Hi everybody. Welcome to Cabinetmakerprofitsystem.com's Podcast. Today, we're going to be doing an interview with Mark Graban and Mark is an expert in the field of lean manufacturing but he comes at it from a different angle than you might think, which is exactly why I had him on the show so that we could learn new things from new angles that we can apply to our business, and you know what? That's where innovation comes from. So stay tuned and we'll see you on the other side.

This episode is brought to you by kitply.ca. If I see managed inventory, do you think it's a snooze fest? Well, do you shake your head every time you send one of your production guys out to the supplier just to get one little thing that really should've been on the shelf in the first place? Well, I learned about managed inventory from kitply.ca. If the up and down of inventory management and reviewing pricing on every little thing is taking you away from the important work of bidding and running the business, then you really should look into a managed inventory system like the one at kitply.ca. A managed inventory program gets rid of a headache you don't even need to have. Visit kitply.ca today, to find out more.

Mark.

Mark Graban: Dominic. Hey.

Dominic Rubino: Hey, how are you?

Mark Graban: I'm doing well thanks.

Dominic Rubino: Good. Great to have you here.

Mark Graban: Yeah. Thank you for having me on.

Dominic Rubino: Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, I like hanging out with guys like you because you're very efficient.

Mark Graban: I was right on time. I was just in time.

Dominic Rubino: You're just in time but, also, we only spoke last week and here we are, our schedules lined up, and we're ready to do this podcast video, whatever.

Mark Graban: I feel like I'm having a fireside chat with you. So this is nice.
Dominic Rubino: Oh, because of the fireplace?

Mark Graban: Yeah, exactly.

Dominic Rubino: Oh, that's good. Well, and those kids that are in the pictures aren't home right now, so we can be having this conversation without the sound of elephants trumpeting through the background.

Mark Graban: Good.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah, well, Mark, as we get started here maybe we should give some contacts to our listeners. This is the Cabinet Maker Profit System blog or podcast and blog and everything. So you know who our market is but they don't necessarily know who you are, although they might recognize some of your stuff. Who's Mark Graban and why are you here?

Mark Graban: Yeah, well, I'm not here because I'm an expert in cabinet making. I own cabinets, so that's something. My background, originally I'm an industrial engineer by Bachelor's Degree. I've got Master's degrees in mechanical engineering and an MBA. So, from the sounds of that, you would think I would be working at manufacturing companies and that was my early idea of a career path. I worked for General Motors, Dell Computer, Honeywell. I got the bug and started a software company in between. So I appreciate and admire entrepreneurs including those in your audience. So I had always been focused on culture change, leadership, and in the context of getting everybody participating in continuous improvement.

The one popular label or banner for that is usually referred to as lean manufacturing. It's based on the Toyota Production System. And, you know, there are pros and cons of the word lean but when that term was coined by some IT researchers about 30 years ago, the idea was to separate it a bit from Toyota because, when I worked at General Motors, it was kind of forbidden at the time to copy Toyota. If they're going to do something better and very General Motorish ...

Dominic Rubino: Right.

Mark Graban: ... the reality was they were scrambling to catch up to Toyota, by copying them, which is good things to copy. But it helped also, I think, emphasize that the Toyota Production System is not about building cars, it's a culture, it's a philosophy, it's an improvement system, and it really is transferrable to other settings. So, for about 13 years I've focused very much on healthcare. I work as a consultant for hospitals and health systems.

Dominic Rubino: Really?
Mark Graban: Really trying to apply these principles to help a hospital or a clinic be the best it can be.

Dominic Rubino: Right.

Mark Graban: Kind of adopting and adapting lessons from other settings, and looking at work as a process, and focusing on the customer and trying to create an environment where everyone can succeed.

Dominic Rubino: I love it. Adopting and adapting, and I think, if anybody listening to this right now is thinking, "Hey, Rubino, why'd you bring a hospital specialist onto our cabinet maker platform?" It's for exactly that reason. I feel like it's my job to bring new perspectives, just new ways of seeing things to the guys that are listening to this, and we get stuck in our own reality. We think everybody's a cabinet maker or everybody either needs cabinets or doesn't yet. And that's not the case. And so, we have to look around us to find inspiration or ideas from outside of the industry.

