

TOYOTA KATA

Developing the Skills to
Thrive in Today's Constantly
Changing Marketplaces

Change arrives fast these days. Competitors emerge overnight, new technologies alter the business, and labor market conditions are uncertain. How do you ensure continued success in such complex, dynamic, and unpredictable conditions?

The default way people think about problems often involves jumping to conclusions and immediately seeking to solve problems, because the brain does not like uncertainty. The unconscious part of our brain takes bits of surface information, quickly extrapolates to fill in blanks, and gives us a false sense of confidence in our conclusion. And then we start making costly mistakes.

Toyota Kata helps develop creative, scientific-thinking skills. Employees can use these skills to keep improving, adapting, and generating competitive advantage in a strategically-aligned way.

RESULTS*

\$312,439

Average sales increased/retained

\$132,013

Average cost savings

\$222,380

Average total investment

3.89

Average new/retained jobs

Toyota Kata is about:



Developing new habits and allowing people to think differently about problems and goals.



A way of working, and of working together.



Using scientific thinking as an ingredient to make teams and organizations more effective and successful.

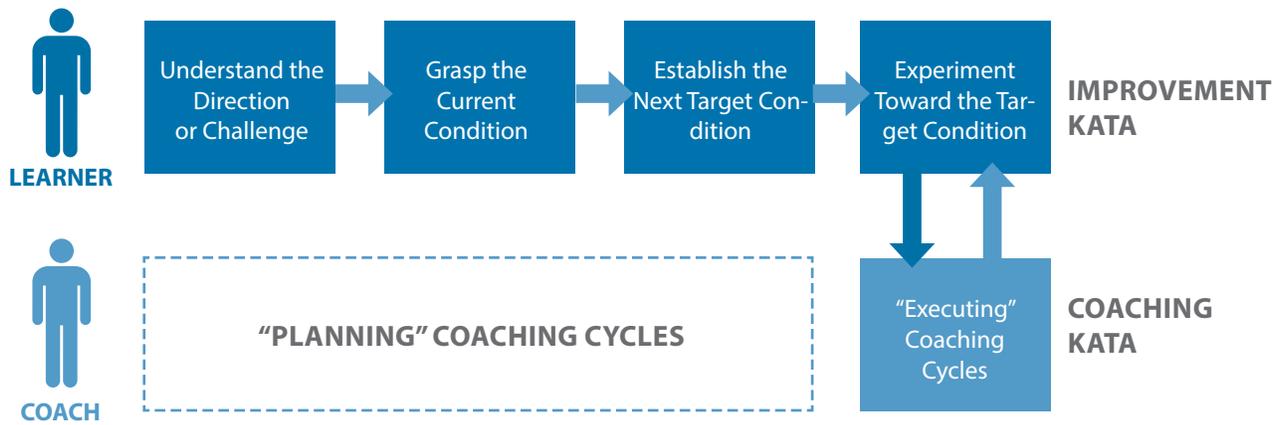


Developing a culture of continuous learning and improvement at all levels through deliberate practice.

*Based on MEP Center client survey results from 2011 – 2019.

Toyota Kata does not teach problem solving, but rather a mindset that can make people more effective at problem solving – through practicing “Starter Kata.” Starter Kata are small routines or protocols that get practiced deliberately, especially at the beginning, to help people acquire a new skill. Starter Kata increase the speed of learning and are especially helpful when companies want to develop a shared way of thinking and working in a group of people, because everyone starts with practicing the same basics.

There are two main elements within Toyota Kata and each has its own set of Starter Kata - Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata.



The Improvement Kata helps develop fundamental skills of working like a scientist. The learner iterates or experiments his or her way toward a desired goal instead of deciding the way forward. This way of thinking and working helps people successfully deal with uncertainty and challenges.

The Coaching Kata is a repeating routine by which managers teach Improvement Kata to everyone in the company. The teacher or coach gives the learner procedural guidance, not solutions, helping the learner successfully overcome obstacles and develop confidence. Since many managers do not have experience in coaching others to think this way, the Coaching Kata helps managers develop these skills. With Toyota Kata, managers can develop their own coaching skills and their team members’ problem-solving skills simultaneously.

“ Our company has continued to enjoy sustainable growth and development by using methods like Toyota Kata. We have been able to make the continuous development needed to sustain this growth and develop our team members by empowering them to become problem solvers and obstacle hunters. Without the support of internal and external team members, to include Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions, it would have been difficult to enjoy this success. Our company has grown its workforce and its customer base since the transformational journey began.

– Arkansas MEP Client

CONTACT US:

Many companies have introduced Lean techniques, but the results often do not sustain. By practicing the Toyota Kata routines and patterns, anyone can become better equipped to navigate ambiguity and reach challenging goals. Contact us to learn more.

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*Graphics inspired by images from the Toyota Kata Practice Guide.