

“Leadership to Support the Pathway for Operator Excellence”

The 2011 **TPM & Lean Annual Forum** got off to a flying start with **CTPM President** Ross Kennedy delivering the key note address on how Leadership is required to create the Vision, Structure and Capability to support the pathway for Operator Excellence.

Held at the Citigate Central Hotel, Sydney on Tuesday 2 August 2011, Ross’s opening address provided an exciting review of how CTPM’s thinking has developed over the past 15 years.

Figure 1 – Ross presenting at the Forum



He first addressed the question of what is Operator Excellence and what role does it play in minimising Operational Risk. As our plants and processes become more complex and the number of operational and support staff continues to dwindle, the capability of the operators become a greater imperative.

If we can get our frontline operators and maintainers to care for the equipment by identifying defects and problems at the earliest possible time then we will have a plant that will not only be clean and tidy but one which will have substantially **reduced Operational Risk**.

The new analogy being used for Operator Excellence is that of the Formula 1 driver. The Formula 1 driver is not someone who just hops into their machine and operates it for a couple of hours but is someone who is an excellent operator and understands the functioning of the equipment, in order to diagnose problems on the run. They are supported by a highly skilled and motivated support crew who together create a winning team.

This example is a great demonstration of the three types of skills needed for operator excellence.

- **Base Skills:** - The operator is able to competently operate the equipment;
- **Team Skills:** - Able to be an integral player in the team achieving synergy; and
- **Mastery Skills:** - Able to diagnose safety, quality and equipment problems at the source as they happen.

There must be a structure in place to support the pathway for Operator Excellence. In our experience superior results occur when production and maintenance rosters are aligned and there is a leadership span of about 1 to 4-8.

In order to obtain the vision of Operator Excellence, organisations need to create the opportunity for each employee to participate and contribute in formal continuous improvements in a routine and predictable way.

The final piece in the jigsaw is for the leader(s) to provide the direction for the various activities that are being undertaken. Apart from having a Company Vision to distinguish the overall company direction in the market place, we have seen successful companies develop a further three visions:

- **Improvement Vision** which defines what the site is trying to achieve and by when;
- **Operator Excellence Vision** which provides the guidance for how the operators are to develop in order to meet the improvement and operations vision; and
- **Operations Vision** which will define how the plant is to be operated.

CTPM support these three visions by a set of milestones to gauge the sites progress, for which we call the **5 level Milestone TPM³ Excellence Award**.

The combination of these three visions to establish Leadership direction and structure, with the development of operator skill, and a coach to provide guidance, will ultimately lead your organisation to World Class Performance!

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