Mark Graban: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: And that's why I'm glad to have you here. That's how I found you, actually, on your blog.

Mark Graban: Yeah. I'm glad you did. But a historical tidbit. Supposedly, I wasn't there, I believe the story is true. This is what I've read. Do you know where Henry Ford got the inspiration 100 years ago for the classic moving assembly line?

Dominic Rubino: No.

Mark Graban: He or somebody in his company went to a meat packing plant and they saw, basically, apologies if anyone's even watching right now, animal disassembly ...

Dominic Rubino: Right.

Mark Graban: ... on a moving line, and they were inspired because, before that, cars were built with the car sitting in place and people kind of moving around it, and building it very much a craft build. So, even the origins of the assembly line come from other industries. Now, lean manufacturing is not all about assembly lines.

Dominic Rubino: Right.

Mark Graban: You can do lean work in manufacturing or in other settings without the assembly line. But I think it's just an interesting example. You know, we should open our eyes and get different experiences we can work from.
Dominic Rubino: Yeah. Well, as I've said to you in our previous conversations, I use lean process a lot as a business coach.

Mark Graban: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: And I even use it myself. If I'm going to use something twice, I'm going to create a system for it. So the first time I create it, I put my time in and the second time it's a fill in the blanks. It works in the office setting, as well, I guess.

Mark Graban: Yeah. I mean, I try to practice what I preach. This morning I recorded a podcast and I have a checklist that I follow for that. I recorded or I hosted a webinar for somebody early, and checklists are not meant to shut off your brain. Checklists are helpful and, if you look at aviation, cockpit, you know, the movie Sully ...

Dominic Rubino: Yeah.

Mark Graban: ... and that amazing story. Healthcare has been learning from pilots and aviation about how checklists can help make sure things don't fall through the cracks in frantic, busy, stressful situations, or even in everyday work. So, you know, building process around something shouldn't preclude creativity when it's needed and it certainly shouldn't prevent ongoing improvement.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah. That's one of the things, actually, that this group, cabinet makers, they're very creative cause they're really good with their hands.

Mark Graban: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: And they can see problems in 3-dimension and they see maybe sometimes too much. They can see things from all angles. They're really good at that problem solving.

Mark Graban: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: Checklists focuses us ...

Mark Graban: I like the way you said look at it from all angles. I think, in a way that's what lean is about. Instead of looking at the work in a silo, my work, my department, lean teaches us and challenges to look at things from different directions, to bring in a team of people across different departments, make sure we're not suboptimizing part of the overall system, getting the customer perspective, and going and observing what the customer's needs are to make sure we're fulfilling them. To me that sounds like lean, as well.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah. Well, so one of my clients right now does large commercial work and having a business coach to them is something outside of their comfort zone. I've
been working with them for quite a while but I knew that it was a new experience for them. Well, they are now doing a build for a really large industrial project and that builder, actually, the general contractors, use a lean process.

Mark Grabin: Hmm. Good.

Dominic Rubino: So my client came back to us at our coaching meeting and he said, "Dom. You know all that stuff we talk about in our meetings? They got it on their board too." So it was nice to see that it really is everywhere. You know, a general contractor can use it, so can the guy doing the cabinets, and the other people in that meeting with my client, who's a subcontractor, we're the drywall guys, the electrical guys, the flooring guys, et cetera.


Dominic Rubino: So lean, one of the challenges that I've always noticed in my business, the business of ... business of grooming, is that lean seems daunting. Like it's a big thing to take on. So why does it feel like it's hard to do?

Mark Grabin: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: And then maybe, towards the end of that, tell us some easy wins you've seen from any industry.

