

KARL WADENSTEN

Karl Wadensten is a passionate, memorable personality with big ideas, big success stories and a take-no-prisoners attitude. He is the President of VIBCO Vibrators in Wyoming, RI, and the host of a weekly web TV show, *The Lean Nation* on UStream Wednesdays at 3pm EST. Karl has a terrific sense of humor and his passion for lean and for life is contagious. He is a firm believer in the power of leadership and Lean to transform and VIBCO's story is truly inspirational. Karl is a much-in-demand keynote speaker at regional, national and international conferences.



As a speaker, Karl tackles the “real deal” of overcoming leadership and organizational challenges to build a culture of improvement. He challenges his audience to think deeply about what transformation actually entails, and to remember that the driving force for any improvement effort MUST be aligned to a True North focused on adding value to the customer.

At VIBCO Vibrators, Wadensten has developed a lean culture where continuous improvement is the norm and the pursuit of excellence is fully embraced by the entire VIBCO team. Throughout its lean journey, VIBCO has gained and sustained dramatic improvements in inventory, lead times, SMED, quality, and has implemented literally thousands of employee ideas. Today, Karl and VIBCO Vibrators are developing the VIBCO Production System to attain the highest level of producing to customer pull.

For the past several years, Karl and VIBCO Vibrators have hosted free learning plant tours where VIBCO employees speak directly to the visiting leaders to share their experience and demonstrate their own improvements. To date, more than 300 presidents and greater than 4,600 of their employees have benefitted from this program.

VIBCO is committed to producing a complete product portfolio that is Made in the USA. Under Karl's leadership, VIBCO has won numerous awards including Best Places to Work in Rhode Island by the Providence Business News and Best Companies, the Progressive Manufacturing PM100 Award, and is a past winner of a Providence Business News Business Excellence Award. VIBCO Vibrators is the subject of a new Harvard Business School case, “VIBCO Vibrators”, released in October 2012. The company is also the feature of two lean training videos, "Vibration Nation: Learning to See" and "Change(over) is Good! Cut Costs & Increase Flexibility Through Set Up Reduction" produced and marketed by GBMP (Greater Boston Manufacturing Partnership).

Karl attended Rocky Hill School, then graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in business and obtained his MBA at the Florida Institute of Technology. Throughout the early stages of his career, Karl learned every aspect of VIBCO, the business founded by his father, Theodore Wadensten. He became President of VIBCO in 1994.

Karl is a member of the Board of Directors for the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, an active member and frequent event champion of Young President's Association (YPO), he is a current member of the Education Committee for the National

Precast Concrete Association, has served on the MCGRI Board of Beacon Mutual, and has been a member of the Fundraising Committee for South County Hospital.

Karl is an avid skier, a classic car aficionado and enjoys playing competitive croquet. Karl is married with four children and lives in South Kingston, Rhode Island.