



EPICENTRAL

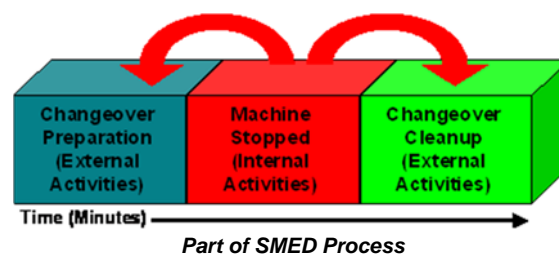
A Newsletter from Epicenter Development Group
highlighting ideas that improve organizations

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.

Lessons Learned When Reducing Changeover Times

In the February 2014 EPICentral article [The "Pit Crew" Approach to Changeovers - SMED](#), we outlined the seven-step SMED process for reducing changeover times within your organization. This approach can be a valuable tool towards a Lean system transformation as it enables organizations to migrate from a "Build to Stock" to a "Build to Order" mentality and to dramatically reduce inventory and non-value added activities.

Although SMED can unlock significant savings, experience has shown that it also requires a commitment to continuously improve and learn and a willingness to work through implementation issues when they arise. In this month's newsletter, we are going to review some of our key learnings that have been compiled over the past fifteen years of implementing SMED.



- **Stack the Deck in Your Favor.** In some of our most successful events, we hand-picked the best people to be on our first team. Not only were they energized to make improvements, but they paved the way by showing what is possible. This helped to create the initial momentum to expand the effort across all shifts and areas.
- **Start By Understanding the Current Situation.** There is always a reason that current changeover times are longer than desired/necessary. To truly create a sustainable improvement, it is important to understand and address any issues (technical or cultural) that are getting in the way of streamlining the process.
- **Create a Compelling Need to Reduce Changeovers.** "Necessity is the mother of invention." It is very difficult to drive people to reduce changeover times when

there is no immediate, compelling need. So if changeover time reductions are necessary to meet your overall Lean goals, then you will want to create the conditions where the need is easy to see. For example, start the process of reducing the order batch sizes so that changeovers must occur more frequently.

- **Continuously Track Progress Towards the Goal.** What is measured is considered important. Successful SMED implementation usually include the regular tracking of changeover time (time of last part from previous order to first good part of next order). This information should be regularly reviewed and used to identify and act upon issues or improvements, especially if the changeover duration was unusually long or short.
- **Deal with Issues When They Arise.** Implementation issues WILL arise, and it is important to address them as soon as possible. For example, one organization had some production shifts that were not following the SMED plan. This created friction between the shifts that undermined the entire SMED process.
- **Celebrate the Win.** It is really inspiring to see some of the significant changeover improvements made by our clients. Giving out "Kudos" to a project team is an important part of creating a culture that cares. This might mean recognizing a team of people in organizational meetings, spending time on the manufacturing floor thanking people for their contributions and/or thanking the team with a free lunch, donuts, pizza, etc. The more appreciation, the better.
- **SMED Only Works if the Culture Supports It.** As engineers, we would like to think that all issues can be solved with a technical solution. The reality, however, is that most Lean systems (including SMED) are only sustainable if the culture supports them. So while SMED sometimes involves technical solutions, don't forget that it is the people that will sustain, maintain and further improve the systems that are implemented today.

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.

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

www.epicentergroup.com

Epicenter News

Epicenter is excited to be working with Chore-Time on a facilities planning project.



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