

5 S

Organizing Your Workplace to be Clean, Lean and Effective



An Introduction and Process Outline

Provided by Whitewater Strategies, Inc.



Simple Teams – Profound Principles

Every week across this country, young men and women get together, form teams, play to win, value the competition, learn better skills, and have fun without the “benefit” of being “trained” to be part of a team. At the same time, managers are having meetings upon endless meetings trying to figure out how to get their employees to “team,” to work together, to compete in today’s fast-paced and highly competitive world. What in the world got lost from the 11 year olds to the 35 year olds??

Saturday Morning Football

The sun is up, the temperature a crisp 50 degrees. Thirteen rough and ready “kids” have gathered at the park to participate in an American Tradition, Saturday Morning Football.

At first there is no “organization” just running, random blocking, passing and receiving, and “positioning” among the peers on the field. Team leaders are picked, they are the best players, the known “experts” who will be given the chance to lead “this week.”

Next the teams are picked. Everyone has been waiting to know “what team am I on, who do I play with, what skills do my peers have and can I be valued in that group.” Then the “goals” are identified. “Your goal is between that tree and that rock!” “Ours is between the fire hydrant and my Dad’ car – and DON’T HIT MY DAD’S CAR!!!”

Then the boundaries, what is “in-bounds” – the playing field, and what is “out of bounds.” What are the “rules” and it is usually amazing how few rules actually have to be established?

Now to the huddle. Everyone on the team meets for the huddle. They don’t send representatives to the huddle, or a huddle “task team,” They huddle to: pick roles and assignments, clarify the plays, evaluate the other team, and “pump each other up” with the sureness of success.

Now to the play. The kick-off, the run, the tackle. Back to the huddle, who will do what, what is the

play, what must I do better, where did you mess up, and so on. The huddle is quick, focused, direct, anxious. Everyone knows that you don’t win the game in the huddle. But the huddle is where you put your heads together so you execute the right play, in the right way, together on the field.

Now to the next play, and the next. “How far did we get, how close to a 1st down???” “What is the score, what do we need to win??” After every single play, every player knows their results, their goals for the next play, the overall score, and has feedback on themselves and their team, and it only takes seconds.

Teamwork at 11 is pretty simple. No politics; no hierarchy; a clear organization; clear goals; rules and boundaries; known roles and responsibilities; cross functioning and role sharing; results focused; clear information on the score, the results, the plan; brainstorming and trying new ideas: short meetings (huddles); no “experts” who are not players; just results, fun and true growth.

The question is: ‘Can we get a Saturday Morning Football team mentality and culture in a real business, with real “winnings and losings” and real but “mature” people??’ The answer is clearly YES!! The methodology is fairly simple, but requires a return to the focus, directness and action orientation of a bunch of Kids, playing the most important game of their life – until NOW!!!



5 S

Organizing the Best Plays

The concept of 5 S is a pillar of Lean Manufacturing. 5 S refers to a process for gaining and maintaining first “order” in our workplace, and then “effectiveness” of the facilities, equipment and resources we need to produce.

If we continue our analogy to “Saturday Morning Football” the principles of 5 S insure that we have order, clarity and cleanliness on the field. If we found a crooked field littered with debris, and a random ordering of equipment and obstructions, playing football would be confusing, dangerous and certainly less fun. Laying our an effective playing field, clearly and visually marking the boundaries and goals, removing unnecessary obstructions and hazards, and maintaining the field is one key to the team’s effectiveness.

In the workplace, key responsibilities of each associate include knowing their work area, knowing what resources they need and knowing what they need to accomplish each day. Associates must take ownership for their area and insure they create the organization, layout, orderliness and cleanliness support high performance.

Following the elements of 5 S will get them the best playing field for the best plays. The outline which follows provides some brief guidance in understanding the 5 Ss. The actual Japanese name follows our basic S – and we have provided some “common sense” statements to help remember each one.

