



Annual Report 2021

2021 a year of changes

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Introduction

'May you live in interesting times' – says the Chinese proverb, which must be treated rather as a threat. All signs in the sky and on earth show that we have now been living in the 'most interesting times' of the previous 70 years. We are the ones to cope with new challenges and face the unprecedented limitation of freedom in running production, commercial or service activities.

On the other hand, the breakthrough times, which are called 'new normality' by some, bring about a unique chance of development for all those who will be able to adjust. New products, the originating market niches, parabolically growing demand for some services – all that is happening just in front of our eyes.

Creating the Action Plan we are fully aware of the necessity of continuous development and introduction of new, revolutionary functions. Therefore, within the last two years the Action Plan application has been significantly developed, and some of its modules have changed beyond recognition. Thanks to that, we not only follow the omnipresent changes but sometimes go ahead of them.

I wish to present to you the Action Plan report for 2021. Have a good lecture and please share your thoughts with us.

We all remain at your disposal. You can contact me and the whole Ruby Logic team through electronic mail at: info@rubylogic.pl.

Yours faithfully,

Aleksander Niemczyk, CEO Ruby Logic

2021 a year of changes

2020 was a year in which a majority of companies, including software developers, were first clearly informed that the stable and quiet times ended, and the current year has just assured all that we are the witnesses of breakthrough events.

It has been the same at Action Plan. After a few years of stable and peaceful development of functionalities there came a time for changes, some of which may even be called revolutionary. A major part of the Ruby Logic team have now been engaged in the system development, and works cover all aspects of software programming, e.g.:

- market demand analysis;
- designing new functionalities;
- programming works;

- testing and optimisation;
- implementation and configuration works;
- customer feedback analysis.

The effects of these works are highly measurable and perceivable to the Action Plan system users, regardless of the position occupied or role fulfilled.

Mobile Action Plan

The beginnings of the mobile Pulse application reach 2020, when it appeared that communication with the employees staying on forced leaves due to downtimes was considerably hindered.

We and our customers have, however, quickly noticed the great potential of an application available for every employee, regardless of the place they are staying in. Action Plan Pulse is now an application through which the employees may report an innovative ideas or carry out an audit, among other things.

Also for smaller organisations

We have so far focused on serving larger organisations with at least 100 managerial staff, i.e. the potential users of Action Plan.

In 2021 we have started reaching smaller organisations in which sometimes 5 people deal with coordinating action plans. It was possible thanks to acceleration of the onboarding process and optimisation of resources.

Resources optimisation

The greatest, most complicated and highly challenging change occurred in the optimisation of resources used by the system. Interestingly, it has been completely unnoticed by the users, but absolutely necessary to maintain the subscription costs on similar level, with constantly growing prices of services and leasing of resources.

We are talking about implementing the so called multi-tenancy facility, which is the possibility of co-using one application by many clients, with maintenance of the highest standards of confidentiality and data security. ■



Pulse moved Action Plan to a new level

Still two years ago no production plant nor any other company imagined remote work to at such a great scale as now. There were many obstacles, particularly those related to security policy and absence of adequate technologies. And suddenly, as if by magic, everything proved to be possible and allowed.

Managers deal with a company on hybrid basis, working 3 days at home and 2 days at the headquarters, daily meetings stopped to be a problem even for people with limited technical skills, and sending key company data by mail is treated as a security exception.

The corporate world has changed. Also Action Plan also had to change, and Pulse enabled the implementation of the changes in an instant.

Pulse is available for iOS and Android



One of the major reasons for the high popularity of the mobile Pulse application is that it may be downloaded both to iPhones and smartphones with Android operating system. Thus, the application distribution takes place directly, outside of complicated corporate procedures.

Thanks to applying authorisation and user blocking mechanisms, a company has full control over who and when accesses the particular resources.

Many useful functionalities

As regards the range of the offered functionalities, Pulse is a completely different application in 2021 than a year ago. The original application used for one-way informing the employees about the situation at the company now provides a series of new functionalities:

- the employees may report their innovative Quick Kaizen ideas through it, attaching photographic documentation;
- auditors may comfortably carry out audits and document irregularities by attaching photos;
- all action plan users may react to their assigned tasks by changing the task progress and accepting or rejecting its result.

Continuous development of the application

The possibilities of development of the mobile Pulse application are practically unlimited. Every week we arrive at new ideas improving the application use.

