

## Sweet Savings from Sweet Water



For the second year running Sugar Australia – Yarraville, Victoria has had one of its many successful Improvement Teams make it to the “Aussie Cup” team competition final at the CTPM Annual Forum held in Sydney on the 2 August 2011. The **“Sweet As”** team gave an insightful presentation on how they achieved **73% reduction** in Trade Waste cost, saving their site an average of **\$5,000 per week** or **\$250k per annum** by using the Micro Focused Process Improvement methodology.

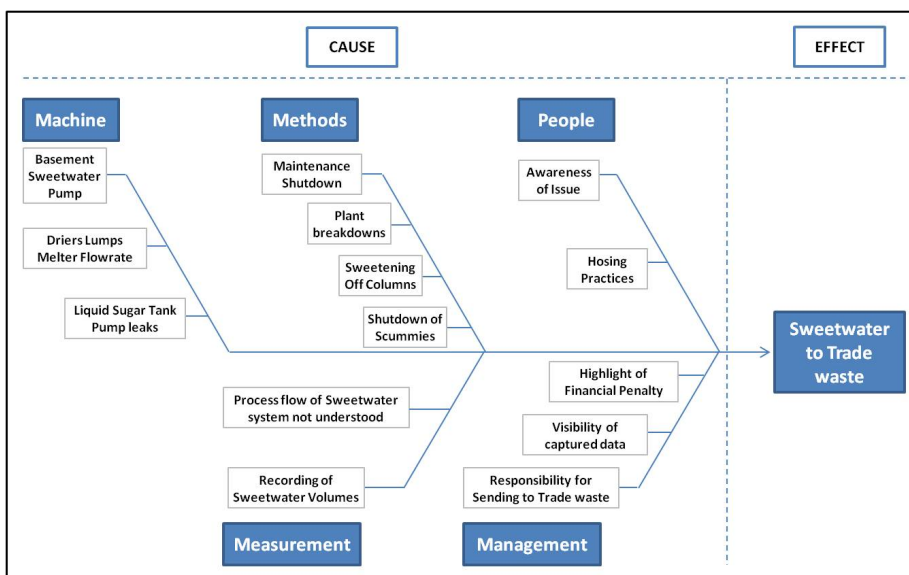
The “Sweet Water” Cross-functional Team was set the challenging mandate to reduce the amount of Sweetwater (SW) pumped to Trade Waste by 50%. Sweetwater is produced as part of the sugar refining process and any excess SW not consumed has to be diverted to trade waste. It’s a real balancing act.

analysis was supported with a Cause & Effect diagram listing possible causes for generating too much SW (as seen in Figure 1 below).

This analysis identified a number of improvement opportunities which were implemented to both reduce the amount of excess SW being generated and consume more of it. The improvements included;

- Simplified the SW process wherever possible by redirecting pipe work and additional manual valves to allow SW flow to be re-directed as needed;
- Substituting SW for cold / hot water in certain processes;
- Fixing leaks in pumps and valves, while replacing missing spray nozzles and worn seals;
- Installing hand guns on a number of hoses throughout the refinery; and
- Measuring and reporting on SW levels daily (simply raising awareness).

**Figure 1 – SW Cause & Effect Diagram**



The first challenge faced by the team was to process map a very complex SW pipe work system to fully understand the current process and identify any potential problem areas. This

team to implement more improvements identified. This is continuous improvement working at its best!!!

What really made this team a standout is that it has been able to accomplish both tangible and intangible results. The intangible benefits were best demonstrated by the Operator in the team having the ***“Final Say”*** (as he put it), during the team’s presentation at the forum. Sharing his thoughts on what he really thought of the improvement activity on site, here is just a short excerpt on what he had to say in front of the delegates:

***“...12 months ago as a operator down there, we wouldn’t of given you ‘2 bob’ for TPM, it meant nothing to us, heard it all before, seen it all before...”***

***...but as time rolls on and you get invited on a team, I guess you grow with the team and you get to learn a bit, you get involved with engineers and managers and sit around the same table...***

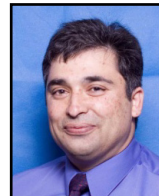
***...you all give your ‘2 bob’ worth and everyone is equal.”***

***“Operators are now starting to take a bit of interest... and it does work!”***

Although still in its early stages, it’s this type of positive experience and personal development that propagates culture change and will continue to drive and sustain the site’s improvement activity for years to come.

CTPM would like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate the “Sweet As” team on their excellent achievements and for being runners up in this year’s Aussie Cup competition.

For further information please contact:



**Larry Mazza**

Director

Phone: 0408 743 214

Head Office: +61 2 4226 6184

Website: [www.ctpm.org.au](http://www.ctpm.org.au)