

Getting your paper published in the *Lean Construction Journal* LCJ Readme & Format Template

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Abstract

Question: What stops papers submitted to the Lean Construction Journal (LCJ) going for review as soon as they are received?

Purpose: The purpose of this note is to help you get your papers ‘right first time’ for the Lean Construction Journal, to demonstrate the way to format documents and to help you use the format to excite our readers with your ideas, your research and your experience so that together we can make a difference in our industry.

Research Method: observation of submissions over first six years of the journal

Findings: this paper documents what stops papers being ready and spells out how to prepare papers so that they are ready for review.

Limitations: it is impossible to anticipate every eventuality and we expect that on occasions you will need to format within the *spirit* of these guidelines rather than sticking to the letter.

Implications: failure to follow these guidelines will delay publication of your paper

Value for authors: this paper will help you get your message across and get your paper accepted for publication more quickly.

Keywords: styles, communication, making a difference

Paper type: Readme and template for Journal authors

Introduction

When, with the support of the Lean Construction Institute, Tariq Abdelhamid and I created the Lean Construction Journal we wanted it to make a difference in our industry. We imagine you would like your paper to do that too. Our aim is to help you get your message across as clearly as possible so that you, and we, can make a difference in the world of design, construction and use of our built environment.

-
- 1 use style *x-footnote* for footnotes and insert a tab to separate note from number - Note: The paper should be A4 size portrait format (210 x 297 mm) with margins set: Top & Bottom: 3 cm; Left & Right: 2.5 cm. almost all the ‘Styles’ you need are already set up in this template - look at the bottom of your styles list.
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use the footnote for author affiliation and contact info (+ qualifications if you wish)



Please read this before you start to format your paper – it has important information that can help you, help your reviewers and help us as Journal editors.

To do that please pay attention to the following as you write:

- Your audience and your customers
- Content
- Styles - *this is x-text*
- Tables
- Figures
- Citations and references
- Use of English

I discuss all of these and more below and conclude with a brief description of the review process so that you know what to expect.

Whatever type of paper you write, one requirement is common to all: it is **easy to read** so that it will be accessible to practitioners and to people who's first language is not English.

Please make your paper a joy to read by getting your ideas across clearly and succinctly with the help of the ideas below.

Keep it simple

Good communication starts with clear ideas. Too many papers I read are not clear, the language is overly complex, and it is difficult to grasp the key idea. What do you want people to know? They are not interested in how many long words or how much jargon you know – they want to know what you have learnt and how you have learnt it.

What you have learnt may be very simple but no less profound for that. How can you tell it simply? I'd much prefer to receive a two-page paper that tells me your story simply and quickly than a ten pager that I have to wade through.

Start with the abstract, then write the paper, then review your abstract.

Your reviewers are your customers

LCJ reviewers are volunteers giving you their time for free. We ask them to help you improve the paper. We want you to make it as easy as possible for them to read and understand. The formatting and the structured abstract is designed to do that.

As with any communication activity, it will help you to think about your audience as you write. Think about your reviewers. At least one will be a practitioner and one a scholar. They may be on the other side of the globe, on the next continent or in a neighboring town. Help them make a picture of your situation and of what you did as well as the results you got. You are their eyes and ears.

Your reviewers are your customers - make it easy for them. If they have to struggle to make sense of your paper they are less likely to recommend that it be accepted.

Content

As it says on the label *The Lean Construction Journal* is a journal concerned with Lean Construction. Please ensure that you make a clear connection between the subject matter of your paper and the emerging field of study known as *Lean Construction*.

It is highly unlikely that we will accept your paper if you make no or only superficial reference to lean or your references ignore the prior work from the global lean or lean construction communities³.

The term “Lean Construction” deserves to be a proper noun because it refers to a specific set of principles and concepts used in practice to reach ideals of generating maximum value and eliminating waste, waste being non-value-added uses of resources, activities that an owner isn’t willing to pay for. While capitalizing “Lean Construction” may remain controversial, it doesn’t matter. What matters is the crux of what the lean philosophy is all about. This is aptly captured by a statement by Greg Howell, “Lean is a new way to see, understand and act in the world.”