The newest functionality is the possibility of user self-registration, which significantly accelerates the adoption of new clients and implementation of new employees. This refers both to new clients and employees whose organisation has already subscribed for Action Plan. ■

Layered Process Audit – a modern tool to manage quality at a company

Layered Process Audits (LPAs) represent a significant element of improving the quality management system at a company. Effective organisation management, apart from planning and monitoring of the particular processes, requires accurate and effective verification of sources or the occurring non-compliances and implementing adequate remedial actions. The characteristic feature of an LPA is that employees at all levels of the company hierarchy are responsible for carrying out audits.

What exactly do layered audits mean and why are they implemented by the most profitable companies in the world?



What are layered process audits?

Internal audit (including 5S, LPA or TPM) is a set of simple and effective methods which contribute to establishing and maintaining high production quality. It is related to verification of compliance of the operating standards, staff competence and operation of the company as a whole.

LPAs have been developed for checking the compliance of a production processes with the standards and strictly determined specifications, as well as implementation of changes or corrective actions in case of detecting non-compliance.

They are mainly applied in controlling manufacturing processes in many sectors around the world. Outside of industry, they are applied less frequently.

Layered audits also comprise the following activities:

- determination of audit levels and their schedules;
- identification of all high-risk elements;
- checklist supporting the assessment of the current processes in compliance with the standards binding at an organisation;
- determination of remedial and corrective measures;
- systematic reviews of the audit results by the authorised persons.

Everyone is an auditor

Unlike in other types of audits, LPAs are not carried out by specialists of only one group.

Nearly everyone, regardless of their place in the organisation's hierarchy, becomes an auditor. A production operator fulfils the same functions within an LPA as the plant manager. Thanks to that, every employee of the company is aware of the level of quality of the products manufactured. Yet, it must be remembered that the frequency of carrying audits by production staff is definitely higher than in the case of a Management Board member or even a Department Manager.

The first LPA layer is checking the quality of semi-products and correctness of the whole process by a production employee.

At another step a supervisor verifies the key process stages and forwards feedback on the process compliance. If needed, remedial actions are introduced.

Identical control is carried out by the employees of further levels within the hierarchy of an organisation management. In that way everyone is an auditor within the meaning of the layered process audits.





Corrective and remedial actions

Identically as in the case of classical quality audits, within an LPA a plan of reaction to the non-compliance detected must be determined and prepared. Non-compliance must be properly documented and documents must generally be accessible as a direct point of reference for further audits.

Any non-compliance detected during an LPA must be remedied within a strictly determined remedial or corrective actions. The actions planned for easily foreseeable non-compliance are sometimes prepared even before the planned audit and are based on prior experience of the organisation.

Advantages for the company

The main advantages of implementing LPAs include but are not limited to:

- more effective standardisation of processes within an organisation;
- updating of the particular process stages;
- higher safety level on workstations;
- ensuring interaction between the managers and production operators;
- direct feedback from the operators ensuring the possibility of immediate implementation of corrective actions;
- error elimination;
- reduction of the quantity of waste;
- product quality improvement;
- higher customer satisfaction.

LPA applications

A layered audit is a very effective tool in the process of quality, productivity and safety improvement. Therefore, it has been broadly applied at production plants, particularly at the automotive sector. Layered audit implementation is required, for example, at the suppliers of such international giants as Chrysler General Motors.

LPAs are perfect to be applied both at corporations and at small family companies. Successful implementation guarantees a significant reduction of the number of complaints by effectively preventing of identical problems recurring in the future. It also enables quick identification of areas requiring improvement, and detecting points which generate production waste. In LPA implementation it is of key importance to fully

engage the employees at various levels of the organisation. Thanks to that, the achievement of the TQM principles is more effective. Layered audit may also be a perfect tool to improve the processes of the integrated safety, quality and environmental systems. It may also act as a signpost towards the improvement of production effectiveness, ergonomics of manufacturing processes but also minimising the number of errors.

A properly carried out layered audit, preceded by employee instruction and training, is a perfect tool for efficient management, which indirectly contributes to the improvement of results of the whole company. ■

Action Plan in figures



Quick Kaizen as a road to company innovativeness

Kaizen is one of the modern management concepts. In Japanese it means continual improvement of the work performed and refers both to the company management and regular employees. A master and guru of the trend is deemed to be Masaaki Imai, who published a book on the subject in 1986, which immediately gained the status of a bestseller.

