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.

Creating a Supportive Facilities Layout

As an industrial systems engineer and general Lean practitioner, I am always looking for ways to improve and streamline the design process. Over the past thirty years this has led to the development of a number of standardized tools for activities such as analyzing material flow and equipment capacity, improving equipment changeover times and understanding storage requirements. This newsletter provides an overview of one of the tools that I use when developing facility layouts.

The Lean Layout Checklist

Because facility layout design projects typically involve a large number of considerations, it is helpful to have a checklist of "good" design characteristics available to critique design alternatives. Checklists are great because they provide a method for fully evaluating a design in a standardized and structured way. The Lean Layout Checklist includes over 100 items to consider in the following areas (some considerations listed).

- **Aisles** (clearly marked, straight, flow along major lines of material flow, no dead ends, etc.)

- **Work Spaces** (all required tools/supplies, visual aids/work instructions, adequate trash containers, material staging areas, equipment clearance, easy to keep clean, supports smooth operator movement, etc.)

- **Storage Areas** (locations identified/marked, materials stored close to point of use, use of vertical space, empty pallet storage space designated, etc.)

- **Receiving/Shipping Areas** (adequate number of docks, conducive to good flow, incoming audit area?, hazardous material storage?, staging area for incoming materials, etc.)

- **Support Areas** (close to areas/people that they support, maintenance, quality assurance, break rooms, meeting spaces, etc.)

- **Inventory Considerations** (fixed sizes/location for materials, Kanban systems as possible, elimination of obsolete materials and unused equipment, etc.)

- **Other Considerations** (appropriate lighting, information center locations, building egress to match building codes, visual systems, handling of noisy and dirty operations, etc.)

Other Thoughts:

- A main point is to consider is how checklists can be used to support standard "best practice" processes. Checklists can be effectively used for a variety of things from evaluating layouts to preparing materials for equipment changeovers.

- If you would like a copy of the entire checklist, please contact me at wproctor@epicentergroup.com.

- The checklist includes a column for listing areas of concern (for the specific consideration) and a column for listing possible improvements.

- If you are interested in learning more about checklists, consider the book "The Checklist Manifesto - How to Get Things Right" by Atul Gawande.

- If you are interested in learning more about the work that Epicenter has completed in the area of facilities planning and design, you can visit our webpage at Epicenter Facilities Planning.

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:

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