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LEAN THOUGHTS

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MAINTENANCE AREA AUDIT A GREAT LEAN MEASUREMENT

A few weeks ago I kind of did a bit of a rant about maintenance departments and how under-utilized they normally are within an organization. [Lean Thoughts -- April 28, 2008](#)

Well the topic has returned but in a different manner. During a recent discussion I was asked how Toyota conducts a potential supplier audit. This took me back several years when I had the privilege to participate in an audit field trip with a Toyota team. The actual plant audit took only 10 minutes to complete.

When we arrived at the potential Supplier Site we were warmly greeted and escorted to a very ornate boardroom and offered food and drink. The leadership team then proceeded to bombard us with information about how great the company was ... they emphasised their technology, their commitment to people and how robust their processes were.

(By the way ... Suppliers are deemed to be organizations you may want to partner with, on the other hand Vendors are used for “spot” buys like the roadside hot-dog stand.)

After a 2 hour session I was feeling very good about the potential of working with this supplier and eager to explore the factory floor to examine process. We were escorted to the factory where the plant did look clean and organized at first sight ... then it happened ...

Two maintenance technicians came past our group with their super large rolling tool boxes in tow (remember they travel in packs!). One of our Senior Leaders within the group requested from the President if he was able to talk with the technicians ... after a puzzled look from the Supplier President the wish was granted. He spoke with the technicians and introduced us to them. Our Sensei then proceeded to asked them to show him the drawers of their tool boxes and empty their contents.

After a very brief review our Sensei announced to the Supplier President that the tour was over, he had seen enough and was ready to conduct a debrief with the Supplier Lead Team.

What did he see ??? And what were his comments ??

- 1) He immediately recognized that the tools were disorganized within the mechanics tool boxes ... this was a key indicator that the mechanics probably spent too much time searching for the proper tools to do their job and increasing the length of unscheduled down-time

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*Where “Lean Thoughts”
Become Reality*

- 2) He noticed that in several cases standard tools had been actively modified for a specific purpose. Upon further inquiry, the mechanics confessed that certain pieces of equipment were constantly breaking down and this was easy remedy to get machines active again.
- 3) The toolbox had a huge chain and lock attached to it, in order to prevent it probably from wandering away. This was a huge indicator of the culture that existed within the facility where the supplier team had just pontificated about respect for people.
- 4) Spare components that the company produced were stored in the tool-chest. This was to enable operations to meet numbers while the machine was being repaired or adjusted.

So even without walking the process our Sensei was quickly to conclude the following;

- Lack of organization resulted in unnecessary extended downtime while mechanics searched for tools.
- Lack of Robust processes since the mechanics carried hand modified tools and a lack of a strong Preventative Maintenance Program.
- A problem culture since the mechanics felt they needed to lock their tool boxes to prevent theft ... or maybe contain the clutter ...
- Spare components ... in order to support operations in meeting targets.

So what is the answer?

- Do a Kaizen event in your Maintenance area.

- Get them organized ... but think before you act. Sort by commodity and then machine type.
- Use an outside resource for the initial sort and Red & Yellow tag event ... maintenance will be reluctant to cull anything initially.
- Date stamp everything, if it has not been used within a year ... return for credit.
- Measure reactive maintenance vs. preventative maintenance.
- Train your technicians in formal problem solving to help them more quickly identify root cause.
- Leverage your quality department to monitor your machine repair logs. With them using their standard array of tools they can show trends of re-occurring defects and break-downs and act as the bridge to engineering to solve the problem.

I am firmly convinced that if you provide the maintenance department some focus on basic Lean principals like 5S+1, it will lead to immediate general productivity improvements and happy and healthier workplace.

We have been working with a supplier of maintenance department organizational supplies with great success. You can contact us for details or possible facilitation.

So yes, in the end my Sensei was able to read the organization correctly and although initially the Supplier President was visibly upset ... 12 months later upon a return trip we saw a dramatic difference at the facility and the tour took much longer and yes we did a deep inspection of the maintenance department and technician tool boxes.

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



2008 Consortium Event Schedule



Tour Workshop Conference

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