

5S can pave the way to lean success

Paul Wilson, Managing Director of Aster Training has rolled out many 5S implementation programmes for companies throughout the UK.

Paul takes up the story, “Some organisations we work with initially tend to think they have a unique set of problems or operating conditions which would make 5S and the other lean tools difficult to implement. The reality tends to be very different. Once we get over the initial hurdle of the ‘buy-in’ of the management team, progress and improvements can be rapid.

The mechanics of 5S implementation are relatively easy and straightforward but where organisations can make a mistake is by failing to build in objective review mechanisms designed to identify how far the workforce has bought into the programme. 5S is about making everyone responsible and accountable for their work areas, not just the enthusiastic few.

5S is also a company wide improvement programme and therefore needs ‘champions’ in every participating area both ‘talking the talk’ and ‘walking the walk’ on a daily basis. If this is not achieved early on it is likely the company will have difficulty sustaining the 5S project in the longer term. Failure at this early stage will make it very difficult to resurrect the 5S project at a later date because of the entrenched views and attitudes generated as a result of initial failure.

It is therefore essential we get it right first time. At Aster we focus heavily on building the confidence of the 5S project leaders by getting them to use an Aster designed ‘structured framework’ of priority based implementation activities. This allows the project leaders to follow a ‘proven path to 5S success’ freeing up their time to act as both mentors and coaches to their team members thus ensuring the smooth introduction of the programme. By doing it this way we can bring about sustainable cultural change within an organisation thus making it easier to implement other lean manufacturing tools when the time is right”.Additional Notes

5S is one of the cornerstones of a lean manufacturing programme.

5S, also known as 5C or CANDO is concerned with the elimination of the ‘7 wastes’ by the introduction of world class workplace organisation and housekeeping.

What are the 7 Wastes?

By reviewing just 7 wastes in our business, we can account for over 80% of the waste we are likely to find in both an office and factory environment.

Paul Wilson
Managing Director
Aster Training