<i>Americanized “S”</i>	<i>Japanese Root</i>	<i>Phrase to Remember</i>
Sort	Seiri	“When in Doubt – Throw it out!”
Straighten	Seiton	“A place for Everything and Everything in its Place!”
Scrub	Seiso	“The White Glove Treatment”
Systematize	Seiketsu	“Practice Makes Permanent”
Sustain	Shitsuke	“Perfect Practice Makes Perfect”



5 S as a Process Setup and Follow-through

“5 S is great!!!” ...

...It really works!!!”

.....“People can get so excited about cleaning their work area and being really organized!!!”

.....“It has really made a difference in our plant!!!”

Quotes like these are common, inspiring and enthusiastic following the start of a 5 S process. It generates energy and excitement. People “see” things getting accomplished, changed, moved, repaired, thrown away, and improved. But all too many effective “5 S Programs” are seen as an exciting “activity” rather than the sustained and difficult process which it can create in the plant. Many plants do 1 S (**Sort**), or 2 Ss (**Sort and Straighten**), or get all the way to 3 Ss (**Sort Straighten and Scrub**) in an activity. Things look better, they feel better, and not they go back to the work and the old habits.

Systematizing and Sustaining the 5 S – building a living and effective process – requires diligence, discipline and accountability. It also requires leaders willing to drive it beyond the activity and into everyday plant life. So, what does it take? Here are a few setup and follow-through ideas.

Build your process yourself

The outline that follows is an attempt to help your group understand the key elements in everyday terms and to offer a few examples. You certainly can purchase a 5 S – step by step program if you choose – but this often cheats your people from the chance to think, plan, learn, modify and improve that process. In some ways it’s like following someone in your car to a meeting place. You tend to remember what their tail lights look like. But in “following” them you rarely learn where the meeting place is so you can make it on your own next time. Better to get directions, think it through, act for yourself and know the way.

“If you tell me – I will forget.

If you show me – I will remember.

If you involve me – I will understand. . .

. . . Chinese Proverb



Share Leadership

Sustained processes depend on leaders at every level who understand the importance of the process, the details and methodology, and have to account for their results. That last part is really important, “leaders are called to account.” If you have people who should be helping you develop and sustain this process, they need to be visible in the accountability process as well. That’s where they truly take on the mantle of leadership.

Build individual day to day processes at the “working” team level.

It is great to develop a “task team” to initiate and lead the 5 S “Learning and Organizing” process. However many times we see these task teams “doing it all” and not building a process to integrate the process at the working level. And the “non task team members” begin to assign all 5S activity to the task team. Then when a crisis happens and the task team is disbanded – there is no infrastructure to continue the process and the old culture creeps back at an alarming pace.

Plan and Schedule Long Term Accountability

Accountability is uncomfortable. Well, it’s not uncomfortable when we have easily met our objectives and have good news to report. But when we have lots on our plate and it is time to “account,” most of us will try to avoid that discomfort. Sustainable processes required leadership to set regular accountability, insure a schedule several months into the future, and resist the tendency to slip or miss that accounting opportunity. We would not fail to “close the books” at the end of the month on our financials, and so we pay attention to them. Successful processes “close the books” regularly and make adjustments to insure continued success.

Be visible and active – Continuously!!

Leadership is Active and Visible in sustainable processes. You have to keep caring, paying attention, noting areas of sub-standard performance, and helping continue to make changes. That energy that is felt in the beginning of this process because of all the supported changes the team makes is exciting and encouraging. But it does not have to end in the first month of a 5 S process. Help deeper and deeper changes continue to be made and involve others in making them. That’s the long term payoff of any real process.

Now – let’s get to the 5 S Concepts!!



When in Doubt – Toss it Out!

Sorting is a process for insuring that only necessary equipment, materials and tools are present in the work area. “Extra Stuff” just seems to grow in our areas. “Just in case” items are present and may be important but usually are not separated and stored with other similar items. Often this leads to re-ordering materials, tools or repair parts which we already have but can’t locate.