Length

Unless noted, including title page and abstract, manuscripts should not normally exceed 10000 words or word equivalents. Longer scripts will be accepted if the material justifies the additional length. [If you think your material justifies more than 10000 words, do discuss an outline of your paper with the editors before you write it.]

Clarity and conciseness of thought is more important than absolute length. However long your paper, make sure it is clear and concise. If you include a lot of unnecessary detail you are asking your reviewers - your customers - to spend more time reviewing it. Please ensure that your reviewers’ time is well spent.

In general, background and methods should be kept to a minimum in the submitted paper. Background and/or method appendices can be sent with your paper if you feel it will help your reviewer decide or if you want to make them available to Journal readers as a separate optional download.

Choosing what sort of ‘paper’ to write

We welcome a number of different types of paper in the journal from practitioners, consultants and scholars:

- **Full Papers** - manuscripts that report archival-worthy basic and/or applied research that provoke new thinking in Lean Construction. Papers are blind-reviewed by at least three peer reviewers. This category is most suited for academics seeking credit for promotion purposes.
- **Technical Notes** - These are manuscripts (usually has fewer than 5000 words or word-equivalents) that report (1) novel/alternative theoretical construct; (2) innovative practical developments; (3) structured investigations into Lean Construction country/region-based, and/or industry-wide implementation opportunities/challenges; (4) preliminary/partial research findings. Notes are

³ see e.g. <http://www.iglc.net>, <http://db.tt/uKSA9dK> and <http://db.tt/0xozjL5>

blind-reviewed by at least three peer reviewers. This category is most suited for academics seeking credit for promotion purposes.

- **Case Studies** - descriptions of the application of Lean Thinking to the construction process and the results obtained. We welcome reports of failure, particularly where the authors also record their learning, as well as success. Case studies are welcome from practitioners as well as academics - taken together they can form the basis for research by others. There is no requirement for case studies to be backed up by extensive references to theory and literature. All we ask is that case studies acknowledge their sources - books or people - and are easy to read. At a minimum, a case study will be reviewed by 2 practitioners and 1 academic.
- **Process Benchmark** - This is a document that summarizes experiences and knowledge gained from scholarly activities: 1) At Lean Construction Institute affiliated university-based research labs; 2) By practitioners and/or academics who are active in the International Group of Lean Construction. This document captures the state of practice and theory to date on a particular topic (the current state of standard work), and serves as advice to industry that is grounded in research. The Process benchmark establishes a point of departure from where we can improve on standard work. This category is reviewed by the LCJ editors only. Updates to a published process benchmark are welcome.
- **Discussions, rejoinders and closures** to previous contributions – We would like this to be kept to 2500 words. We welcome formal and considered comments, rejoinders and/or questions about the technical content of a paper. Authors' responses/closures respond to arguments and clarify issues raised in discussions.
- **Advanced Research**- Manuscripts in this category area usually have fewer than 5000 words or word-equivalents. This category is for established Lean Construction scholars who wish to report on preliminary/partial research findings based on advanced, cutting-edge ideas for reactions and discussions. Advanced Research manuscripts are reviewed by the journal editors, or at their discretion sent to one or two peer reviewers (double-blind process). If blind-reviewed then this category is suited for academics seeking credit for promotion purposes.
- **Forum Essays** - Manuscripts usually have fewer than 5000 words or word-equivalents. This is an excellent category for practitioners or those seeking to learn how to publish. We look for thought-provoking and stimulating opinion pieces on practices in the field, experiences with or historical chronicles of Lean Construction implementations, reflections on Lean Construction principles and tools. Essays may be founded in fact, conjecture, and/or speculations of the author(s). It is not acceptable that author(s) present opinion, conjecture, and/or speculations as statements of fact. For this category, the review process is seeking to make sure the spirit of a forum essay has been met rather than whether the manuscript is a synthesis of a short/long term research-based endeavor and is of archival value. We instruct reviewers to provide an open-ended and personal reaction to the manuscript [a paragraph or two would suffice, pointing out improvements, if any, such as readability, clarity, arguments presented, methods, references, etc]. Forum Essays are reviewed by the journal editors, or at their discretion sent to one or two peer reviewers (blind process).

