






**Introduction to Lean Construction**  
**Professor – N Raghavan**  
**Department of Civil Engineering**  
**Indian Institute of Technology – Madras**  
**Introduction of Big Room Approach, Some Requirements for Efficient Working,**  
**Virtual BR Meetings**

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Prof. N Raghavan, FNAE, FICE(UK), FIE(I)  
Department of Civil Engineering  
Indian Institute of Technology Madras







Now we come to another very important, very interesting tool for lean. It is called the big room approach.

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**Session 13 – Big Room Approach**


**Topics to be Covered**

- [S13.01](#): Understand the Introduction of Big Room Approach, Some Requirements for Efficient Working, Virtual Big Room (VBR) Meetings
- [S13.02](#): Understand the Big Room Approach through Case Studies
- [Supplementary Module](#)



Introduction to Lean Construction: Module 1 – Lean Basics – Session 13 – Big Room Approach


BIG ROOM




### S13.01: Introduction of Big Room Approach, Some Requirements for Efficient Working, Virtual Big Room (VBR) Meetings

- Learning objective(s)
  - To Understand the Introduction of Big Room Approach
  - To Understand Some Requirements for Efficient Working
  - To Understand the Virtual Big Room (VBR) Meetings

[Topics to be Covered Slide](#)



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Introduction to Lean Construction: Module 1 – Lean Basics – Session 13 – Big Room Approach

So, here we look at the introduction to the Big Room Approach, something called the virtual big room meetings and then look at some case studies. So, the first part S13.01, we look at the introduction to Big Room Approach, some requirements for efficient working and then look at also the Virtual Big Room Meetings.


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BIG ROOM




### Big Room Approach

- “*obeya*” (Japanese for “big room” or “great room”) is a Lean manufacturing tool, in which a *dedicated room is set aside* for employees to *meet and make decisions* about a specific topic or problem
- Concept *involves multiple stakeholders* working together closely in same (Real/ Virtual) Space, to *solve common problems collaboratively*
- Basic idea is that all information required for closure on any of the pending (pre-decided) issues is available in the *same room from the various stakeholders*. Hence *informed discussions* are possible to *facilitate quick and logical closures* for the Issues
- Facilitates *speedy closures* duly considering all data and allowing all concerned to collaborate
- *A Must for*: LAP & WP for CPS; Lean Design formulations; Quick & Informed Decision making where multiple stakeholders are involved
- *Beware*: Physical distancing requirements in COVID times!












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Japanese term in the buildings, you have something called Obeya, that is the big room or great room where there is a space where the employees can get into it. A dedicated room and then discuss and come to decisions about any important topic or a very particular specific problem. So, from that lean we have developed this Big Room Approach, wherever you have multiple stakeholders, getting them to come to a particular decision on a specific point or a problem, one can always keep using emails or mail, letters or telephone calls and so on.

But then, that involves a lot of going back and forth and convergence takes a lot of time and you also do not get to know the other people properly to agree with them or bring them to your point of view. If you are able to get them to a single space called a big room in the same room for example, then all the people can interact with each other across the room. Share their common viewpoints, discuss, convince the others or get convinced.

And then come to convergence on the issues at hand as quickly as possible very amicably and having considered viewpoints on all the topics involved. So, here basically informed discussions and logical closures are very important. So, that is a basic requirement that people have to be conducive to come to logical conclusions and agree to the other's viewpoints when they are logically correct.

The advantage of course is speedy closures on the various issues. Otherwise, it will be very protracted and then people will still be unhappy that probably their viewpoints have not been duly considered. When you look at the collaborative planning system, the look-ahead planning or weekly planning, the big room interaction is a must. That is always the case, where you have all the stakeholders coming together and deciding upon the look-ahead programs or the weekly programs.

And then when you are looking at the lean design kind of concept where you want to close out where you want to converge on the design formulation, the design basis report for example, you may have civil, mechanical, electrical foundation people and contractual people and so on. So, everyone has to come to the same space, discuss, debate and then come to a conclusion as rapidly as possible.


And everyone should agree to the decisions made in that room because they all had a fair chance of saying what they wanted to say. So, wherever you have multiple stakeholders, is a very good point and today for example, when you have the COVID kind of problem, we need to have proper physical distancing.


