

Improvement in the Work Place

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Continual improvement day by day is imperative for increasing profit, customer loyalty and worker satisfaction. There are three areas that are essential for practicing improvement in the work place.

1. Housekeeping
2. Waste elimination
3. Standardization

Let's take a look at each. Good housekeeping allows employees to acquire self-discipline, without which, it is impossible to provide quality products and services. Housekeeping is anything from clean trucks, shop, and personal appearance to waste elimination. Waste elimination is a very important activity that must take place in the work place. **WASTE: Is any activity that does not add value to the end product.** Management, support, sales, etc. all are very valuable to the process of getting work done; however, they do not produce direct value to the end product. Therefore, efforts to ensure they are as lean as possible are imperative. Value is defined by the customer and is what they are willing to pay for. Without the customer we do not exist. Waste reduction will reduce operating cost and increase efficiency in the work place. We must seek Quality, low Cost, and Deliver (QCD) our product or service on time every time. The following are areas of waste that must be eliminated:

1. **Rework and scrap:** Any rework, inspection failure or material scrap
2. **Motion:** Any motion that does not add value (i.e. Going back and forth to the truck to get materials and tools)
3. **Transport:** Any transport is waste (i.e. Chasing after materials during production, time to get to and from the job)
4. **Inventory:** Any more than the minimum to get the job done or not enough to get the job done
5. **Processing:** Any variability (i.e. all work is not done the say way every time)
6. **Waiting:** Any waiting on materials or people
7. **Intellect:** Any failure to fully utilize the time and talents of people

Small improvements in many processes gradually accumulate. Long term sustainability should never be sacrificed for short term profits. Success often causes great turbulence within a company and everyone ends up running around like a chicken with its head cut off. We all want for our companies to have a large impact in our communities and to produce profit. A large spread out pine branch thrown into a pond makes very little ripples on the pond. Throw a small rock into the same pond and it will send out ripples across the pond. We must build companies that specialize in influencing and positively impacting each of our customers to the point they become loyal to our company. Loyalty is a behavior where satisfaction is a feeling. We need to maximize both.

Lastly, standardization of work is the best way to do any job. **STANDARIZE: To cause something to conform to a standard.** All work is a process and maintaining agreed upon requirements and standards in each process will insure quality (i.e. Local Weatherization Specifications, DOE Standard Work Specifications, standards and codes). We must implement work methods and tools (i.e. Mistake Proofing verifications, Critical Detail Sheets) that sustain standards and prevent recurrence of errors. Housekeeping, and waste elimination can reduce failure rates by 50%, and standardization can reduce failure rates by 50% of the new figure.

Improvement in the workplace is a daily chore that in the end, will bring pride of work, profit and loyal customers.