



Wayne A. Minkler

Senior Continuous Improvement & Operations Leader



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Executive Assessment

Wayne Minkler brings an uncommon combination of manufacturing experience, Toyota Production System knowledge, Continuous Improvement leadership, and military operational leadership. His career has been built around improving the way organizations operate not simply introducing individual Lean tools, but developing the systems, leadership discipline, problem solving habits, and accountability needed to sustain improvement.

His nearly two decades with Toyota Motor Manufacturing provide the foundation of his professional identity. That experience, combined with his later work in Continuous Improvement, Operations, training, and military leadership, gives him a practical understanding of how process improvement works on the manufacturing floor and how leadership behavior affects whether those improvements last.

The Goodyear opportunity is a logical next step because it could allow Wayne to take that experience beyond individual production responsibilities and apply it at a broader Continuous Improvement leadership level.

STRENGTHS

1. Deep, Practical Toyota Production System Experience

Wayne's strongest differentiator is his extensive experience with the Toyota Production System.

His 18 years with Toyota Motor Manufacturing exposed him to the principles and practices that underpin Toyota's approach to manufacturing, including standardized work, Kaizen, problem solving, KPI management, process improvement, and daily operational discipline.

This is important because there is a significant difference between understanding TPS as a methodology and having spent years working within an organization where those principles are part of the operating culture.

Strategic value: This gives Wayne a practical perspective that can be difficult to develop through classroom training or certification alone.

2. Strong Connection Between Continuous Improvement and Daily Operations

Wayne's experience goes beyond improvement projects. His background covers production, operations, safety, quality, productivity, cost, logistics, training, leadership development, and operational readiness.

That breadth allows him to look at an operation as a complete system rather than focusing on one isolated problem.

His approach to Continuous Improvement is therefore closely connected to the realities of manufacturing: people, processes, equipment, standards, performance measures, leadership, and execution.

Strategic value: This is particularly relevant to a senior CI position where improvement has to become part of the way the operation is managed every day.

3. Ability to Teach, Coach, and Develop People

Wayne brings an important capability that is sometimes overlooked in Continuous Improvement leadership: the ability to transfer knowledge to others.

His background includes TPS training, instructor responsibilities, coaching and mentoring, leadership development, and military drill-instructor experience.

He understands that an organization cannot become continuously improving simply because one expert knows how to solve problems. The people operating the business have to learn how to identify problems, understand their causes, take action, and sustain the results.

Strategic value: Wayne can potentially build improvement capability throughout an organization rather than becoming the person everyone depends on to solve every problem.

4. Proven Leadership Under Demanding Conditions

His military career adds another layer to his leadership background.

Wayne has operated in environments where accountability, readiness, communication, discipline, planning, and execution were critical. His résumé reflects responsibility involving more than 1,000 personnel, large-scale logistical movements, training, safety, and operational readiness.

That experience complements his manufacturing background.

Strategic value: It demonstrates that his leadership experience is not limited to a production environment. He has also managed people and operations in situations where the consequences of poor planning or execution can be significant.

5. Evidence of Measurable Results

Wayne's résumé contains several measurable accomplishments, including:

- 10–15% improvements in line efficiency
- 90%+ advancement rates in leadership and development activities
- 100% accident-free live-fire and off-road vehicle training
- Large-scale logistical movements involving 300+ vehicles with zero delays
- 100% compliance with specified readiness requirements

These results provide evidence that his experience has translated into operational outcomes.

Strategic value: At the senior level, the ability to connect improvement methods with measurable performance is essential.

WEAKNESSES

1. His Résumé Does Not Yet Fully Reflect the Level of His Experience

Wayne's actual experience is stronger than the way it is currently presented.

The résumé communicates a capable Operations and Continuous Improvement leader, but it does not yet fully present him as someone prepared to influence Continuous Improvement at a broader corporate or enterprise level.

This is an important distinction.

Potential impact: A hiring executive could recognize his manufacturing depth while still wondering how extensively he has operated across a corporate organization.

Recommended response: Reposition the résumé around transformation leadership, organizational capability building, cross-functional influence, measurable results, and operating-system development—not simply individual responsibilities.

2. His TPS Philosophy Needs to Be Communicated Carefully

Wayne has a strong belief that TPS offers something deeper than simply applying individual Lean or Six Sigma tools. That conviction is part of what makes his profile distinctive.

However, there is a difference between having a strong professional philosophy and presenting it in a way that resonates with an organization that may already have established Lean Six Sigma or Operational Excellence systems.

Potential impact: If TPS is presented as a replacement for everything an organization currently does, some stakeholders may become resistant before understanding the value behind the approach.

Recommended response: Position TPS as the management and operating philosophy that makes Continuous Improvement sustainable, while demonstrating that Wayne is comfortable using the appropriate Lean, Six Sigma, problem-solving, KPI, and operational tools when they add value.

3. More Financial and Business Metrics Would Strengthen the Story

The résumé already contains several useful performance metrics, but the executive case would become stronger with additional information about the financial and operational impact of his work.

