

*Discoveries are often made by not following instructions,
by going off the main road, by trying the untried.*

—Frank Tyger

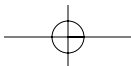
1. "I" Power

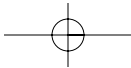
The Perpetual Improvement Machine

So-called “scientific management”—which encourages increasing specialization of labor on the factory floor, in research and in management—has continued to dominate American business practices long after its limitations became apparent.

Why is its grip so strong? For one thing, it works—in a rigid and limited way. And it is appealing because it imposes at least the appearance of order on complex operations. Scientific management emphasizes setting standards, then demands techniques for financial and management control to enforce those standards.

But the long-term consequences can be bitter, as many American companies have now discovered. Instead of providing the means for consistent improvement, scientific management encourages one management fad after another, each promising to shock the company into higher performance. It has led to dangerous arrogance about American innovative genius and its ability to keep the





nation's companies competitively strong. And it tempts managers into short-term thinking and into devising short-term incentives.

For the most successful Japanese companies, there is only one system: *Kaizen*—continuous improvement. Not a day goes by without meaningful improvement in companies that use Kaizen. They have to use it in order to stay competitive and remain valued suppliers of goods and services.

Contrast: When, as is true of many US companies, the emphasis is on setting standards and establishing controls, all the energy and drive in a company is assumed to flow downward—from management—chiefly in the form of “big ideas”—more often as *this year's big idea*.

But the day-in-day-out process of Kaizen—of continuous improvement—requires successful implementation of *a series of ideas*—large, small and also those in between. And that involves every person in the company—at every level—in thinking about the process of work and suggesting and implementing improvements.

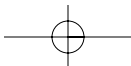
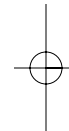
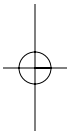
The techniques for continuous improvement started in America in the 1920s. How did such a simple, powerful idea get lost in America? Does it still make sense for American business? Can continuous improvement be implemented in US companies?

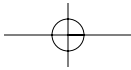
Yes! And the sooner your company adopts it, the better off it will be.

This book explains the simple way in which we successfully created such a system at Boardroom. We actually reinvented the system—and only after putting it together did we recognize that it was essentially the Kaizen system.

We call it “I” Power.

Any company—large or small—can use it. Any department, group or individual in any company can use it.





- As an individual, you can use "I" Power to make any job more productive—and more creative and interesting.

- As a first-level manager, you can use "I" Power to noticeably improve the performance of a working group.

- As a company, you can use "I" Power to sharpen your competitive edge and assure it the flexibility it needs to survive in today's business world.

Continuous improvement works for nonprofit organizations—large and small—and even for families. Individuals can use the system to improve their own business and/or personal expectations.

Back in the beginning of developing a new management system at Boardroom, we had arrived at a method, but we didn't have a name for it. We ran a company-wide contest—a way of finding a name that was, as you shall see, the essence of "I" Power itself.

As the suggestions came pouring in, many of the names began with the letter "i." Words like "ideas," "innovation," "improvement," "incentive," "ingenuity," "individual," "inspiration."

The "I" in "I" Power stands for that long list. But more important, it stands for that very simple pronoun that is the source of all that power: "I."

Two ways to make "I" Power work for you

- *Give up the illusion of scientific management that all good ideas for improving company performance flow from the top.*

- *Recognize that change for the better is more important than conforming to standards.*

