

Toyota Way 4P Maturity Checklist

A quick assessment of where your organisation sits today: Level 1 (Command & Control), Level 2 (Lean Tools), or Level 3 (Toyota Way Vision)

Based on the 4P Model (Philosophy, Process, People, and Problem Solving), this checklist helps you gauge Lean maturity across the core elements of the Toyota Way. For each principle, choose the level that best describes your current reality on the ground.

I. PHILOSOPHY

Principle	Level 1: Command & Control	Level 2: Lean Tools Approach	Level 3: Toyota Way Vision
1. Long-Term Thinking	Focus is on short-term performance.	Payback horizons are lengthened.	Focus on long-term, holistic impact on society and stakeholders.

II. PROCESS

Principle	Level 1: Command & Control	Level 2: Lean Tools Approach	Level 3: Toyota Way Vision
2. Continuous Flow	Focus is on individual processes.	Processes are connected.	Coupling is tightened through kaizen.
3. Pull Systems	Scheduled push systems are used.	Visual or electronic kanban is used.	Buffers are used and shrink through kaizen.
4. Leveling (Heijunka)	Erratic ups and downs in production.	Leveling methods are applied.	Continual reduction of unevenness (mura) and overburden.
5. Standardized Work	Imposed by staff specialists.	Staff responsible for standards with some input.	Owned by work groups to support continuous improvement.
6. Build-in Quality	Problems are found and fixed later.	Quality techniques are applied.	Designed-in quality and in-station control.
7. Visual Control	Performance is hidden from view.	5S and visual management are present.	Visual standards are integrated into the work process.
8. Technology Use	Latest technology is pushed.	Right-sized technology supports flow.	Simple, slim, and flexible technology supports kaizen.

III. PEOPLE

Principle	Level 1: Command & Control	Level 2: Lean Tools Approach	Level 3: Toyota Way Vision
9. Develop Leaders	Fast-track training models.	Leader standardized work is used.	Leaders act as coaches to develop others.
10. Develop Teams	Workers learn jobs on their own.	Lean short courses and practice are used.	Semiautonomous teams of highly developed people.
11. Partner Network	Adversarial, cost-reduction focus.	Long-term relationships with key partners.	Focus on cross-enterprise learning.

IV. PROBLEM SOLVING

Principle	Level 1: Command & Control	Level 2: Lean Tools Approach	Level 3: Toyota Way Vision
12. Deep Observation	Plan solutions, implement, and confirm.	Standard problem-solving methodology.	A mindset of scientific thinking is developed.
13. Aligned Goals	Top-down targets with delegated execution.	Top-driven hoshin kanri tools.	Collaborative planning and reflection at all levels.
14. Bold Strategy	Strategy is divorced from execution.	Strategy is connected to lean processes.	Long-term strategy with appropriate flexibility.

How to Use This Checklist

1. Conduct a gemba walk: Walk the actual material and information flows to gather current-state information.
2. Evaluate each principle: Rank your current status for each of the 14 principles from Level 1 to Level 3.
3. Identify gaps: Lean tools often fail when organisations go mile wide with tool deployment (Level 2) without going mile deep on capability and philosophy (Level 3).
4. Create a value stream plan: Use the gaps to break implementation into steps, often starting with the pacemaker loop.

Analogy for Understanding

Think of this checklist as a medical check-up for your business. A Level 1 organisation is treating symptoms as they appear (fixing problems after they happen). A Level 2 organisation is taking vitamins (using tools like 5S or kanban) to improve general health. A Level 3 organisation has transformed its lifestyle (Philosophy and People). It does not just use tools; it has built a system that detects and repairs issues through daily scientific thinking.

Tip: Score each principle, then look for patterns across the 4Ps. The goal is not a perfect score, but a clear next step.