Elements of an effective Sort process include:

- A full set of “befor” photos – to document our starting point and help the group build a plan.
- A Plan for identifying necessary and unnecessary equipment, tools and materials
 - Remove all “non essential” or “not currently needed” equipment, tools and materials from the designated area.
 - Identify a “sorting location” to place all unnecessary equipment, tools and materials and classify them according your sorting criteria. That criteria might include:
 - Discard
 - Re-Inventory
 - Unidentified
 - Repair and Re-Inventory
 -
- Sort and Tag all unnecessary materials. Tags on unknown or repair items must have a “complete by” date or should be discarded.
- Allow individuals from other areas to check for materials for their needs.
- Prepare to re-store necessary materials or equipment in newly designated and visual locations.



A Place for Everything and Everything in its Place!!

The layout of our areas must not be random and the only way to insure order is to plan, designate, clearly mark, and utilize areas appropriately and consistently. Materials, both incoming and finished, should have clearly marked, designed and protected floor or shelf space. Tool boxes should have designated storage areas, marked and replaced after use. Safety areas should be clearly identified so that materials or tools are not “parked” in walkways, electrical access, fire-extinguisher access, emergency access or switches, etc. Outlining areas and equipment on paper, assigning specific teams and involving people in improving both the layout and work flow makes a major impact in the efficiency of any area.

This process will “define” order for your area in the future and include the following:

- Ordered and visual storage of essential tools and equipment
- Ordered and visual storage of essential materials
- Communications centers with locations for:
 - Written communications
 - Phone and other necessary directories
 - Critical Files
 - Pads and critical supplies
 - Phones, radios, or other communications devices
 - Production communications
 - Essential Instruction and parts manuals
- Designated storage and pallet locations (outlined and visually identified)
- Designated walk and work areas (to be kept clear of materials and equipment)
- Visual instructions key to processes
- Clear, Ordered and visual location for specific cleaning materials and agents.



The White Glove Test!!

Our experience with TPM (Total Productive Maintenance) continues to highlight the importance of cleanliness to proper operation of high speed machinery. More than that, it applies to our entire work area. Equipment, floors, walls, overhead lights, walkways, areas under equipment all need to be deep cleaned regularly. Effective work areas usually assign specific equipment, floor space, etc. to individual teams so that the “scope” of keeping it clean and orderly is clear and focused. Old equipment and facilities are NOT an excuse – some of the cleanest facilities I’ve seen are 40+ years old. Scrubbing impacts not only our ability to see problems when they are small but also how our associates feel about the work environment.

To pass the White Glove Test – you may want to build processes to:

- Complete an Initial 5 S “Super Cleaning”
 - Identify and secure all “cleaning agents” necessary for facility and equipment deep cleaning.
 - Insure associates are trained on any hazards of cleaning agents
 - Systematically deep clean the assigned area.
 - Insure that regular cleaning assignments are made to maintain it after the super cleaning.
- Clarify operator, maintenance, or other associate responsibilities for regular and periodic deep cleaning of the area.
- Insure that the “working associates” in the area participate in and understand both:
 - The cleaning responsibilities and methods
 - The organization and order of the area
 - The system to account for their area of responsibility
- Take Before and After photos
 - Establish a visual accounting for “current conditions” and build a new understanding of what is acceptable and what is not.
 - Reward improvements
- Account, Account, Account
 - A drill sergeant regularly makes white glove tests of the areas within his responsibility – and so must we.



Practice Makes Permanent!!

Sorting, Straightening and Scrubbing sets the stage, now there must be a process for regular, periodic cleaning and reorganizing of materials equipment and facilities. We are creating a new culture, one that expects order, rather than accepting excuses of “too much to do to clean,” “too many problems, breakdowns,” “not enough help,” etc. All of these conditions probably exist, but by working together we can establish a new culture of order rather than clutter.

The saying “Practice Makes Permanent” is an “observed” phenomenon. “Where ever you go – There you are!!!” Practicing any skill in an ineffective way will not make you more skilled – in fact it will make the habits of ineffectiveness harder to break.

Some key helps in practicing the right processes and making them Permanent.