Mark Grabin: Well, there's sort of two sides of the coin or there's sort of, a catch 22, where I recently read an article about the woman who's the plant manager for the Toyota Assembly Plant in Georgetown, Kentucky. And so, they have 8000 employees. Their process has been changed and radically overhauled in the last couple of years. I think it was something like 40% of their employees have been there five years or less. So when the plant first opened 30 years ago, they've now got people retiring, expanding, they're thriving, more employees are coming in. So she described this process. They don't take it for granted that they need to teach the new employees about the Toyota Production System, and she said it takes years. And you think, well that sounds daunting. Right?

But I think the way we learn about lean is through practice, and we've got to start somewhere. So, the practice of kaizen, the Japanese word for continuous improvement, really kind of points to that, yeah, starting small. And I know you've talked to somebody who's great, Paul Akers, 2 Second Lean. So, it's if you can find any small idea that saves you two seconds, that's worth doing. And that's a really powerful classic kaizen mindset. People in healthcare say, "We're too busy to fix all of the big complicated, messy, sticky problems." Okay. Fair enough.
Dominic Rubino: Yeah.

Mark Graban: Find something you can solve right now that makes your work a little bit better. The nurses might say or you might observe and they take this for granted now, climbing down on the floor under a table to plug in a portable computer ...

Dominic Rubino: Right.

Mark Graban: ... that's on a cart. And they might've gotten used to that, which is kind of sad. But then when you ask, well, is that really the easiest and best way to do that? They say, "Well, yeah, sure. We'd love power outlets up above the desk." And we're like, "We can make that happen. That's a work order. That can happen the next day." And now people started thinking, oh, little problems are worth bringing up. Little problems, and then you start asking, what can you solve? So it's not just about writing work orders but getting people engaged, getting the ball rolling. I think the best way to start with kaizen and lean is just to ask, what bugs you, and what can you fix? And Paul talks about very similar things because this comes from sort of, a similar based in some literature.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah.

Mark Graban: Paul's not making up his own thing and I'm making up something separately, using kaizen principles are pretty basic.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah. I love that. So looping back to the things I talk about. When we do something ... and this is a very thrilling piece of business here. There's this finance and forecast meeting agenda that we ... but part of that finance and forecast meeting agenda, the fun part, is called Profit Lab, which is both kind of the closing thing that whoever's chairing that meeting ...

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Dominic Rubino: Which is kind of the closing thing that whoever's chairing that meeting is going to walk the team through. That's where you get a chance as the leader to say "okay folks, where do you see opportunity in the company and who's going to do what by when about it"? That in itself is ...

Mark Graban: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: Need. It's just that people don't often wrap their heads around it. [crosstalk 00:12:19] I think it's coming together in many places.

Mark Graban: Yeah. You know, you can start small ideas bubbling up. But then there's ... there are elements of blame that tend to start up at the executive level. Defining your ... the terminology we use is "your true North". What's the direction of your
organization? What are the key metrics that you need to track? What do we need to improve? You start creating alignment through the organization. So that now the bigger projects can be prioritized and aligned to that organizational need. So that's why I said there's always two sides of the same coin. You ask people what bugs you and what can we fix now?

Dominic Rubino: Right.

Mark Graban: That can build enthusiasm and capabilities that people then start applying to solving bigger problems over time. So it's where Toyota would say that LEAN is not just engaging employees in improvement. It's also a management system and a culture. There's a philosophy. That might take time to learn.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah.

Mark Graban: It might take time to build up let's say our problem solving skills. I feel like after 20 some years with this, I'm certainly still learning and practicing and I'm still trying to get good at this.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah.

Mark Graban: It's not so simple. It's like flipping a switch and saying " alright I took a one week class and now I know this".

Dominic Rubino: I read a book and now I'm a genius.

Mark Graban: It's tempting early on you know, there's a certain human nature to that. "I've learned enough to be dangerous", people say.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah that's me with foreign languages. I know quite a few foreign languages to the level where I can order food. But I don't know those foreign languages well enough to send it back.

Mark Graban: Yeah.

Dominic Rubino: I'm just stuck with whatever I ordered. So you actually mentioned something there that's interesting. This industry looks at a lot, which is metrics or numbers. Performance metrics.

Mark Graban: Right.