- **Book reviews** – We welcome review of books relevant to Lean Design and Construction. Preferred limit is 2500 words.

Preparing your paper for LCJ

When you submit your paper please:

- use LCJ format - that includes **styles** - see below
- include a full *structured agenda* - see below
- have each graphic as a single item in-line with the text - see below
- format all captions correctly
- use MS word for tables
- name the file <title> *yymmdd.doc* - where *yymmdd* is the last save date - this helps the editors ensure that they are working with the most recent version

Why it's important to format your document correctly

Our format -this template is an example - creates the look and feel of LCJ. We believe that it contributes to the readability & accessibility of ideas in the papers we publish. Without correct formatting your paper won't get reviewed let alone published. That's why it is important.

And it has to *be* right, not just look right. We frequently get papers that have the 'appearance' of being right but the wrong styles are used or the 'normal' style in MS Word is modified to look 'right'. One paper was delayed 9 months because the author did not know how to format his paper and refused to learn - he thanked us when he did.

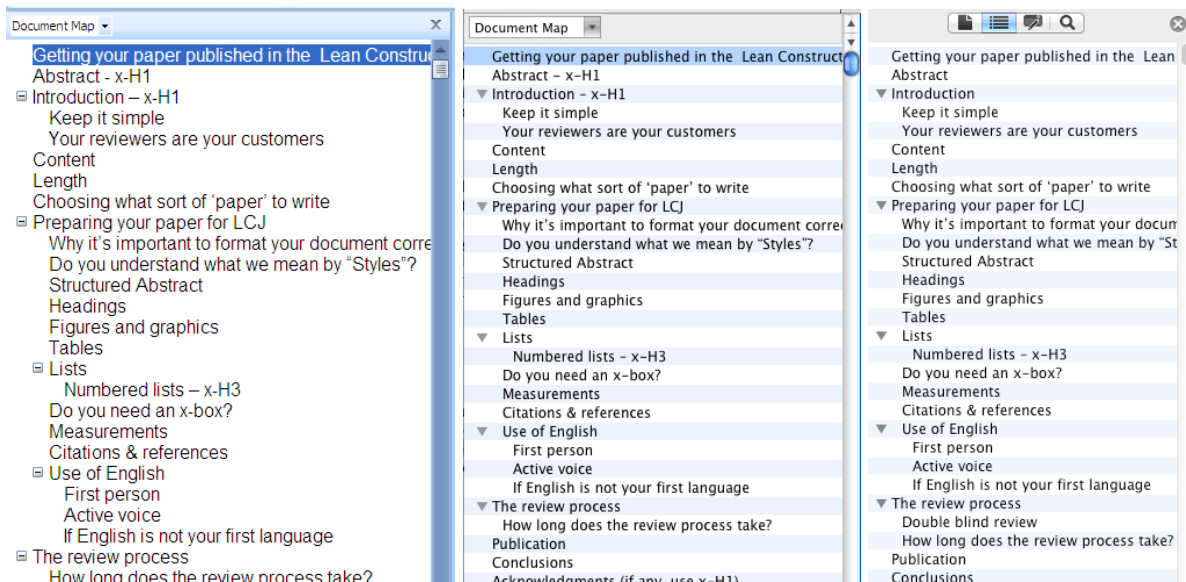


Figure 1. Examples of MS Word Document Maps view for this document PC (left) Mac (centre) Word 2011 (right).

As editors, one of the first things we check is the **Navigation pane** or **document map** in Word (see Figure 1). If we cannot see the full outline in the Navigation pane we know it is not formatted properly. If you don't know about the *Navigation Pane* in Word, it is

worth learning about - It will help you move quickly around documents and save you time. You need to be using **styles** (see next section) to make it work.

To turn **Navigation pane** or **document map** on:

- **on a PC** in MS Word 2007 go to 'View' then click on 'Document Map'; in MS Word 2010 go to 'View' then click on 'Navigation Pane'
- **on a Mac** go to View and select 'Navigation Pane'.