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**Some Requirements for Efficient Working**


- All concerned (preferably **multi-disciplinary**) stakeholders to be involved to avoid any deferments due to gaps in information
- They should be in **same space (real or virtual)**
- All to be **empowered** to give data / take decisions
- All to take **Responsibility & Accountability**
- "I will revert shortly" and "phone a friend(!)" **not allowed!**
- Some sort of **Efficiency Measurement Metrics** would be useful to evaluate the **efficiency of the Meeting Process** and to improve further meetings based on such feedback


**BIG ROOM**














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Some of the requirements for efficient use of big room is that, it should be multi-disciplinary, all the concerned people should be there otherwise if some viewpoints are left out again there may be back and forth correspondence which is against the principles of big room convergence. And they should all be in the same space, either in the same physical room or they are all on the virtual meeting where they are able to talk to each other, understand each other and so on.

The people who come for the meeting should all be empowered people; they should not be people who need to refer back to their superiors or other people in their organizations to come to decisions. They should be able to give decisions on the spot and whatever decisions they give, they should be responsible and accountable for what they do. So, that once the decisions are taken in the big room, they are final. They should not have to come back to it again and again and keep revising.

Sometimes they may say, oh, I will have to think about it. I will reverse shortly or I will phone my friend and check it out like that. Those things are not allowed in the common understanding for big room interactions. The basic idea is that, we need to come to a convergence on all the listed agenda points within the span, time span allotted and then the decision should be informed decisions, amicable decisions and logically relevant concluded decisions.

And it will be also good to have some efficiency measurement metrics. We can develop our own criteria for such things. So, how quickly, how effectively we have been able to come to a conclusion or closure on the agenda points what have been listed and how efficient was the

meeting whether everybody was able to express themselves properly and got their points heard duly. That is very important.

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### Big Room Meetings








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### Virtual Big Room (VBR) Meetings

- When it is difficult get all people together physically, Virtual Big Room (VBR) where they can have an **e-Meeting** is useful
- **Usages:**
  - In COVID times VBR is the order of the day
  - For multiple stakeholders in multiple physical locations
  - For large project sites with spread out distances
  - For daily brief get-togethers for status checks & info. Exchanges
- **Advantages:**
  - All viewpoints considered
  - All stakeholders kept in the picture
  - Speedy & informed decision making
- Need to establish Protocols, Coordinator, etc for optimum usage










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There are a number of different ways in which one can do the big room. These are some of the examples and today with the COVID time for example, we go for virtual big room meetings, which are actually e-meetings, online meetings. COVID times or when you have multiple stakeholders somebody sitting in Bombay, somebody is sitting in Chennai, Delhi and so on.

We may go for virtual big room, then large project sites like the Jetty Project, we looked at earlier, where you know people are sitting in different locations. They cannot travel that much and come to the same physical room. So, there again we can use a virtual big room.

Also, you may have daily briefing get-togethers, maybe in the morning or evening. There again the online meetings or virtual big rooms will be very few, very very good, very useful.

The basic idea as in the other physical big room is, you have all the viewpoints considered. All the stakeholders are fully in the picture and then again, we have informed decision making possible and that too again as quickly as possible. But you know the physical big rooms, meetings you can have your own meeting rules which you can adopt on the spot.

But when you have a virtual big room meeting, it is good to have a priory proper protocol for the meeting, a coordinator who will conduct the meeting properly and then agenda points and so on. Then it will be optimum for the required viewpoints. Thank you.

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### Quiz

**BIG ROOM**

1. The Japanese word for "Big Room" is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Kanban
  - b) Muda
  - c) Obeya
  - d) Seiku
2. Which of the following are NOT the requirements for successful functioning of Big Room concept:
  - a) All concerned should be in the same real or virtual space
  - b) All participants must be fully empowered
  - c) No one should speak in a loud voice
  - d) Constraint Analysis
  - e) All participants should have Accountability and Responsibility
3. Name three advantages of Big Room meetings  
All viewpoints considered, All stakeholders kept in the picture, Speedy & informed decision making