

# EPICENTRAL

A Newsletter from Epicenter Development Group highlighting ideas that improve organizations

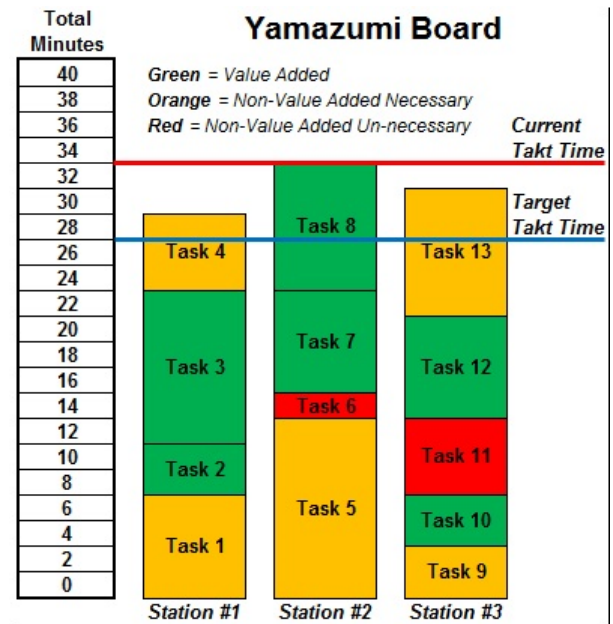
Welcome to Epicenter Development Group's newsletter, EPICentral. The purpose of this newsletter is to highlight fundamental ideas that have helped organizations develop and maintain great manufacturing and service operations. We hope that you find our EPICentral newsletter helpful, and we would welcome your comments on its content.

## Yamazumi Boards - Stack Up to Process Improvements

In this month's newsletter, we highlight a simple process improvement tool called the Yamazumi Board. "Yamazumi," which means "to stack up" in Japanese, is essentially a visual tool for showing how value added and non-value added tasks "stack up" within a process. As a visual tool it can help teams of people to identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement, track improvement efforts, and balance work between employees or workstations.

### Making a Yamazumi Board:

1. **Identify the operation to study.** This tool can be used to evaluate a wide variety of activities - industrial, office and personal.
2. **Document the tasks.** Through direct observation, document the actual tasks that were performed to complete an activity from start to finish. It can be valuable to do this using a video camera.
3. **Document the duration of each task.** Remember to document ALL of the time - not just how long it should have taken to complete a task.
4. **Classify each task.** Each task should be classified as value added, non-value added but necessary, or non-value added and not necessary.
5. **Generate the chart.** Using the information developed, you can now generate a Yamazumi chart using a software tool like MS Excel (stacked bar chart). The example above shows a simple Yamazumi chart that identifies value added (green), non-value added but necessary (orange) and non-value added and not necessary (red) tasks for assembly line workstation activities.
6. **Generate the board.** One of the main goals of this process is to use the information generated as a



continuous improvement tool out in the workplace. With this in mind, the developed chart can be converted to a Yamazumi Board by either attaching the printed chart to a board by the workstation or by creating task "pieces" that can be affixed to the workstation board using magnets, Velcro or a sticky medium.

7. **Use the board!** It is important to remember that the Yamazumi board is only a tool. No improvement will occur unless it is actively used. This means that people should be actively encouraged to use the board and track progress on a regular basis. General questions to ask can include: How could this task be eliminated? How could the task duration be shortened? Could a new method or tool be used to reduce the time associated with this task? Would a change in the workplace layout lead to improvement? By how much?

### Considerations:

- "Pretty" charts are nice; but remember that, in the end, the point is to use this as a tool for change. The key point is to create a mechanism to help your team to visually "see" where improvement is possible and to take action. Feel free to modify the Yamazumi Board tool so that it can be effectively used within your organization.
- This tool can be used to evaluate a wide variety of processes: equipment changeovers, office work, purchasing processes, assembly line balancing, weekly planning (personal).
- Epicenter encourages its clients and business partners to develop their own standard "toolbox" of tools that they can effectively use to plan, design and improve their operations.
- Practice! Practice! Practice! - As with any tool, Epicenter encourages people to practice using the Yamazumi Board to hone their skills and increase its value.
- If you would like more information on the Yamazumi tool or would like to give us feedback on this article, please contact us at 216-548-7136 or [cscott@epicentergroup.com](mailto:cscott@epicentergroup.com)

### Next Steps

If you would like more information on this topic or other similar types of tools, please contact Bill Proctor with your request at [wproctor@epicentergroup.com](mailto:wproctor@epicentergroup.com) or 216-702-0952. You can also find previous issues of EPICentral at [Newsletters](#).

Mr. Proctor also speaks on a variety of problem-solving and system design topics that can help companies significantly increase the success and profitability of their businesses. If you are interested in having Bill speak at one of your upcoming meetings/events or would like more information on any of the speaking topics, please visit [Speaker Services](#) or you can email [sales@epicentergroup.com](mailto:sales@epicentergroup.com).

Epicenter Development Group is a unique consulting firm that seamlessly integrates the disciplines of Systems Engineering and Organizational Analysis & Development to create practical design solutions to your toughest challenges. It is on the cutting edge of problem-solving solutions and the creator of a unique process called GreenRoom Engineering. This process adds greater value and cost savings for clients as compared to traditional engineering

### Epicenter News



methods.

William Proctor, Epicenter's founder and president, has provided services around the country to more than 100 companies consisting of a variety of organizations; and Epicenter continues to grow as a resource for firms of all sizes.

**To learn more about Epicenter Development Group, visit our website:**

**[www.epicentergroup.com](http://www.epicentergroup.com)**

#### **Quick Links**

[Comments/Suggestions](#)

[Archive](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)