If you see thumbnails to the left of your document, select 'Document Map' from the pull-down menu top left where it says 'Thumbnails'. For more on using the Navigation Pane watch this U of Saskatchewan Training Services Video on YouTube: Working with Styles: Tutorial 3 Benefits -<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R1fgMCjm9A>

Do you understand what I mean by “Styles”? style - x-H1

Styles are an important feature of MS Word⁴ and most other word processors. They are there to improve work flow so you can write and edit faster & more easily. - [this paragraph is in style **x-Text**]

For example, when you click on the title of your paper, it should show the style being used as “x-Title”.

To see styles:

- **on a Mac**, in your top menu, Click 'View' > Toolbox > select 'Styles'
- **on a PC**, click the following key combination (Ctrl+Alt+Shift+S)] . - [this paragraph is in style **x-text•**]

If this is something you don't know about please talk to the IT people in your organization and get them to explain - most universities, for example, run courses in MS Word that explain how to use styles to save yourself time and hassle.

Take this template and one of your existing papers with you on your course. You'll learn more if you have a real project to practice on - and you can get help from your tutor.

Almost all the Styles you need to write your LCJ paper are pre-defined in this template. Most begin x-... so that they appear in a group at the bottom of your styles list. Scroll down and check. We have also included two character styles **z-italic** and **z-bold**. We are using these styles in this 'paper'. In this section we have signaled which style we are using in blue at the end of the first paragraph where it is used.

Follow these steps if you are comfortable with MS Word:

4 If you are not familiar with Styles in MS Word please read one or more of:

- <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA102308821033.aspx>
- <http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?assetid=rc011039261033>

or follow the advice of Dr Zofia Rybkowski who wrote (email 22Oct11): “we found a great series of YouTube videos to which you might want to create links on your LCJ website for authors. These videos give the ABCs of styles and are better, in our opinion, than the video to which the LCJ site is currently linked as an information source because these videos have sound. The videos were developed by the University of Saskatchewan Training Services and are truly excellent. In fact, after watching them just once, using styles became instantly understandable and do-able. They even show viewers how to use the Navigation Pane. :-)

See what you think:

- Working with Styles: Tutorial 1 Applying Styles - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hy9SvovpP4>
- Working with Styles: Tutorial 2 Modifying Styles - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL8jYjshpIU>
- Working with Styles: Tutorial 3 Benefits -<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R1fgMCjm9A>
- Working with Styles: Tutorial 4 Creating a TOC - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acjXhMOoSJ0>



- the easiest way to do this is first save the template file {LCJ_Format_Readme-Template.dot} to your hard disk. - x-text•
- Open the {LCJ_Format_Readme-Template.dot} and save it as a new .DOC file name, for example: {00_000 Your Paper Title yymmdd.doc}.
- Open the {00_000 Your Paper Title yymmdd.doc} and open the {LCJ_Format_Readme-Template.dot}
- Go to the file {00_000 Your Paper Title yymmdd.doc}. Work on your paper, switching to {LCJ_Format_Readme-Template.dot} to see which styles to use.
- If your paper is already written in a different format and you want to convert it, save it as {00_000 Your Paper Title yymmdd.doc}.
 - Format>Style...>Organiser and import the required styles from {LCJ_Format_Readme-Template.dot} - x-texto
 - Reformat your paper - there are various shortcuts you can use to do this - if you are not familiar with them please consult your in-house Word trainer for advice.

Structured Abstract

The purpose of a structured abstract is to ensure that key information is available and readily identifiable at the top of the paper so that readers can quickly see whether the paper is relevant to their needs. It is like a *shadow board* and an example of visual management for papers.

We want the complete abstract on the first page. To do that you will need to strike a balance between the length of your abstract, the length of your title and the number of authors. Please check that you have the correct paper size and margins set - see footnote 1 on page 1 for details.

Use MS Word Style 'x-abstract': and use style 'z-bold' on everything before the colon. Responses are required to all headings unless otherwise noted—the only exception is A3 papers - they need no abstract at all.