Dominic Rubino: I also have to say there's so many metrics that once, even myself, that once I start diving into the numbers, the radicals are everywhere. How do I figure out the top, the most important performance metrics to focus on? So that I get some value for the company?
I think there's two dimensions of the question asked. One is how do you choose ... narrow down the number of metrics? So a lot of time people say KPI's. Wait... let's pause. What does KPI stand for? It stands for Key Performance Indicator. Not kagillion performance indicators.

Well I'm going to use that one. That's good.

Fair enough. I draw an analogy to health. There are hundreds of different laboratory tests we and measures of our body. But we really boil it down to you can probably ... it might be different for different individuals but maybe four key indicators that tell you generally, am I healthy? Am I healthier? Am I moving in the wrong direction? You don't need hundreds of lab tests every month or every week. So I think an organization you ask what are the key indicators of not just profitability, but growth, quality, other ... you know cash flow, other factors. You might boil it down to a couple of measures.

Then there's the issue how do you avoid going down the rabbit hole? Even if you boil it down to five key measures, there's a real tendency to over react to every up and down in the metric. What happened last week? Why is that number worse? The reality is sometime even in a consistent business, the same people doing the same things in the same market, every market is going to fluctuate, from day to day, week to week, month to month. There's some really important lessons I feel fortunate to have learned that help you filter out, if you will, the noise in the data so that you're looking for and reacting to meaningful signals in those data. So if we get down to 50 different rat holes, instead of saying these two metrics are worth investigating, we focused our effort and in the language of LEAN we waste less time. We perform better which I think are the goals there.

Yeah. For a furniture maker, a cabinet maker, an architectural millwork person there's a ... quite often they focus on linear feet and you know some linear foot. That's not necessarily the right way to price, but they also tend to ... what I found is that people get focused on things within companies in a very specific way. One of the questions I ask that shouldn't be ... shouldn't knock people off their feet but quite often does is "what's your profit per "x". I don't know what the "x" is, I'm asking. Is it profit for job? Is it profit for man? Is it profit for man hour? If it's profit for man hour do you count your building as one man? Including its cost in that profit for man hour?

Yeah.

Again that's if profit is the driver. If the driver is actually to keep this company going as a family legacy business, profit might be part of the conversation but not necessarily always the end. There's so many nuances there.
Mark Graban: Sure. Yeah. Well I think that's where the true north for different organizations is going to vary. If somebody is trying to grow as quickly as possible that's a different strategy than I want to preserve the family business at all cost. You might become a little more cautious. That's neither good nor bad it's just that's the goal of that particular organization. Right?

Dominic Rubino: Yeah. So when we go to set out what our ideal ... what our metrics are ... performance metrics, what should we be looking for in any given company to know that's ... this number or this theme should be important. Let's think about it more until we come up with something.

Mark Graban: Yeah so I mean there's one framework that comes from Toyota, it's been adopted the auto industry, manufacturing. It's brought into healthcare in slightly different ways. The mantra had always been "safety, quality" ... and some organizations combine those ... safety and quality are in the same ballpark. But safety, employee safety. If you can't have a safe workplace what else matters? That's ... [crosstalk 00:18:33]

Dominic Rubino: Nobody should die at work.

Mark Graban: That should be a top priority. It should be a given. It should be a top priority. Safety, quality, delivery. Which could mean basically on time delivery. Cost and employee moral. Part of the idea is if ... you know the hypothesis would be in most businesses ... if you address safety, quality, on time delivery which means improving flow, you're going to get lower cost and then employee moral I'd say sort of more surrounds all of that. Good employee moral is built upon safety. Good moral feeds into quality, delivery and cost performance. I think part of the difference in the LEAN philosophy is ... and it's different that "cost cutting" which focuses on cost and getting rid of and slashing where a lot of time LEAN looks at cost as an end result of those other metrics and a lot of business leaders of various size businesses have said LEAN is a better growth strategy than it is a shrinking business strategy.

