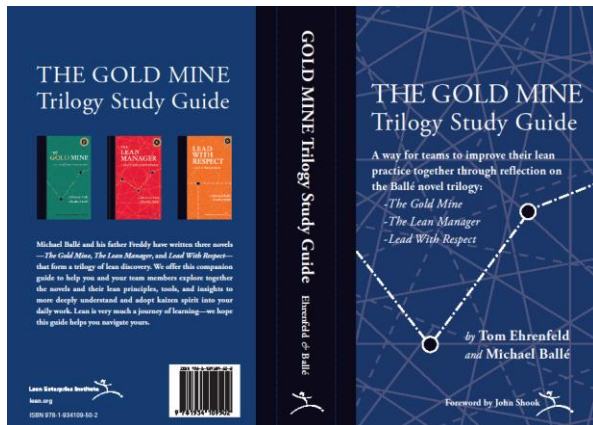


How to Use the “Trilogy” to Support Your Lean Journey



Published by the nonprofit Lean Enterprise Institute (LEI), *The Gold Mine Trilogy Study Guide* is a personal lean management coach for you and your team. It's written and designed to support, challenge, and facilitate as you put into practice the lessons in the [award-winning set](#) of *Lead With Respect*, *The Gold Mine*, and *The Lean Manager*. Co-authors Michael Ballé and Tom Ehrenfeld explain how:

Q: Michael, congratulations to you and your father, Freddy, your co-author, for recently winning the Shingo Research and Professional Publication Award for *Lead With Respect*. That's a clean sweep for your trilogy of lean management novels. *The Gold Mine* won in 2006, *The Lean Manager* in 2010. Your publisher calls this set of related books a trilogy. How would you describe them and how do they fit together?

Michael Ballé: Thank you very much. My father and I are honored to have received the award three times, and we hope that the recognition encourages business leaders at all levels to learn how to achieve objectives through developing people as problem solvers.

We wrote the three books to highlight different aspects of a lean transformation in a sequence that reflects real-life business challenges. [The Gold Mine](#) is an introduction on how to comprehensively introduce lean management thinking and tools by developing problem awareness and practicing kaizen.

In the next book, [The Lean Manager](#), we follow the characters as they advance beyond implementing tools to creating and sustaining a complete lean management system. But we also see the hazards of trying to transform a company at the expense of respecting and developing everyone.

[Lead With Respect](#) shows you how to avoid the hazards by describing leadership behaviors needed to support and develop lean management as a business system. Lean leadership is not based on personality traits. It's practice-based and can be learned and taught. This third novel also shows you how to develop yourself as a lean leader and then develop others around you. In our fictional but very real company, readers see how this opens new avenues for improvement that turns into game-changing innovation.

Q: You've just come out with the *Gold Mine Trilogy Study Guide*? Why did you write a guide for the trilogy? How did you get the name?

Tom: We have been contacted and work with a number of lean leaders in companies that have used the Ballé books as the basis for study groups over time. When we learned that lean practitioners valued these resources for their internal learning, we decided to respond by creating a guide that would support this work. There's a story, a natural learning path that unfolds over the course of the trilogy. As a matter of fact our working title for this guide was "The Way to Lean." Ultimately we wanted to be very clear with the title that this guide is designed to support the reading of the novels, and the subsequent group learning that can ensue; and is NOT meant to be a standalone resource. So we chose something descriptive.

Q: How should the *Guide* be used and by whom?

Tom: The guide is designed to support group conversations about lean practice. It's not designed to test what you know about lean, but rather to prompt you to test each other's assumptions and ideas.

Because you learn lean through actual practice, the guide shares the "real" experiences of our fictional characters and what they learned through trial and error. Just as they benefit from a coach who challenges and supports them through every new problem, lean tool, and setback, the *Guide* helps you play this coaching role with your teammates and them with you. The material is structured to support a regular cadence for discussions. Each chapter section contains:

- A chapter summary
- Author explanations of the significance of each chapter and how specific tools embody specific lean principles
- Key ideas contained in the chapter
- Reflection questions to guide your conversations

Q: Why did you use a novel format for the trilogy of lean books? Most business and management books are nonfiction.

Michael: There are many very good nonfiction business books on lean management. But change – especially the change in behaviors and work processes required in a lean transformation – also is an emotional and very personal challenge, besides an intellectual one. To capture and weave together the technical and very human elements of lean change, we thought that fiction worked best. We also wanted to write books that were persuasive and compelling as well as instructive and helpful.

Q: Where can we buy the *Gold Mine Trilogy Study Guide*?

Tom: Go to lean.org and click the "Store" tab or just [use this link](#) to learn about the whole set. You can download an excerpt from the *Guide* and the other books in the trilogy.

Editors/Producers/Bloggers: For review copies of *Gold Mine Trilogy Study Guide* or to interview the authors, contact LEI Communications Director Chet Marchwinski cmarchwinski@lean.org or 617-871-2930.

Michael Ballé, PhD, is a lean management practitioner, business columnist, and author. His most recent business novel, co-authored with Freddy Ballé, is [*Lead With Respect: A Novel of Lean Practice*](#), published by the Lean Enterprise Institute. As managing partner of ESG Consultants, Paris, he helps companies and executives adopt lean systems and behaviors. Ballé is associate researcher at Télécom ParisTech's Projet Lean Enterprise and co-founder of the French Lean Institute. He writes the weekly [*Gemba Coach*](#) column answering implementation questions from lean practitioners.

Tom Ehrenfeld is a senior editor at the Lean Enterprise Institute. A former writer/editor with *Inc. Magazine* and *Harvard Business Review*, he is the author of [*The Startup Garden: How Growing A Business Grows You*](#). He works as a consulting editor for LEI and with many other lean authors. Six of his edited books have won the Shingo Research Award.

About the Lean Enterprise Institute

Lean Enterprise Institute Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, makes things better through lean research, education, publishing, and conferences. Guided by a mission to advance lean thinking and practice around the world, LEI also supports other lean initiatives such as the Lean Global Network, the Lean Education Academic Network, and the Healthcare Value Network. Visit LEI at <http://www.lean.org> for more information.