miami, Florida, his father was an internationally recognized geologist and micropaleontologist and his mother was a homemaker. Bob graduated from Coral Gables High School and went on to the University of Miami (Coral Gables, Fla.) where he received a B.S. in mechanical engineering. He then earned an M.S. degree in chemical engineering from the University of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI) and a Ph.D. from Brown University (Providence, RI). Bob married Lucinda Bronico in 1985 and they have two children.

Bob's many interests over the years have led to diverse professional capabilities and personal interests, including: engineer, manager, artist, author, publisher, musician (bass guitar), photographer, craftsman (bicycle frame builder), cooking, vegetable gardening, scholar, and educator.

Career Summary

Bob began working part-time at the age of 13 as a salesperson at Camera Corner South in Coconut Grove, Fla. Subsequent to that, he worked as a laboratory technician and as a freelance writer for *Bicycling*, *Bike Tech*, and *Bicycle Guide* Magazines producing articles on various metallurgical aspects of custom bicycle frames and components. While pursuing his Ph.D., Bob worked at Monet Jewelers (Pawtucket, RI) as a metallurgist in manufacturing operations.

Upon completing his Ph.D., Bob worked at Pratt & Whitney in Florida and Connecticut and held positions of increasing responsibility in engineering, manufacturing operations, supply chain management, and organizational learning. His first exposure to TPS management was in July 1994 as a business unit manager in operations, and he later worked to establish Lean in the supply chain of the commodity he managed. Bob was trained in the Toyota Production System by sensei from Shingijutsu Co., Ltd.

Bob left industry in 1999 to join academia where he teaches graduate courses on Lean leadership, supply chain management, and failure analysis of management decisions. He has an active research program in Lean management and is regarded as "an eminent American academic at the forefront of Lean thinking."

Bob pioneered the application of Lean principles and practices to the design and delivery of his courses starting in 1999. He was also the first professor to facilitate kaizens in higher education to improve a 10-course executive M.S. degree program in 2002. Bob has been called the "first Lean professor" for his work in higher education.

Bob is one of the most prolific authors on Lean leadership and Lean management, having written numerous books and peer-reviewed papers. Several of these works have won awards for excellence.

Bob's extensive body of work on Lean management led him to develop unique short courses in Lean leadership for executives that highlight the "Respect for People" principle, which is invariably missing in other training courses yet is critical to Lean management success. He is a frequent speaker at corporate meetings and senior management retreats due to his pioneering work in Lean leadership and his deep understanding of the history of progressive management and of the "Respect for People" principle in enabling material and information flow.

Significant Contributions

Bob's work in Lean management is informed by his extensive hands-on application of Lean management principles and practices when he worked in the aerospace industry.

Bob's research on Lean leadership began in the early 1990s and was prescient, for it is only since late 2007 that the broader Lean community has begun to recognize the importance of leadership. He chose to study the least-understood aspect of Lean management because it is the key to Lean success. Bob's extensive knowledge of the history of progressive management dating from the late 1800s contextualizes today's leadership challenge in ways that are not recognized or understood by others.

Bob was the first researcher to provide a detailed description of how the "Respect for People" principle functions in enabling continuous improvement, and how wasteful leadership behaviors severely impair Lean transformations. He has written several innovative papers that describe practical approaches to identifying leadership problems in organizations that seek to practice Lean management. His books and papers provide readers with direct and effective routes for improving their Lean leadership capabilities and are fully consistent with Lean principles and practices.

Bob's supply chain management research agenda (discontinued in 2007) focused on two topics. The first was Lean supply chain management, based on his own experience creating a Lean supply chain while working in the aerospace industry. The second research topic was B2B online reverse auctions, a disgracefully anti-Lean purchasing practice, for which he was the most prolific researcher. He gained widespread recognition for his work debunking numerous claims related to reverse auction process effectiveness, cost savings, and much more.