Changes introduced in accordance with the Kaizen philosophy occur slowly, but the very process brings measurable results within a longer perspective. For a system based on Kaizen the most characteristic is the emphasis on the process. Such approach requires much effort from the managers in order to improve

the particular processes within the organisation. At the same time, thanks to Kaizen, a new work discipline is being developed, better time management, and also team-working skills and capabilities are developed.

Following the assumption of the Kaizen philosophy, the Japanese Toyota achieved an international success with its production system, which has been continuing on a daily basis.

Kaizen at a company

The methodology proposed by Masaaki Imai is to engage all employees in the improvement process. Every employee shall continually analyse the activities performed, control the principles of conduct as well as the methods and standards of the work performed. In that manner errors and irregularities within the company operation may be found and eliminated.

Kaizen actions may be carried out in many different ways.

The first action is a change in the relevant process such as to make it more efficient and safe. Another one is focused on process quality.

Process Kaizen

It is a method applied to draw the employees' attention to the importance of minor improvements. In that model the employees search for small solutions which may be implemented in the shortest possible time. This works contrary to the classical models of work effectiveness improvement, which usually set out much longer periods between a concept and the final project performance.

Flow Kaizen

It deals with continuous flow of materials and information. Frequently, it is identified with the comprehensive reorganisation of the production area, or even the whole company. Flow Kaizen also means remodelling and improvement of workstations as well as betterment of the methods of performing duties by the employees. ➡

Kaizen implementation

Kaizen is strongly related to another management method also developed in Japan in the 1950s. That is the so called Deming Cycle (also known as PDCA), covering four areas of action considered to be the pillars of the Kaizen philosophy:

1. Plan – create an action plan which will make the process performance more efficient;
2. Do – execute the plan;
3. Check – identify the potential problems and wastage, check all phases of the optimised process;
4. Act – or Adjust – implement corrective actions in order to remedy the irregularities found at the preceding stage.

The Deming Cycle should be applied in a continuous manner. It is possible only as a result of a gradual – which means slow – adding of improvements focused on comprehensive optimisation of production processes and reasonable use of the organisation's resources.



Quick Kaizen – tools supporting the innovation policy

Is it worth to have a continuous improvement department at an organisation? Definitely a better solution is to make the whole company one huge innovation department, every day.

We already know that it is a completely realistic strategy of development of any company, enabling the engagement of the employees to report improvement ideas. For that purpose tools such as Quick Kaizen are applied, which will prove to be effective where there is a need for simple changes.

For that purpose interactive problem management systems may be used, as well as gradual knowledge base created and new ideas generated.

In that way, the company gains high quality information exchange among the employees of various levels. Training processes accelerate and creativity is raised among the employees, which is further translated into fast problem solving.

It is, therefore, worth rejecting the hardly effective methods of creativity management, lists of ideas in Excel type spreadsheets or paper forms. Using the web and mobile engineering solutions, the exchange

of information regarding key process elements may be accelerated by following it online, which includes:

- reporting the perceived problems;
- proposing new solutions (innovativeness ranking);
- promoting good practices (reward catalogue);
- documenting the particular process events;
- recording information crucial for further development;
- building a solid knowledge base;
- rewarding good ideas through a bonus system;
- improving information flow.

Thanks to that every employee engaged in the changes may follow the problems reported by others and perceive their potential solutions. ➡



Summary

Kaizen, as a tool of 'small steps', systematically and gradually leads to changes which are to ensure long-term effect within a specific time horizon. The results are rarely visible at once, but when every employee has introduced a dozen or more seemingly minor improvements a year, the effect is marked and perceptible.

For a majority of western companies and organisation, a methodology based on the Kaizen philosophy means first of all a change of the whole corporate culture. This is a key to success.

Roadmap for 2022

	Action Plan	Action Plan Pulse	General
Q1 '22	New refreshed look of the audit modules	Enabled full service of activities from a phone	New refreshed plandzialan.pl site and obtaining of a global domain
Q2 '22	New 'Maintenance' module Additional functions in the action plan view	New 'Maintenance' module	Promotional campaign and extension of customer base in Europe
Q3 '22	New action plan views: Gantt Chart and Flow Chart	Enabled full service of action plans from a phone	Promotional campaign and opening to customers from south-eastern Asia
Q3 '22	New 'KPI Tracker' module	New 'KPI Tracker' module	Introduction of further three languages



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<https://oeetools.com>

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Production

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