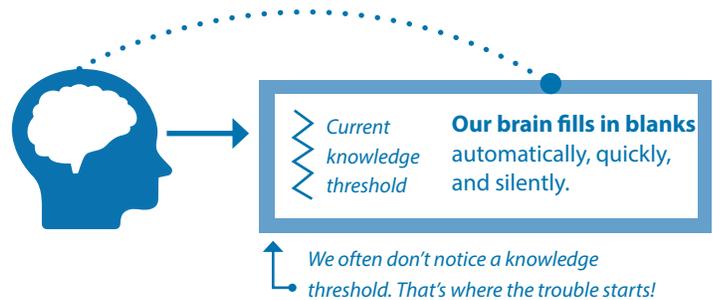


TOYOTA KATA

Developing the Skills to Thrive in Today's Constantly Changing Marketplaces

Change arrives fast these days. Competitors emerge overnight, new technologies alter the business, and labor market conditions are uncertain. How do you ensure continued success in such complex, dynamic, and unpredictable conditions?

The default way people think about problems often involves jumping to conclusions and immediately seeking to solve problems, because the brain does not like uncertainty. The unconscious part of our brain takes bits of surface information, quickly extrapolates to fill in blanks, and gives us a false sense of confidence in our conclusion. And then we start making costly mistakes.



Toyota Kata helps develop creative, scientific-thinking skills.

Employees can use these skills to keep improving, adapting, and generating competitive advantage in a strategically-aligned way.

Toyota Kata is about:



Developing new habits and allowing people to think differently about problems and goals



A way of working, and of working together



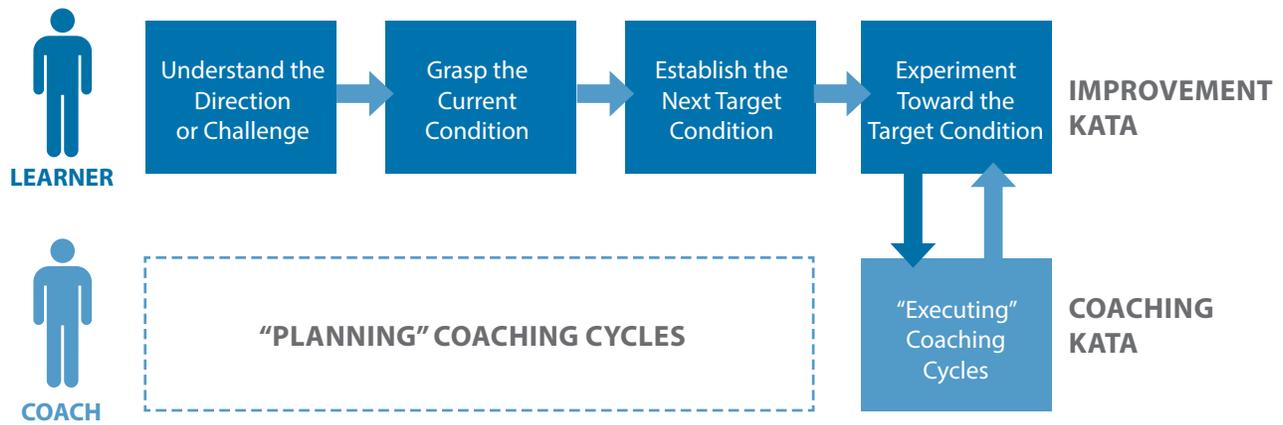
Using scientific thinking as an ingredient to make teams and organizations more effective and successful



Developing a culture of continuous learning and improvement at all levels through deliberate practice

Toyota Kata does not teach problem solving, but rather a mindset that can make people more effective at problem solving – through practicing “Starter Kata.” Starter Kata are small routines or protocols that get practiced deliberately, especially at the beginning, to help people acquire a new skill. Starter Kata increase the speed of learning and are especially helpful when companies want to develop a shared way of thinking and working in a group of people, because everyone starts with practicing the same basics.

There are two main elements within Toyota Kata and each has its own set of Starter Kata - Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata.



The Improvement Kata helps develop fundamental skills of working like a scientist. The learner iterates or experiments his or her way toward a desired goal instead of deciding the way forward. This way of thinking and working helps people successfully deal with uncertainty and challenges.

The Coaching Kata is a repeating routine by which managers teach Improvement Kata to everyone in the company. The teacher or coach gives the learner procedural guidance, not solutions, helping the learner successfully overcome obstacles and develop confidence. Since many managers do not have experience in coaching others to think this way, the Coaching Kata helps managers develop these skills. With Toyota Kata, managers can develop their own coaching skills and their team members’ problem-solving skills simultaneously.

“ When we first started training on the [Toyota] Kata concept, it was a lot of information to take in. This was something completely new to us; it was intimidating. Now a year later, with [Arkansas Economic Development Commission’s] training and the support of Bill Kraus, the Nice Pak team is empowered with the PDCA concept and we try to use with all of our practices. Whether it’s doing Kata, Kaizen events, or opportunities brought from the operators, this is a very valuable asset we have learned and the benefits from it, especially the mindset change, have been extraordinary!

– Tim Hall, Process Trainer, Nice-Pak Products, Inc.

CONTACT US:

Many companies have introduced Lean techniques, but the results often do not sustain. By practicing the Toyota Kata routines and patterns, anyone can become better equipped to navigate ambiguity and reach challenging goals. Contact us to learn more.

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**Graphics inspired by images from the Toyota Kata Practice Guide.*