Dominic Rubino: Nice

Mark Graban: So when you think about that cliché of do more with less ... obviously or ideally we'd like to do more business with the same number of people perhaps. Right? Or we could double our revenue without doubling our employee base or we would aim for a more scalable business and LEAN is a way to help with that.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah. It's an interesting way to look at things. You know when we come ... you know a lot of this requires us to dig into our numbers. Just knowing our numbers. Taking action when we see something that frustrates us like you mentioned about all acres the two second [inaudible 00:20:23] But knowing that I should be spending "x" and I don't want to spend to little and I don't want to
spend too much, there's this variance like you said. Right? I know that if I'm buying wood that's just too cheap, I'm paying for it somewhere. What's going on with this?

Mark Graban: Right.

Dominic Rubino: You know or if I'm getting labor that's just too cheap? There's always something we have a threshold where we go ... well ... I'm not willing to go below that threshold that I think you can even look at how we buy cars. We buy very cheap cars but all of us made a decision on our vehicle based on price and value, price and function. But there's cheaper options out there if you just wanted to get the cheapest van.

Mark Graban: Right.

Dominic Rubino: You'd get an Astro van that delivers ... sorry Chevrolet, but ... you'd get an Astro van to deliver your cabinetry or to move things. It's just not the right tool for the application. So you expect bad "x" on a reasonable van and that would be a great argument. That's a metric as well.

Mark Graban: Well so when you look at the book, and I recommend to people, there's a book called The Toyota Way written by University of Michigan Professor Jeff Liker, who spent a lot of time studying Japan, learning ... or in Japan and the US learning from Toyota.

There's 14 principles of the Toyota Way. Principle number one says basically, I might be paraphrasing ... make decisions based on the long term even at the expense of the short term. So I think to your car buying analogy, you could buy a car that's cheaper off the lot but it's going to kill you in maintenance costs.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah, down the road.

Mark Graban: So even though you've got to ... and sometimes in business you have to look at cash flow. But ideally we're making decisions that are a little bit more long term focused and you know there are plenty of ways to get cheap that hurt quality. It's really hard getting approved quality. I mean sure you can use more expensive components but a lot of ways of improving quality lead to lower costs. Reducing scrap and rework. Not delivering the wrong thing to the wrong place, not building the wrong thing in the wrong place.

Dominic Rubino: Yeah.

Mark Graban: You know those are all things that add cost and ... We have a better process and you eliminate those defects. You might reduce costs and then maybe you can
upgrade some of the components and become a better value provider to your customer.

Dominic Rubino: You know, we use a formula for reinventing a business from the inside. Reinventing it from within. It's like building an airplane when you're flying it. You're hammering in ... your leaning out the window and you’re hammering in these rivets and you're removing these and you're doing it while your flying it. That's what business coaching is. There's formulas for that, no surprise. Some of those formulas ... parts of those formulas are what to do and what to ignore. Where to look for what you need to change and what ... what I found again and again in my 18 plus years in this is that my clients always think it's the expensive stuff that's going to have the impact and it's actually the cheap stuff. Better communication or having effective meetings. People right now are rolling their eyes ... please if your driving but keep your eyes on the road ... "awe Dom I don't want to do more meetings". Okay but if you have better, more effective meetings, and you communicate better with your team, your expectations waste goes down, quality goes up. There's a real core... you know you could draw a direct line between those things.

Mark Graban: Exactly. And that investment of time and planning, communication, problem solving ...

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Mark Graban: And Planning, communication, problem solving, building teamwork. You would hope that's an investment that pays off. We had four people in the room for 15 minutes. They developed a solution that's going to save each of those four people five minutes a day, you do the math, I'm like, that time paid for itself in a week. And over enough time it becomes an almost infinite ROY. And then there's the challenge of, I think a question of, what do you do if business is a little bit slow?

Toyota and Honda and some other companies when they have a slow period, whether it's a couple of days till the end of the shift days, weeks, months like, back 10 years ago during the financial meltdown. Toyota and companies like that will continue paying their workers to come in and do training, quality improvement. Toyota at times has even paid employees to go build houses for habitat for humanity. Well, why would you do that, while you’re developing teamwork and leadership skills?