Here is some guidance on each of the headings:

Research Question/Hypothesis: if you are writing a Full Paper or a Forum Paper you may delete either *question* or *hypothesis* as appropriate; if you have more than one hypothesis please number them H1: H2: ditto for research questions Q1: Q2: etc. this sub-head is optional for case studies -

Purpose: state the purpose of your paper - Why have you written it.

Research Design/Method: you can choose whether to outline your **research design** or your **research method**. *This is not the place for a methodology discussion!* this sub-head is optional for case studies

Findings: what is the contribution to knowledge of this paper or case study?

What did you find out?

What have you learned?

Limitations: what are the limitations on your findings, your method, your design, etc.?

Implications: what are the implications for future research, for the industry, ...?

Value for practitioners: what is the relevance of this paper to practitioners in design, construction, facilities management, procurement, etc. - why should practitioners read this paper?

Put yourself in their shoes and tell them what your findings enable them to do (e.g. improved results, higher quality; or what not to do to avoid the opposite) that they could not otherwise do -no hype please.

Keywords: no more than ten please

Paper type: *choose from:* Full paper, Forum essay, Literature review, Case Study

And here is a version for you to copy into your paper:

Abstract

Research Question/Hypothesis:

Purpose:

Research Design/Method:

Findings:

Limitations:

Implications:

Value for practitioners:

Keywords:

Paper type:

Headings

Because it is easier to read, please use upper and lower case in all your headings, table headings and titles. When everything is in upper case (capitals) all words have the same shape, and our brains have to work much harder to read them. With upper and lower case together each word has a distinct shape and we can read much faster.

We prefer *Sentence case* to *Title Case* throughout.

Figures and graphics

Use the style **x-figure** for all graphics and figures.

Please ensure that each graphic is a single item *in-line with text* - nothing should float above or below the text or be wrapped - ensure that all images are legible and text is of similar weight (even if it is a different size) to that in the main text - we prefer font *trebuchet*

Each figure or graphic should have a caption below in style **x-figure caption (bottom)**

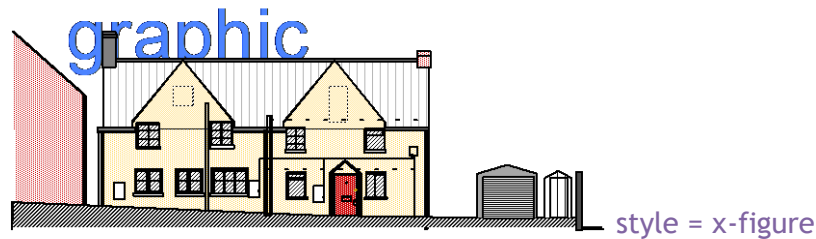


Figure 2: Alan’s cottage in Stroud (right) north elevation 1996
style = x-figure caption (bottom)⁵

Tables

Heavy black vertical and horizontal rules (i.e. lines, borders) can make it much more difficult to read the information in a table. We prefer something lighter and softer as in table 1 - here the whole table is first formatted using `x-TableGrid`. It clearly isn’t possible for us to say in advance what is most appropriate for the table(s) you will use so please think carefully about what it is necessary to include and what rules (lines or borders) will help you get your message across.

Table 1: style = x-table caption (top)⁶

	x-TableHeader	x-TableHeader
x-TableHeader	x-TableText- <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ x-TableText•▪ and this one too	2
x-TableHeader	3	4

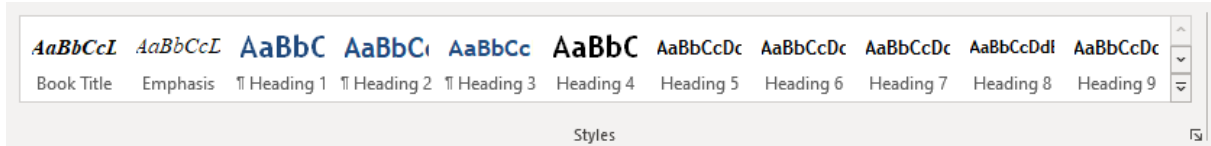
Please:

- place the caption above the table using style **x-table caption (top)**
- use MS Word tables rather than graphic objects that look like tables
- format the table using `x-TableGrid`
- use table styles within the tables - `x-TableHeader`, `x-TableText-`, `x-TableText•`
- feel free to use font size 9 in a table if that will help make it work - the default size is 10.

