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LEAN THOUGHTS

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Leveraging your Maintenance Team?

OK ... so I am not allowed to make general sweeping statements ... but I am convinced that most organizations are not optimizing their maintenance groups. When I visit most companies the plant tour normally by-passes the maintenance shop probably because they are embarrassed about what we may see. In other cases, the group is secluded in a back part of the facility shrouded behind a tarp or curtain ... with the excuse it shields employees from welding arcs.

But here is what I think ... Maintenance folks tend to have the following common traits;

- They like to keep everything ... just in case ... which means a lot of dollars
- Maintenance employees are always busy ... just ask them
- Maintenance employees are busy doing stuff ... what stuff we are never really sure of.
- Maintenance employees never travel alone anywhere in the plant.
- Maintenance Employees are like Paramedics ready to administer first-aid to equipment
- Maintenance employees do have a valued skill set !!

So how can we make the department more pro-active and value-add to the organization?

- 1) Get them organized through the **application of 5S+1**. This may seem basic but if you think this is a difficult task within the plant it is 100 times more difficult to convince these folks to get organized ... remember they are always busy. But if a machine suddenly breaks down ... how much search time is consumed while they walk back to their maintenance cave searching for replacement parts.
- 2) Categorize their MRO supplies and place them on a **Kanban System or VMI program**. All of those fittings, fasteners and other gadgets of equipment first-aid can quickly consume a lot of cash. When equipment breaks the accountability of expense controls is put aside to get equipment up and running.
- 3) Get your mechanics pro-active ... if you already have a TPM program in effect have them **conduct daily audits of specific machines and operations** ... this is a great opportunity for enhancing the training of team members that are running the equipment. Most companies remain focused on just getting the employees to complete daily TPM tasks.
- 4) Schedule your mechanic's to **run a machine or operation** for an extended period of time during the week. These folks have hopefully and enhanced mechanical ability. They will run the operation using the eyes of a mechanic ... they will find areas of opportunity and the ability to enhance and improve the process capability of the machine and/or the process. Now you will probably get significant push-back ... since they will claim not to have time available to run the machine because they are busy doing stuff ...

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Where “Lean Thoughts” Become Reality



Sustaining the Gains of Lean

It's not just about choosing the right lean tools.

By [Jill Jusko](#) edited from IW e-newsletter

For many companies engaged in transforming their environment through lean, the problem is that gains made with the use of lean tools don't stick. Indeed, Jamie Flinchbaugh says he has never observed a company move forward in their continuous improvement efforts without some steps backward. Flinchbaugh, founder and partner in the Lean Learning Center, offered this observation at the recent IW Best Plants conference held in Milwaukee.

He outlined as an example the lasting effects of kaizen efforts at a company for which he once worked. According to Flinchbaugh, upon measuring the results of those kaizens, he discovered the half life was about five months. By that, he meant that in five months, the company had lost half the gains of the kaizen effort.

The challenge of making and sustaining gains is not about choosing the correct lean tools, Flinchbaugh says. It's about creating a culture in which everyone understands the principles of lean and engages in behaviors that reflect that understanding.

At the conference, Flinchbaugh posed several questions and shared ideas to help companies maintain their lean gains. His observations included:

- "What is the purpose of 5S?" he asked the IW Best Plants conference audience. Among the responses Flinchbaugh heard were: housekeeping, organization and less clutter. Those are benefits of 5S, to be sure, he said, but the *purpose* is to spot problems quickly. Don't expect to maintain gains of a 5S program if everyone doesn't understand the purpose of the program.
- One measure of how well you've internalized lean principles is how much your job changes every day, Flinchbaugh says. "If you truly internalize lean principles, you can't help but continue to improve," he said. That means the job changes every day.

- Work on what's important, Flinchbaugh said. Many organizations begin a lean effort with 5S, and the reasons are sound: It's very visual and it gets everyone involved. However, for many companies Flinchbaugh says 5S isn't the best place to start if it doesn't solve a problem the company has.
- Make the work visible so problems become visible. He cited inventory as an example. Inventory covers problems in the process, he says. Reducing inventory illustrates the fragility of the process, makes problems more visible, and provides the opportunity to solve those problems before they become bigger problems.

He ended the presentation with the reminder: "Every big problem you face today was once a small problem."

Contact me if you need coaching or facilitation help in the areas such as but not limited to; 5S, Value Stream Mapping, Set-up Reduction, Problem Solving or Policy Deployment and Consortium Development



IndustryWeek defines cellular manufacturing as a manufacturing approach in which equipment and workstations are arranged to facilitate small-lot, continuous-flow production. In a manufacturing "cell," all operations necessary to produce a component or subassembly are performed in close proximity, thus allowing for quick feedback between operators when quality problems and other issues arise. Workers in a manufacturing cell typically are cross-trained and, therefore, able to perform multiple tasks as needed. As the accompanying table indicates, cellular manufacturing is in wide use among many IW Best Plants winners and finalists

Adoption of cellular-manufacturing practices (% of plants):			
Year	None	Some	Wide
2003	12	8	80
2004	4	20	76
2005	8	16	76
2006	12	28	60
2007	10	29	62
2003-2007	9	20	71

Source: 2007 IW Best Plants Statistical Profile

2008 Consortium Event Schedule



Tour **W**orkshop **C**onference

January	February	March	April	May	June
T Wednesday 16 <u>Eaton Electrical</u> , contact Joe Fisher, JoeRFisher@eaton.com	T Wednesday 13, <u>ACE Bakery</u> , contact Cindy Grolleman, cgrolleman@acebakery.com	T Wednesday 19, <u>Nestle Waters</u> , contact Mariela Castano mcastano@perriergroup.com	C Consortium Shareshowcase Saturday 05 <u>Eaton Milton</u> , Contact Cindy Grolleman cgrolleman@acebakery.com or Joe Fisher JoeRFisher@eaton.com	T Wednesday 14, <u>Alumicor</u> , contact Barry Wood barry@Alumicor.com	T Wednesday 18, <u>Morrison LaMothe</u> , contact Tony Vita tvita@morrisonlamthe.com
July	August	September	October	November	December
		T Wednesday 24, <u>Kraft Foods</u> , contact Hanif Jivraj hjivraj@Kraft.com	T Wednesday 16, <u>CTS Corp.</u> , contact Navneet Mann, navneet.mann@ac.ctscorp.com	T Wednesday 12, <u>Messier-Dowty</u> , contact Mike Smith Mike.Smith@Messier-dowty.on.ca	T Wednesday 10, <u>Orenda</u> , contact Brenda McIntosh brendamcintosh@orenda.com