Where available, metrics such as cost savings, productivity gains, quality improvements, scrap reduction, downtime reduction, throughput, labor efficiency, or the size of improvement portfolios would add further weight.

Potential impact: Without these figures, some of the value created during his career may be difficult for a hiring executive to immediately appreciate.

Recommended response: Identify as many measurable business outcomes as possible and connect them directly to the initiatives Wayne led.

4. His Career Story Needs a Clearer Through-Line

Wayne's experience spans Toyota manufacturing, Continuous Improvement, operations, military leadership, training, and organizational development.

That breadth is an advantage, but the story needs to be simplified.

The strongest narrative is:

Toyota TPS practitioner → Manufacturing and CI leader → Operations leader → Trainer and developer of people → Senior Continuous Improvement leader.

Potential impact: A clear progression will help decision-makers understand how each stage of his career prepared him for the next one.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Move Into Senior-Level Continuous Improvement Leadership

Wayne has stated clearly that his immediate career objective is to move into a Continuous Improvement Director-level position.

The Goodyear opportunity represents a potential step in exactly that direction.

It would allow him to take decades of practical manufacturing and TPS experience and apply it in a role where the focus extends beyond running production to improving how an organization approaches performance, problem solving, leadership, and operational excellence.

Opportunity: Move from primarily executing improvement within operations to influencing the broader Continuous Improvement system.

2. Build and Refine His TPS Implementation Methodology

Wayne has already developed a clear philosophy around how TPS should be introduced into a manufacturing operation. His approach includes assessing the facility, identifying strengths and problem areas, establishing leadership alignment, training employees, developing team leaders and supervisors, connecting improvement activity to KPIs, and addressing organizational issues that could interfere with performance.

A senior CI position could give him an environment in which to continue refining that methodology.

Opportunity: Turn years of practical experience into a repeatable approach for implementing TPS across different manufacturing environments.

3. Differentiate Himself in a Crowded Continuous Improvement Market

There are many professionals with Lean and Six Sigma experience.

Wayne's strongest differentiation is not simply another certification. It is the combination of **long-term Toyota manufacturing experience, practical TPS knowledge, operational leadership, and the ability to train others.**

That combination gives him a distinctive professional position.

Opportunity: Establish himself as a Continuous Improvement leader whose value comes from knowing not only the tools of improvement, but also the management system and leadership behaviors required to sustain them.

4. Develop Organizational Capability Rather Than Individual Projects

Wayne's philosophy naturally lends itself to capability building.

His emphasis on training employees, developing leaders, establishing KPIs, and creating consistent problem-solving practices means he can potentially influence how an organization thinks about improvement at multiple levels.

Opportunity: Help create a culture in which managers and employees are capable of identifying and solving problems themselves.

That is a much larger contribution than simply completing a series of Kaizen events.

5. Build Toward His Long-Term Training and Certification Vision

Wayne's 5–10 year goal is to eventually establish a training and certification program that teaches Continuous Improvement professionals how to implement TPS effectively.

The next stage of his career can play an important role in preparing for that objective.

By working at a senior level, documenting what works, measuring results, refining his methodology, and gaining broader organizational experience, he can eventually turn decades of experience into a structured body of knowledge that can be taught to others.

Opportunity: Build the professional credibility, methodology, and evidence base needed for his future training and certification program.

THREATS

1. Competition From Candidates With Conventional Corporate Credentials

Wayne may compete against candidates whose résumés immediately display extensive Six Sigma credentials, advanced degrees, enterprise transformation titles, or years of recent corporate-level Continuous Improvement experience.

That does not necessarily mean those candidates are stronger. It means their qualifications may be easier for a traditional corporate screening process to recognize quickly.

Potential impact: Wayne's practical experience could be undervalued if his résumé does not clearly communicate its strategic significance.

Mitigation: Lead with the depth of his Toyota experience, measurable results, leadership scope, training capability, and ability to implement improvement systems.

2. Existing Corporate Improvement Systems

Goodyear or another large manufacturer may already have established Continuous Improvement frameworks, processes, terminology, and expectations.

A senior leader entering that environment must understand what already works before deciding what needs to change.

Potential impact: Introducing a new philosophy too aggressively could create unnecessary resistance.

Mitigation: Begin with assessment and understanding. Identify what is already effective, determine where the gaps are, and then introduce TPS principles where they can strengthen the existing system.

3. The Complexity of Influencing Without Direct Authority

At a senior Continuous Improvement level, success often depends on influencing leaders and teams who do not report directly to the CI organization.

Technical knowledge alone is not enough.

The leader must build credibility, communicate with executives, work across functions, manage resistance, and create ownership among operating leaders.

Potential impact: The broader the role, the more important stakeholder management becomes.

Mitigation: Make Wayne's military leadership, cross-functional manufacturing experience, training background, and ability to work with different levels of an organization central to his leadership story.

4. The Changing Manufacturing Environment

Manufacturing continues to evolve through automation, data analytics, digital performance management, advanced technology, and changing workforce expectations.

