



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 Consequences of "Practice Makes Perfect"

Have you ever considered the statement of "practice makes perfect?" In the sports world, we know that top athletes spend enormous amounts of time and energy practicing their putting, foul shots or tennis serve so that they can consistently perform well while in the game. In the manufacturing world, top performers also practice. They practice equipment changeovers between products, machining, welding and all sorts of assembly procedures in order to be highly productive while on the shop floor. The idea is that, through active repetition, we create habits that support a consistent, efficient use of our time and enable high performance teams to work together in a seamless way.

So what happens when you don't have an active program for creating "good" habits? **Like it or not, we are always practicing and getting better at something.** Therefore, if people in the plant use poor work methods, they become "experts" in low productivity. If people continue to take two hours to changeover a process using a sloppy method, people eventually become "experts" in long changeovers and sloppy techniques. The point is that if you do not actively promote "good" habits, then you could be inadvertently fostering the development of unproductive habits and making things worse.

Being aware of and actively promoting behaviors and methods that support your business goals is part of a leader's role within an organization. With that in mind, here are some steps that you can take to design and foster good habits within your organization.

Eight Steps Toward Developing Good Work Habits

1. **Identify all of the activities required to successfully complete each major process. Example:** "The New Product Development process includes: Identify Market Needs --> Brainstorm new ideas --> Validate concept ideas --> Etc."
2. **Determine which of the individual activities will have the biggest impact on the end result. Example:** "If we do not clearly identify the market needs, then we will develop products that people won't buy."
3. **Redesign the individual activities to standard "best practice" work methods and document the process. Example:** "The best way to identify the market needs, based upon our research and experience, is to . . ."
4. **Develop visual aids and tools to reinforce the proper way to complete each of the**

- individual activities. Example:** Create a checklist that lists the steps of the "Identify Market Needs" activity that can be used to verify when the overall activity is fully complete.
5. **Communicate the new "best practice" work methods. Example:** Conduct a training class with all people involved in the New Product Development process around the new "best practice" work methods.
 6. **Practice using the standard. Example:** Complete a number of trial runs using the new standard. Give people feedback on their performance against the standard process (did they skip steps or do the steps incorrectly?) and measure progress.
 7. **Put systems in place to monitor the use of the standard. Example:** Schedule a periodic audit to ensure that people are consistently using proper work methods, and provide feedback.
 8. **Continuously seek to improve the "best practice" work methods. Example:** Have a system in place to identify and implement new methods and tools for improving the process.

Right now, your employees are practicing. They are designing new products, manufacturing goods and servicing your customers. Are they building "good" habits that support your company's competitive plan? If not, you might want to consider replacing those old habits with new ones. Old habits are hard to break, but some new habits are worth fighting for.

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

Epicenter News

We are happy to announce that we have opened a second office in Perrysburg, Ohio.



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:

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