- Create “Visible” Order
 - Locations for tools must be clearly and individually marked.
 - Locations for resources and material must be clearly marked and have visible instructions
 - Inventory lists should be posted.
 - Nothing “critical” should be in a “book” somewhere that must be looked for an opened in order to replace materials.
- Process Steps also must be Visible
 - Cleaning steps should be posted
 - Cleaning responsibilities should be posted
 - Audits and accountability should be visible and public
- Locks should not be necessary
 - Locks usually hide contents of a tool box or cabinet as well as attempt to “control” access to them. Unfortunately, the lack of immediate visibility increases the chances that tools will be missing when needed.
 - Visible and enforced “counts” of equipment and materials reduces “borrowing” – but it has to be consistent.
- Lead by example
 - Leaders have to observe both effective and ineffective “practices”
 - Effective follow through should be noted and rewarded
 - Ineffective activity must be corrected and not allowed
 - Leaders have to do the new practice themselves and, if they miss something, be truly appreciative of being “corrected.”



Perfect Practice Makes Perfect!

Walt Disney had a saying “Real Leaders don’t sanction incompetence.” To insure that the culture of order becomes permanent, the leadership has to “recognize and point out” every variance from the new standards. That doesn’t mean a return to yelling and screaming about them, but it does mean teaching to everyone, all the time, that when ANYONE sees a substandard situation, that they will identify it properly, and insures that it is improved. Rex Boland calls it the “Perfect Attitude,” ever expecting to see the standard achieved then recognizing both when it is and when it isn’t with action.

Pianist Vladimir Horowitz was once interviewed by 60 minutes. He is considered by many to be the finest pianist of his time. When asked about his “practice schedule” now that he was in his 70’s he said. “If I miss a day of practice, I know the difference. If I miss two days, my audience will know the difference. If I miss three days, the world will know the difference.” That is a commitment to perfect practice.

We have to instill that in ourselves and in our other “leaders’ if we are to sustain an effective 5 S process.

- **Every day** we have to pay attention to “unnecessary” equipment or tools in our area.
- **Every day** we must see if things are in the right place and re-placed each shift.
- **Every day** we need to clean something, improving our ability to insure quality and effectiveness.
- **Every day** we must call someone’s attention to something they did “right” or something they could do better.
- **Every day** – not once a week and not once a month. Every day we have to vigilant.

The payoff is that everyone knows it’s important; the culture becomes safer for 5 S actions, less safe for ineffective, wasteful activity and more productive all around.



5 S's Planner and Action Sheet

<i>5 S Category</i>	<i>Specific actions needed within work area.</i>	<i>Lead Person</i>	<i>Target Date</i>
Sort (Seiri) Separate Items Eliminate unnecessary Items <i>(When in doubt, throw it out)</i>			
Straighten (Seiton) Align necessary items – Mark and Identify clearly the items and their location <i>(A place for everything and everything in its place)</i>			
Scrub (Seiso) Deep Clean machinery, floors, walls, etc. <i>(The White Glove Test)</i>			
Systematize (Seiketsu) Create a regular, periodic process for cleaning and organizing materials, equipment, facilities. <i>(Practice makes permanent)</i>			
Sustain (Shitsuke) Commit to sustain and continually improve. <i>(Perfect Practice makes perfect.)</i>			



A 5 S Reminder

You've done a great **Sort!!!**

You've **Straightened** and organized all necessary tools and resources!!!

You've **Scrubbed** and cleaned the floors, walls, equipment so it looks great!!!

You've **Systematized** the process by insuring that everyone is involved, connected and accountable for regular cleaning, organizing and improving!!!

You've **Sustained** the process for more than a year having regular, public accountability and audits of your areas and it's beginning to feel like "normal."

Now – what's left??? ---

....Do it again, in a "forgotten area" or at a deeper level.

Remember this is both a methodology for improving effectiveness and for regenerating energy, ideas, and possibilities. You will never get it "right the first time." When it becomes a discipline to continually improve this process – the "improve everything" mentality will permeate the culture.

As long as you are looking forward and looking for that next plateau of improvement – you cannot fall victim to the culture and habits of the past. But as soon as you think you've arrived – you begin to decline.

Remember – with respect to improvement---

Good Enough – Never Is!!!