CTPM Australasia
Specialising in TPM & Lean (TPM³)
enews
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'SWIFT' Problem Solving @ Norske Skog Albury

When you are in the fast paced business of making paper for newsprint, forming a process improvement team called 'The SWIFTS' appropriately captures the need to maintain speed and good output.

In May 2011 a Cross-functional Team was formed at **Norske Skog's Albury Paper Making Plant** to address issues with sheet widening. Successful sheet widening at the final stage of the paper making process is critical to producing a finished roll of paper. Unsuccessful widening results in a break in the sheet being produced, resulting in lost production time and reject paper. The team was asked to implement improvements so as to improve the success rate for attempts at sheet widening.

Figure 1 – The SWIFT'S Team

Right to Left: Damien, Trevor, Trevor, Darren, Andrew and John

Although the site has a strong foundation in root cause analysis, they had a desire to further enhance their problem solving capabilities. To tackle 'The SWIFTS' sheet widening quandary, CTPM's **Focused Equipment & Process Improvement (FE&PI)** activity was selected. This incorporates a structured 9 step problem solving process, which was ideal for guiding the team through their analysis and also developing their desired capabilities through a team based approach.

By the end of the team's improvement activity much had been achieved. The ability to correctly analyse the current situation, develop a vision of improved performance and identify possible root causes. All in which, lead to a pilot proposed solution that was implemented in late July 2011. With the results measured daily, the team was able to report the success rate for attempts at sheet widening improved from **74%** (June 2011) to **92%** (August 2011). This equates to more than **$150,000** additional contribution margin.

At the completion of the improvement activity, the team presented their results and gave a detailed account of their numerous learnings to the Site Leadership Team. The most influential learnings included:

- The structured approach helped to break down large problems into smaller chunks, and allow tasks to be shared more evenly;
- The analysis conducted increased the teams understanding of the machine;
- The use of a Cross-functional Team was critical to obtain different views on the problem at hand;
- The use of operator surveys, process maps, and improvement sheets as tools to help define and rectify the problem;
- The ability to stick to the twelve week / meeting plan and its schedule of activities brought about greater team focus and discipline to carry out tasks; and
- The placement of the Team Noticeboard in a high traffic area increased vital communication throughout the site.

Though the end result was extremely successful, the team knew that they must continue using their newly learnt knowledge to improve and build on their current gains.

The future actions the team proposed for the Site was to:

"Continue to use this structured approach"

Under the guidance of its Accredited TPM^3 Instructor Michael McNamara and with the support of CTPM, further Cross-functional Teams are being formed to address specific looses and wastes as the entire site stays focused on higher production efficiencies.

CTPM would like to congratulate The SWIFT'S Team on their great achievement and we wish Norske Skog – Albury all the best throughout their journey to World Class Performance!

For further information please contact:

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