To see all the styles in the template, you may have to expand the styles pane by clicking on the right lower hand arrow (or use Apply Styles) :

⁵ please avoid complex background to images as far as possible

⁶ use “**keep with next**” to ensure that tables do not break over pages (unless they are larger than one page in which case do not allow rows to break across pages)



Lists

You will have noticed that I use a lot of lists. Please liberate lists from paragraphs - bulleted or numbered lists break up the text and draw attention to important distinctions that you are making, and improves readability.

Please use **x-text** • for any lists where numbering would add nothing to readers' understanding.

Numbered lists - x-H3

Some people use numbered lists and then make no use of the numbers. That seems to me to be waste - it has no value for the reader.

You may change to a numbered list **x-text #** if you refer to individual items in your list by number.

Do you need an x-box?

*If you wish to draw attention to something such as a quote, research question or hypothesis you can include it in an **x-box** like this*

Measurements

Our standard measurements are metric/SI. If you want to use imperial measures please add appropriately rounded metric equivalents in parentheses. E.g. 55 foot (17m).

Citations & references

Please use standard Chicago in-text citations & references as described in e.g. *Chicago Manual of Style* (2003) and use footnotes sparingly.

Use of English

Many scholars have been trained to write in an impersonal way in the belief that this is a more objective or a more precise way to present research. This often involves the use of the passive voice and finding ever more convoluted ways of referring to yourself without using I or we.

More than anything, I'd like your writing to be clear and as simple as possible (and, as Einstein said, no simpler). I notice that it is usually easier to understand things that are presented in the **active** voice and I am not against the use of the first person singular or plural - it is often clearer, precisely because the subject or object in the sentence are clearly stated.

First person

It seems to me that if *you* did it, it is fine to say "I" - and that if *you and your team* did it together use "we" so long as you are clear about who "we" are. Use of the first

person makes your writing more direct and generally clearer. Please do not use the first person if it creates ambiguity.

Active voice

Use the active voice - it is generally shorter than the passive and much more interesting to read. Compare:

- Examination of samples was accomplished by this researcher who was looking for (passive)
- I examined the samples for (active)

If English is not your first language

If English is not your first language, find someone to review your paper and help you edit it - many universities have such people. Remember that the purpose of your paper is to communicate – whether your readers are your reviewers, busy practitioners looking for ideas to help them improve what they do or fellow scholars around the world - make it as easy for them to understand what you have to say.

If you want help finding someone to advise you please let the editors know.

The review process

The review process begins once the editors have a correctly formatted paper and a copyright form (see <https://leanconstruction.org/pages/learning/publications/lean-construction-journal/copyright-form/>).

Sometimes the Editors will offer you feedback before your paper goes for review. You may choose to ignore this if you wish. Just let the editors know that is your decision and that you want the paper to go for review.

Double blind review

The editors send a copy of your abstract and title to potential reviewers with a request to complete a review by a specific date - generally in three weeks. If the reviewer accepts the request, the editors send the full paper (with the author details removed) as a pdf.

Full papers, Technical notes, and Case studies are accompanied by a form that includes the questions in Appendix 1.

For **Forum essays**, reviewers are asked to make sure the spirit of a forum essay has been met (Forum essays are not expected to be a synthesis of a research-based endeavor or to be of archival value). We ask reviewers for an open-ended and personal reaction to the manuscript, so there is no specific review form.

A3s are reviewed in a similar way to Forum Essays.

All papers are reviewed by at least one practitioner and one scholar and there are generally at least three reviewers.

Once the Editors have received all the reviews they are collated into a single document. A copy is sent to the author(s) with the editors' decision and a copy is also sent to the reviewers.

The reviewers don't know who the other reviewers are, nor do they know the identity of the author(s). If authors subsequently want to accept an offer of help from a reviewer they contact the Editors, who make the connection.

If your paper is *declined with encouragement to resubmit*, your resubmitted paper will go back to the reviewers

Once your paper is accepted, it can be published.

How long does the review process take?

