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.

The Lure of Data Collection: Building Information Systems That Help Create Business Intelligence

I think that most professionals would agree that it is important to collect operational data to understand current costs and capacity constraints; evaluate how well your systems are working; and determine what areas should be targeted for improvement. In many cases, however, we find that data collection systems that have been implemented do not provide information accurately, in a timely manner, or in a way that helps decision-makers to make better decisions. This month's article will outline some features of a robust, "healthy" data collection system and introduce a new data collection/analysis tool called "FieldPoint" that is used by Epicenter within our data collection processes.

### Features of a Healthy "Business Intelligence" Process:

1. **Data is Tied to a Specific Purpose -** Collecting data just "because you can" is not a good reason, and organizations should take a regular inventory of data being collected to determine if it is still required to meet their organizational goals.
2. **Data is Easy to Understand -** Information is not knowledge, and it is important that people can "see" what the data is saying. The proper use of charts, graphs and other visual aids can help make the data more intuitive and easy to understand.
3. **Data is Presented in a Timely Manner -** If data is going to be used to identify and problem-solve issues, then it is very important that it is available as soon as possible. This is one value of posting data right at a workstation where it can be seen by operators, team leaders and supervisors.
4. **Data is Accurate** - You have probably heard the statement "garbage in garbage out." For data to be useful and "trustworthy" it needs to be accurate enough to meet the organization's objectives.
5. **The Data Collection/Reporting Process is Efficient** - The method for collecting data needs to be streamlined and efficient. Multiple data hand-offs and manual data entry should be avoided if possible.

FieldPoint Software Application:

The FieldPoint software is part of Epicenter's data collection/analysis process. FieldPoint is an iDevice (iTouch, iPad, iPhone) system that allows people to easily collect, consolidate and review field data:

- **Intuitive** - FieldPoint is an intuitive mobile application that can collect a variety of data types (audio, barcode, photos, GPS location, memos, numbers, signatures).
- **Wireless** - Collected data is wirelessly transferred to a secure web-based portal for remote access and use.
- **Flexible** - The software is extremely flexible through the use of our unique template-building process and can be used to build a variety of applications (shop-floor data collection, electronic kanbans, studies, vehicle tracking, etc.).
- **Cost-Effective** - FieldPoint is easy to setup and requires little or no upfront investment.

To learn more about the FieldPoint software tool, you can go to transfertechnologies.net or contact Bill Proctor at 216-702-0952.
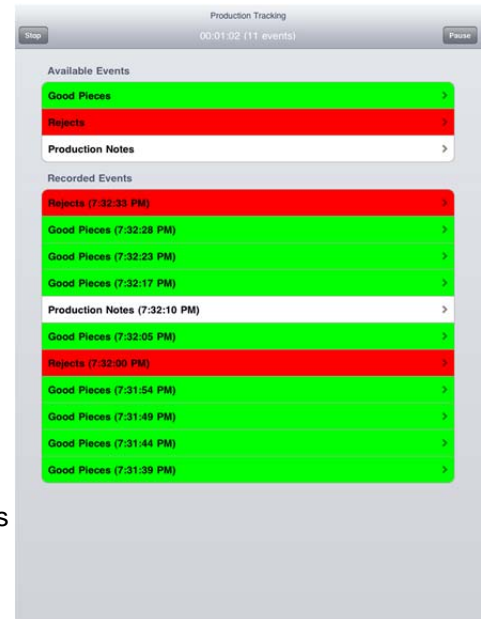
Considerations:

- Consider "cleaning house" and eliminating any data collection efforts where the data is not used. Strictly speaking, data collection is a non-value added activity unless the data is used to add value for your customer.
- The implemention of sustainable data collection systems requires both a process that is efficient and repeatable AND a culture that supports it (accurate and consistent). Changing a culture requires sustained effort through the development of new habits.
- Consider where it is most appropriate to post data. Information that affects the whole facility might be posted by the front door while information that applies to a specific work station might be put on a display board within an area.
- 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.
- If you would like more information on data collection tools or would like to give us feedback on this article, please contact us at 216-702-0952 or sales@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 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.

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 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.

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