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 in Work Standards Development

The concept of "Best Practice" work standards is a foundation of world-class systems and includes the labor process being used, the workplace layout, the tools/equipment, and the resulting task time associated with this system. The idea is that if people consistently use a standard "Best Practice" work method in a well-designed workstation layout and with the proper tools, they will reliably produce products and services at the highest quality and lowest overall cost regardless of who does the work. This article is about lessons that we have learned over the past thirty years when developing and implementing Best Practice work standards within organizations.

Some Lessons Learned:

- ***People need to be formally trained***. Too many organizations rely on the "learning on the job" approach to training new hires. This can lead to people being trained by others that are using incorrect methods that are potentially unsafe, lead to poor quality and are inefficient.
- ***The focus should be on the correct use of the process and not on the results***. Organizations will often focus on <u>results</u> versus making sure that people are using the correct <u>methods</u>. Unfortunately, in a results-focused system, this can lead to people "cheating" to get better results. This could include "cutting-corners" on high importance/low urgent items like quality measures, safety measures, and equipment maintenance.
- ***Consider the use of digital video for training.*** One of the best ways to learn a new skill or process is to watch it being done from start to finish. Consider the use of digital video (with narrative) to demonstrate an experienced person completing the process. The video documents the process and can be used both for new hires and for people needing a reminder of how the process should be completed.
- ***Create systems to sustain the process***. Until processes become so ingrained in the culture that they are habits ("This is how we do this."), it is important to

monitor adherence to the process. Consider systems to regularly audit/monitor the use of approved work practices and initiate corrective action (or appreciation) as needed to reinforce the processes.

- ***Use task times to flag issues***. I know that the use of stopwatches seems, well, old-fashioned. The time it takes to complete a task is, however, a great way to flag potential issues with the process. (ex: people not using the correct method, equipment issues, or quality problems)
- ***Use task times to identify/prioritize process improvements.*** A well-planned time study can not only be used to determine the labor and costs involved in making a current or future product but can also be used as a basis for process improvement projects. The focus should be on tasks that take a long time to complete but could be significantly shortened with improved tools or an improved workstation layout.
- ***Consider the Use of Pre-Determined Work Measurement Systems***. The use of stopwatches to develop task time estimates that are statistically accurate is a long and arduous process. A number of systems, like MOST, are available today that can <u>significantly</u> reduce the time associated with developing these standards.
- ***Related EpiCentral Articles***. We have already covered the "how-to" of this topic in the EpiCentral articles "<u>Getting Back to Basics - Development of Best Practice Work Methods</u>", "<u>Labor Standards - Maximizing Your Most Valuable Asset</u>", and "<u>The Consequences of "Practice Makes Perfect</u>."

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 <u>wproctor@epicentergroup.com</u> or 216-702-0952. You can also find previous issues of EPICentral at <u>Newsletters</u>.

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 <u>Speaker Services</u> or you can email <u>sales@epicentergroup.com</u>.

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.

Epicenter News

Epicenter is excited to be working with NAMSA on a facilities planning project.

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