The clock only starts ticking on the review process once we have a correctly formatted paper and the copyright form. From then the minimum review time is four weeks - that requires that the editors are able to begin the process immediately, all our reviewers to honor their promises to deliver their reviews on or before the requested date and to recommend the editors to *Accept* your paper as it is, and the editors then process the reviews in good time.

If your paper is not *accepted-as-is* then it is most often the case that you, the author(s), determine the length of time in the review process. If you respond to reviewer's comments quickly ... the process moves faster.

Last Planner System®

Last Planner® - this is in reference to the person as the last planner - NOT the system.

Last Planner System®

LPS®

In LCJ manuscripts, it is necessary to use the registered trademark symbol when the term is used. Other publications may have a different preference or format to avoid visual clutter and as an attempt to increase aesthetic appeal of the piece. We are more concerned about the partial use of journal manuscript sections or parts as cited work which do not contain the appropriate mark. Therefore, at the expense of clutter, LCJ authors are instructed to use the registered trademark symbol when the term is used.

Publication

LCJ is an on-line journal, so, once it is accepted, your paper can be published very quickly. This usually happens within a week of your receiving the acceptance notice.

Conclusions

Be clear about who is the customer and who is the supplier in this process. To start with you, the author(s), are the supplier and the journal editors and reviewers are your customers. Write with your customers in mind. Focus on making your customers' lives as easy as possible - and remember that they are all volunteers.

For rapid consideration of your paper:

- Format it correctly



- Send it with the copyright form (<https://leanconstruction.org/pages/learning/publications/lean-construction-journal/copyright-form/>).

Good luck and thanks for thinking of *Lean Construction Journal* for your paper.

Which other journal requires you to start with a little x-citation even before you write the title?

Acknowledgments (if any, use x-H1)

I'd like to acknowledge the work that Prof Iris Tommelein started in 1999 to improve the quality of the formatting of papers in the lean construction community.

I'd like to thank Dr Zofia Rybkowski for her suggestion about how to learn styles.

Version control (for LCJ purposes)

This template 2021 was modified from the 2012 version by Tariq Abdelhamid to reflect some change in the copyright form access, review form questions, paper types, and styles.

References - x-H1

x-reference - please use the minimum of punctuation and include a url if there is one. Use a tinyurl or bit.ly if you wish (www.tinyurl.com; www.bit.ly 11sep10) and please add the date you last saw the item on the web.

Ballard, Glenn (2006) "Rethinking Project Definition in terms of Target Costing".

Proceedings of the 14th Annual Congress, International Group for Lean Construction, Santiago, Chile, July 2006, pp77-90. Also available at www.iglc.net (5 mar 08)

Chicago Manual of Style (2003) <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/contents.html> 11sep10

Shook, John (2008) *Managing to Learn: Using the A3 management process to solve problems, gain agreement, mentor, and lead*; Lean Enterprise Institute; Cambridge, USA

Sobek, Durward K & Art Smalley (2008) *Understanding A3 thinking: A critical component of Toyota's PDCA management system* Productivity Press, Taylor & Francis Group; Boca Raton, USA

Appendix 1

Relevance to the journal's scope which is to “stimulate a systematic rethinking of the construction process both on and off-site”:

Contribution to knowledge: Does the paper contain significant theoretical and/or practical work that is of archival value in Lean Construction body of knowledge:

Soundness of arguments for the problem issue being addressed by the paper: argument built on an appropriate theory, principle, concepts or other ideas

Appropriateness and Correctness of methodology: Presented research or equivalent intellectual work is well-designed; Methods employed are explained and appropriate

Are presented results clear and with appropriate discussion? Does the conclusion section adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?

Clarity of presentation and structure of the paper (readability, abstract, main body, figures, tables, etc):

Sufficiency of references to Lean Construction published literature (please list any missing references):

Suggested improvements for author(s):

Recommendation for publication *(delete all but one of the choices right):*

- a. Accept as is.
- b. Accept subject to listed changes.
- c. Decline with encouragement to resubmit.
- d. Reject for the stated reasons

Other Comments

Are you willing to have a dialogue with the authors to help them improve the paper? Yes/No