Traditional TPS knowledge remains valuable, but senior CI leaders must also understand how these developments affect modern operations.

Potential impact: A hiring organization may look for someone who can connect traditional operational excellence principles with modern manufacturing technologies.

Mitigation: Position Wayne's TPS foundation as the operating discipline underneath modern tools and technologies, rather than as something separate from them.

STRATEGIC INTERPRETATION

The most important thing about Wayne's profile is that his strengths reinforce one another.

His Toyota experience gives him the technical and operational foundation.

His Continuous Improvement background gives him the ability to apply that knowledge outside the Toyota environment.

His military career gives him leadership, discipline, planning, accountability, and crisis-management experience.

His instructor and trainer experience gives him the ability to transfer knowledge rather than simply perform the work himself.

Together, those experiences create a profile that is considerably more distinctive than a résumé built around Lean or Six Sigma certifications alone.

The question is therefore not whether Wayne has enough experience.

The more important question is whether his experience is presented at the level at which he is now trying to compete.

THE FOUR KEY STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

Strength + Opportunity

Wayne's deepest opportunity comes from combining his Toyota experience with a senior Continuous Improvement position.

He can take what he learned inside Toyota and apply it in a different organizational environment, which would broaden both his leadership impact and his professional credibility.

Weakness + Opportunity

The gap between his substantial operational experience and the way that experience is currently presented is also an opportunity.

A stronger executive résumé can make the scale, value, and strategic nature of his experience much easier to recognize.

Strength + Threat

His TPS background provides a strong defense against competition from candidates who may have more conventional credentials.

The key is to communicate the difference between **learning Continuous Improvement concepts** and **spending decades applying them in real manufacturing environments**.

Weakness + Threat

The greatest risk would be allowing Wayne to be viewed as an experienced plant-level practitioner rather than as a senior transformation leader.

That risk becomes greater if his TPS philosophy is presented too narrowly or if his résumé does not demonstrate the business impact of his work.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reposition the Professional Story

The résumé should present Wayne first as a **senior Continuous Improvement and Operations transformation leader**, with TPS as his major differentiator.

The objective is to make his leadership scope and strategic value immediately apparent.

2. Strengthen the Evidence

Where the information is available, add more measurable outcomes—particularly cost, productivity, quality, safety, throughput, staffing, and process improvements.

Senior hiring decisions are easier when experience is connected to results.

3. Broaden the TPS Message

Wayne should not have to abandon his belief in TPS.

Instead, the message should become broader:

TPS is not simply a collection of manufacturing tools. It is a management system for creating disciplined problem solving, developing people, improving processes, and sustaining performance.

That message allows him to remain true to his experience while speaking effectively to organizations that use a variety of Continuous Improvement methodologies.

4. Demonstrate Enterprise-Level Leadership

The next résumé and interview strategy should emphasize Wayne's ability to work across functions, develop leaders, influence organizational behavior, establish management systems, and create sustainable improvement—not simply execute individual projects.

5. Use the Next Role as a Platform for the Long-Term Vision

Wayne's long-term goal of developing a TPS training and certification program gives his career direction a clear purpose.

The next senior CI role should therefore be viewed as more than another job. It can become an opportunity to **test, refine, document, and strengthen the methodology he eventually intends to teach to other Continuous Improvement professionals.**

FINAL VERDICT

Overall Assessment: Strong Candidate With a Highly Differentiated Foundation

Wayne is not entering the Continuous Improvement market as someone trying to build credibility from scratch. He already has the foundation of a long career spent working with manufacturing operations, Toyota Production System principles, Continuous Improvement, leadership development, and large-scale operations.

What makes his profile particularly compelling is the combination of experiences.

He has seen Continuous Improvement from the perspective of a Toyota production environment. He has subsequently applied improvement principles outside Toyota. He has led people and operations in the military. He has trained and developed others. And, importantly, he has developed a clear personal philosophy about what it takes to make improvement sustainable.

The Goodyear opportunity appears to fit the **direction of his career**, particularly because Wayne is looking for a senior Continuous Improvement leadership position rather than simply another production-management role.

There are areas that need to be strengthened—especially the way his experience is translated into corporate-level language, the amount of measurable business impact shown on the résumé, and the way his TPS philosophy is communicated.

But those are primarily **positioning issues**, not fundamental capability issues.

The strongest case for Wayne is this:

He understands Continuous Improvement from the inside of a Toyota manufacturing environment, has spent years applying operational improvement principles in other settings, knows how to lead and develop people, and has a clear methodology for turning improvement from a collection of tools into a way of operating.

That gives him a credible platform for the next stage of his career.

If positioned properly, Wayne should not be competing simply as another Lean or Six Sigma professional. He should be competing as an experienced Continuous Improvement and Operations leader with deep TPS expertise and the ability to build the people, management systems, and operating discipline required to make improvement last.

That is the story the résumé needs to tell—and it is a much stronger story than the current résumé is telling.