

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.

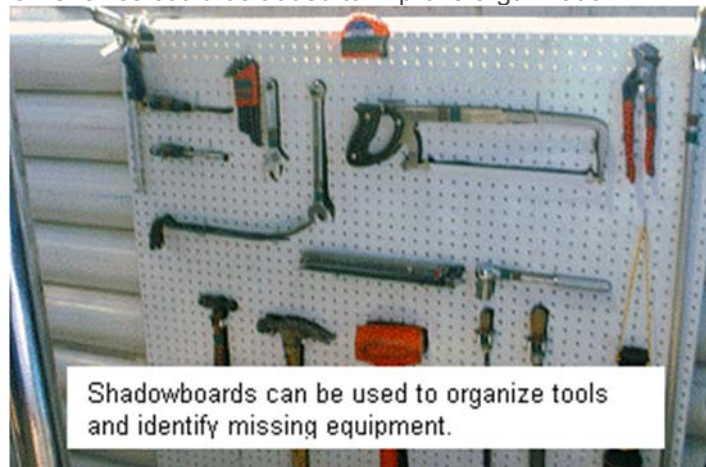
5S - A Fundamental Approach for Building Workplace Organization

Have you ever noticed that it is easier to get things done when you have a clean, organized workspace? A bright, well-cared-for work area not only eliminates the wasted time to find things while working around the clutter, but it also instills a sense of pride in one's work. This is the idea behind the "5S" philosophy - a fundamental LEAN concept for creating and sustaining workplace organization. To illustrate the 5S process and how it is used, we will apply the principles to a common household task - cleaning a basement.

The 5S Process

Step #1 (Sort) - When you clean your basement, one of the first steps you probably take is to sort the things in disarray. What do you want to keep? What things need to be stored together (winter clothes, paint, etc.)? We might throw out or donate anything that is no longer needed.

Step #2 (Straighten/Set in Order) - Once you have sorted through your stuff, it is time to put them in their proper places. Do they go in drawers, on shelves, in a toolbox, or are they neatly stacked on the floor? You want items visible so you can find them the next time you need to use them. Perhaps a few shelves could be added to improve organization.



Shadowboards can be used to organize tools and identify missing equipment.

Step #3 (Shine/Scrub) - Now that everything is off the counter and the floor, it's time to sweep and dust. This is the time to identify things that need to be repaired or replaced like that frayed cord, broken light bulb or loose screws on the racking. Is that a crack in the concrete?

Step #4 (Standardize) - This is where things sometimes fall apart. If we're smart, we standardize our clean basement by labeling drawers and cabinets or taking a picture of the room (to show our children how the room is suppose to look). We may even want to give our family a tour of the basement to show them what a clean basement should look like.



Step #5 (Sustain) - In order to keep the basement clean, we need to set guidelines like "you can't take out new things until the old things are put away" or schedule a once-a-month review and cleaning of the basement. The goal is to keep the basement clean all of the time.

Your ability to maintain a clean and organized workspace will now depend on how well you standardize and sustain the effort. Like in your manufacturing plant or office, 5S involves discipline and a sense of ownership and pride - fundamental tenants for any sustainable improvement or LEAN initiative. This is why many people believe that the implementation of 5S is a good starting point for becoming a world-class organization.

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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