You're investing in the community. Think of the loyalty that they're creating amongst their customers, and the good will that they get in the community. I would look at it and say, they're not necessarily being charitable. I think they're making longterm decisions that thankfully they can afford to make.
Where if you look at companies like GM, or even recently Tesla is operating this way. Or a lot of hospitals, they look at their employees as a cost and say, no, we’re going to send you home, you don’t get paid. And whether that’s Assembly workers or nurses, that’s really disheartening, and you’re just throwing away this resource. The people and the time ...

Dominic Rubino: That's very expensive to train and find.

Mark Graban: Yes. So increasing morale, especially in healthcare, helps reduce turnover, which is a huge cost saver to an organization as well. It's often said, it costs almost $100,000 to hire and replace a nurse. So if a hospital can improve the workplace environment and reduce nurse turnover from 25% down, cut it in half to 12.5%, that's millions of dollars a year.

Dominic Rubino: So Mark [inaudible 00:26:15] That's an interesting number. If it costs $100,000 to find and train and replaced a nurse, what is that acts as part of a nurse's salary is? That's 75% of a nurse's salary. Is that 1.25% of their salary?

Mark Graban: It depends on the type of nursing. It's probably roughly on par with their salary and benefits.

Dominic Rubino: So it's one to one?

Mark Graban: Thereabouts I'd say.

Dominic Rubino: So, and the reason I asked that question is because, we are doing comparisons today that I want our listeners to think about. If you're paying a guy right now, 60 grand, and you're thinking about laying them off because times are slow and you haven't made some deals.

I get it from a cash flow perspective, and it might make all the sense in the world. Let's assume that we all understand that, but what you're saying is, well, that you've seen in other industries is that it's going to cost me 60 grand if I lose that guy by laying them off, to replace them and bring them up to speed.

Mark Graban: It could. Right, it very well could. So, you can look and say, well, I'm going to pay $10,000 in the short term for a work that's, "Not productive," but you could consider that if you have the cash position to do so, consider that an investment in that individual, and therefore in your company. So Tesla right now there are people that say, Tesla is burning cash. There's a situation where you're thinking about making sure you don’t run out of cash.

But 2011 there was the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan and some other locations. There was one auto supplier in Japan that was hit hard, knocked offline, and the supplier made, I forget if it was parts or paint solvent, something
that was used by different automakers. So in that same timeframe, and I blogged about this, you’d see the side by side headlines of Toyota paying their people to come to work even though they weren't building cars, to invest in them.

General Motors had the almost exact same amount of money in the bank. GM said, "No, we’re going to put people on short term layoff." So to me that says, it's not the GM couldn't afford it, it was just more of the mindset that even at that point GM wasn't valuing and respecting their employees, the same way Toyota was not. Toyota is not perfect. I’m not trying to paint too rosy of a picture, but I think there is a really compelling difference in those decisions at that same point in time.

Dominic Rubino: And all of these are decisions based on knowing your numbers, which is, I'll come back to why you're on here. So I found you through your blog, the Lean Blog. It looks like behind you you've got your logo there, but it's leanblog. ... what's your link?

Mark Graban: leanblog.org.

Dominic Rubino: leanblog.org. So for people that do want to find out more about you, how do they get more Mark? How do they find out more about Lean?

Mark Graban: So at one place hopefully would be interesting to people is, leanblog.org. I of course have a blog. I do podcasts, about 30 podcasts a year or so. I've interviewed Paul Akers a couple of times, which has always energizing. I interviewed people from a healthcare and manufacturing and all sorts of different industries. So that's one of the places. Then I also have a website, markgraban.com, which describes some of the speaking, and consulting, and writing, and things that I do.

Dominic Rubino: Now, don't be shy. I understand you have a book coming out.

Mark Graban: I do. I've written a couple of books that have been published about lean and Kaizen in healthcare. The books are called, Lean hospitals, healthcare Kaizen, not real creative. I am working on a book that's more about this question of metrics, and how do you manage your metrics?

Dominic Rubino: [inaudible 00:30:03]

Mark Graban: I'm sorry.

