

Once again, 5S+1 is not about just about creating a clean and organized environment

That is just the resulting “eye candy”. Again this week I spoke with a couple of folks about their 5S activities and they focused on the results instead of the methodology in becoming organized. One of the individuals I spoke with pontificated at length about visiting a facility where the floors were covered with white tiles, the walls were white, the ceilings were white and even the carts had white hub-caps ... the image to an outsider would create that “WOW” factor but is it really efficient?

The challenge is not to jump to solution and frantically clean and organize your facilities. This is a methodology and it must be sustainable. It also a key foundational element of distributed accountability ... let me ramble and coach via the newsletter.

Distributed Accountability

A result for implementing Lean. By finding the best location for your items, shadow boxing and labelling, will encourage folks to return items to their proper place. It is part of the visible workplace so you know exactly how much supplies needs to be in rotation. It should encourage a change in behaviour by all employees ... nothing should be without a proper home. Often referred as “talking floors, walls etc” the environment should be speaking to you through visual triggers to tell you when something is out of sync.

Workplace Organization (5S+1)

This is a methodology and most important will require a lot of tedious work to build a correct infrastructure. It is a slow and sometimes painful process to place tape on the floors, cut shadows for your shadow boards ... but the investment is worth it and most important it must be SUSTAINED and this requires leadership and discipline. We also strongly encourage folks to use premium products for most applications ... you can find cheap floor tape and other ancillary items ... but they will probably not last or withstand the harsh conditions of your environment. This where experience does count ... feel free to contact us for guidance on product selection and application. So here is a recommended methodology and remember the following ...

Every 5 feet of walk = 2.5 seconds. Your job is to eliminate walking and search time within your shops ...

Prior to starting your 5S+1 adventure or enhancement we strongly suggest that you complete 2 exercises. Begin by observing the amount of walk your team members are conducting within the targeted work area you are about to organize. A video camera is a good assistant during this exercise ... convert the walk patterns onto a spaghetti diagram. Review the amount of walk to see how you can minimize the amount of walk your team member does ... make sure to include them in the discussion. In many cases when they see themselves on video (or lack of) they will be able to provide you with explanations and suggestions of why excessive walk is occurring.

Next meet with your team members and develop your Visual Work Instruction (VSWI) to support the task that you want to have performed. It should allow for any team member to perform the function in a standardized and repeatable manner.

The VSWI will also allow you calculate which tools and supplies will be required within the target area ... but be careful not to over supply or stock ... replenishment may be better suited through the Use of Kanban and timed Delivery Routes.

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.”

Ronald. E. Osborn

5S+1 is a methodology and a great springboard

SORT

In essence you will be separating the essential from the non-essential items within a specific target area. Do not select the entire shop ... start small ; a shelf, a drawer or something similar. We normally suggest that you start with a Visual Work Instruction before starting the sort process. People are emotionally attached to the possessions within their areas ... to ease the effect of separation, create a Red-Tag area in your shop. Separated items should be placed in the Red-Tag hold area for a period of 30 days before given the final disposition. We can supply you with Red tags and a supporting procedure that will allow you to keep track of the items removed. Just as you will have some people you will not be willing to separate themselves from items you will also have others who will become zealots and over sort to the detriment of through-put performance.

SET IN ORDER

After you have sorted the items you need , to look at what is left. These items need to be arranged based on product group or frequency of use. We prefer to use "Fat Wall" which is white plastic extruded system with slots incorporated. Fat Wall allows you to use baskets , hooks etc and is complaint for food industry applications and can be more versatile than peg boards. You definitely want to eliminate carts and cupboards. Flat surfaces are the world's greatest magnets of attracting stuff so keep them to a minimum. Also doors on cupboards hide sins which is also cash ... so at minimum remove the doors from cabinets ... of course not on explosion proof cabinets though

SANITIZE

This is an excellent opportunity to perform a deep clean of your target area. Get out the bucket, soap and elbow grease. Deep cleaning not only makes it look clean and pretty but more importantly will expose sub-standard conditions or items and equipment. Normally, look at cords and hoses for abrasions and nicks which could quickly become safety issues. This is also a good time adopt the philosophy to suck and not blow ... using compressed air to clean is not effective since all it does is redistribute dust and debris in other parts of your shop, contributing to an unclean and non-professional looking environment. Better is to invest in a couple of shop vacs and educate the team members how to vacuum.

STANDARDIZE

Not normally what you may be thinking ... In this case I am certain policies will need to be initiated and then followed. They can be simple guidelines .. chairs pushed in after meetings. How high items can be stacked. Where parts are to be stored ... what is acceptable and what is not. Eventually, you will be able to identify the best practices to follow and adopt them through-out your shop.

We normally suggest that your 5S+1 criteria and expectations be included within your TPM program so that regular touch-up activities occur on a regular basis.

SUSTAIN

The most difficult and challenging attribute. Leaders need to adopt a zero tolerance approach to how the shop will look like and not be allowed to be distracted by stories. We are in the process of changing behaviour and this takes time to integrate within DNA. You currently are in a slow period so implementing 5S will be easy ... but as soon as your shops become busy it quickly translates into acceptance that sloppiness can be tolerated. Understand, this is a story and a sad excuse ... the busier you are the more important it is to remain organized.

My apologies to skilled 5S+1 practitioners in articulating this message and desire of organizations to look neat clean and efficient ... but this is a process and a process that needs to be followed and regimented if you are to succeed and sustain. The devil is in the details. If we think about car racing ... where winning a race does not happen on the track but rather in the pits. For quick turnaround everything is insanely organized with some contingency triggers also in place. Remember after a 4-5 hour race the difference between placing 1 or 2nd can be a fraction of a second ... and so it is in business.

We are available for coaching, access to premium tested workplace organization supplies and "waste walks" should you desire some additional help.

Lean Thoughts