

UTILIZING THE 5Ss

PART 2

“CLEANING ANYTHING INVOLVES MAKING SOMETHING ELSE DIRTY, BUT ANYTHING CAN GET DIRTY WITHOUT SOMETHING ELSE GETTING CLEAN.”

Laurence J. Peter (1919 - 1988)

By Preston Ingalls



Once implemented, the 5S system takes a space from cluttered to clean, creating a work environment for increased productivity.

There are many benefits that your organization can reap from implementing the 5S program. Originating from a Japanese focus on organizing and bringing orderliness to a space, the 5Ss represent the five pillars of the visual workplace: sort, set in order, shine, standardize, and sustain. The 5S system is the building block for orderliness, organization, and cleanliness in an organization; therefore, it becomes the foundation for defect reduction, improving cost and safety. Productivity will increase, there will be fewer defects, and

operations will be more efficient and effective. Any organization can benefit from focusing on organizing their workplace. The 5S system is a good starting point for all improvement efforts aiming to drive out waste. Below are some specific benefits to conducting the 5S program:

ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS

- Lower costs due to less waste
- Greater confidence due to no complaints
- Better equipment availability due to no breakdowns

- Reliable deliveries due to no delays
- Safer work environment
- Less requirements for space

INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS

- Cleaner, more organized workplace improves morale
- Frustrations and obstacles disappear
- Communication improvement
- Easier to locate items
- More pleasant work environment
- Workplace safety improvement
- Job is more satisfying

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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There may be some initial opposition to the 5S efforts because implementation of the process means making a lot of organizational changes. As we all know, change can be difficult to introduce and sustain. Below are some resistance statements you might hear with regards to 5S implementation.

- “Is this management’s way of cutting pay by lessening overtime?”
- “I don’t get paid to clean.”
- “Everything has been working fine so far...why do we need to change now?”

If an organization fails at 5S implementation, it might be that the process seems so simple that people don’t take it seriously. Then again, many organizations are able to accomplish great things with 5Ss. You cannot set up a 5S system if you don’t understand the principles, know how to carry out the process, or have the discipline to practice the approaches.

IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE EFFORTS

It takes a whole team of people to manage an organization-wide change effort. Organizing a Steering Council, such as one used for a TPR or TPM implementation effort, is the best practice. A facilitator, various managers, and other crucial stakeholders should make up this group. Most organizations choose a facilitator who is the champion of the change effort. This person might lead the project long-term, or head up a short-term effort. Whichever time frame is chosen, the facilitator’s job is to push the activities through the organization and head up the efforts. This person’s activities might include:

- Recruiting team members
- Being the main contact point between the team and leadership
- Breaking the area into a manageable scope of activity for a week’s effort
- Providing 5S training
- Maintaining team focus on 5S
- Examine material and workflow to minimize waste
- Brainstorming improvements
- Producing a day-by-day project plan of attack

The organization of the team depends on the organization’s goals.

Most teams are cross-functional. A lot of times 5S implementation is the first step in a major organizational improvement effort. Sometimes though, an organization will organize a cross-functional team from the work area. It is imperative to choose people who understand the benefits and value of creating a visual workplace

and who are willing to make a contribution.

The key to successful 5S activities is auditing after the event and rewards and recognition for those sustaining the efforts. Although this looks like a common sense approach ... remember, common sense is not common practice. ■

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