Dominic Rubino: No Way. So you're reading a book now on metrics?
Mark Graban: Yes. And right now it's an E-book, but I've got, here's what the cover I think will look like. The book is called, Measures of success. So it's a little bit more creative of a title. And the subtitle is react less, lead better, improve more, and the roller coaster there I'll show that, that kind of represents more of what it feels like right now.

We're on this roller coaster of metrics go up, metrics go down, we overreact, we investigate, we're chasing our tail sometimes. So we'd like to get off the rollercoaster, and kind of quit wasting time investigating situations where it's again to use the term noise in the system, and to kind of focus our time as leaders and problem solvers.

Dominic Rubino: Well thank you for writing it. Those are valuable. I like reading your blog because I like getting outside perspectives. It challenges my mind to think about, how can I apply this to something else.

Mark Graban: I tried to put myself in that same situation where I'm running across people from different industries, different professions because it's easy to get trapped in, kind of, the conventional wisdom of an industry. And I think it's great for anyone that reaches out and learns from somebody different.

Dominic Rubino: Well, you had a Dilbert cartoon. In the last one that I read, which is a couple of weeks ago, in a shredder.

Mark Graban: Well, it's funny that, that cartoon came out about two weeks after it was the Sunday Dilbert strip. And I had done an April fool's post for a company I'm involved in, a different logo over my shoulder KaiNexus, which is a software company, and it's software to help support an organization's improvement work.

And so, I did a blog post in April fool's joke about, we've now developed a box, and you put your suggestion into the box, and the box scans what's on the paper, and then it also shreds it, and communicates to a server. But I'm in the Dilbert cartoon, Dilbert says, "All right, we've designed the box, the scanner and the shredder work, but the connectivity doesn't work or whatever," and the boss said like, "We don't have time to fix that. You need to just ship the product now." So basically all it was, was a shredder.

Dominic Rubino: Was a shredder for the employee suggestion box.

Mark Graban: So I'm kind of on a same, a similar wave length there with Scott Adams.

Dominic Rubino: Well, see that's why I read blogs from outside this industry so that I get those inspiration. Reminder to read Dilbert, that's what I got. Well mark, thank you so much for joining us today.
Mark Graban: Thank you, Dom.

Dominic Rubino: It's been great, and hopefully our listeners and viewers are getting the info they need to just, if it my take away from you today is, find that thing that to change. And then my other takeaway from you today is, look for the numbers that indicate the health of something else. They're always there.

Mark Graban: Well, maybe kind of final point. There is a common expression, there's different versions of it. If you can't measure something, you can't manage it. So a lot of times people focus on the measures. This book explores more of the, okay, well how do we manage those metrics? How do we look at them, how do we best focus and drive improvement, so that we're not just measuring, we're actually managing and leading and improvement.

Dominic Rubino: Amazing. It's good. There's lots of info out there for us to use, it's just, we have to find the time to do it. It's so much good info. All right Mark, well thank you so much for joining us here, and maybe we'll have you back one day on the Cabinet Maker Profit System when you are dealing with cabinetry and hospitals, and how they are buying all their cabinetry because our guys are very interested in knowing how to get more hospital gigs.

Mark Graban: All right. We'll talk about that.

Dominic Rubino: I'll just strung that one together there but. All right, thank you very much. Have a great day. We'll talk to you again soon.

Mark Graban: All right. Thanks.

Dominic Rubino: Hi everybody. Thank you very much for listening in with that interview with Mark Graban. He's a hospital process improvement guy, and I think that's what we need to here. We need to hear from industries that are doing their best to get better, work smarter and faster, and see where we can learn things to apply to our industry, and really that's what Cabinet Maker Profit System is about. It's not about teaching you how to be more of a cabinet guy. That's what other people are learning.

Here we're learning to be better business people, and so I hope you found that in today's podcast, and you found it interesting, and found places where you can make improvements and changes. So thanks very much for listening. Look forward to having you on here again on our next episode. Thanks. Today's podcast is brought to you by answerswanted.com. Answers wanted as a service for businesses who know they want to get the right kind of content, in front of the right kind of viewers.
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