

# Identifying and Managing Future Shock

by Ross Kennedy – President, CTPM Australasia

All companies identify projects to assist them to become more successful. These projects may be department initiatives, site initiatives or they could come about from a variety of other sources such as corporate directives or changes to government requirements.

Often these projects are evaluated in isolation to other projects outside the boundaries of the initiating department. At this time they are deemed necessary and important to progress. Often they may be linked to personal development appraisals and performance bonuses of the project champion or champions.

Unfortunately what is often not considered is the impact each project has on Frontline Leaders in say 6 or 12 months time when their involvement in adopting the new initiative becomes critical.

This is often symptomatic of Frontline Leaders being called away from their own normal duties to attend special or urgent meetings to resolve the finer details of a project, learn new processes and procedures or to rectify teething problems with the implementation.



***Future Shock is where projects commenced some time back, pervade an organisation to the point where they start to affect the most important people – those directly responsible for the value adding activities of producing the product or service.***



The overload of extra meetings etc on key people in the organisation ie Frontline Supervisors and Team Leaders can lead to the point where they become dysfunctional due to the build up of the frustration of not being able to get their normal tasks completed to the quality level they pride themselves in.

## **How do we best overcome Future Shock?**

Firstly, a review should be conducted to determine whether the affects of Future Shock are already present or whether there is a risk that Future Shock could affect the site. To do this all improvement projects planned for, or progressing at the site should be identified and evaluated to understand the true resource requirements of each project and the magnitude of any potential / future impact on Frontline Leaders.

The review should also try to identify whether the resources allocated to each project are being utilised effectively.

## **Suggested Actions**

Conduct a survey of all Managers (and Supervisors) to identify all current, planned and potential improvement projects documenting such in a simple consistent format (need to keep each project to less than one page). Possible format could include a paragraph or 3 dot points on:

- A. Current Situation – the opportunity
- B. Resources required along with timeframes
- C. Expected Outcome – the tangible benefits under the framework of the site's Key Success Factors along with any expected intangible benefits (a suitable template can be helpful here)
- D. Expected impact on the Frontline eg who will need to be trained to do something different

The projects should then be prioritised based on the expected outcome they will have on the site's Key Success Factors or statutory requirements (eg change of law requires project to be completed within a certain timeframe).

## **Reality Check**

Have every Manager, Supervisor and Team Leader list the regular meetings, and if appropriate training workshops, they attend each week and month along with planned time and actual time. Also list any unplanned meeting that occurred in the past 1-2 weeks and the time they consumed. Classify the meetings into categories such as:

- Achieving the Production Plan eg Daily Review Meetings
- Communication Briefings



- Project Meetings
- Pro-active Improvement Team Meetings and Activities
- Reactive Improvement Meetings and Activities
- Other

## Assessing the Situation

Determine how much time you want Frontline Supervisors and Team Leaders to attend meetings regarding the categories above eg Pro-active improvement meetings and activities might be at a maximum 10% and Reactive Improvement might be 5% per week.

If Frontline Leaders are in Future Shock because the number of improvement project meetings have become out of hand, then we suggest you prioritise all key improvement projects (this should also provide an opportunity to rationalise some of the projects so they fall under a common banner) recognising as a general rule of thumb 5-7 key projects at a site significantly raises the probabilities of creating Future Shock and dysfunctional behaviour within the workplace.

To mitigate the impact of Future Shock, there needs to be agreement on the number of key projects to be progressed at any one time. The rest need to be put on hold or deferred until one of the agreed initiatives is completed and time permits the commencement of another project.

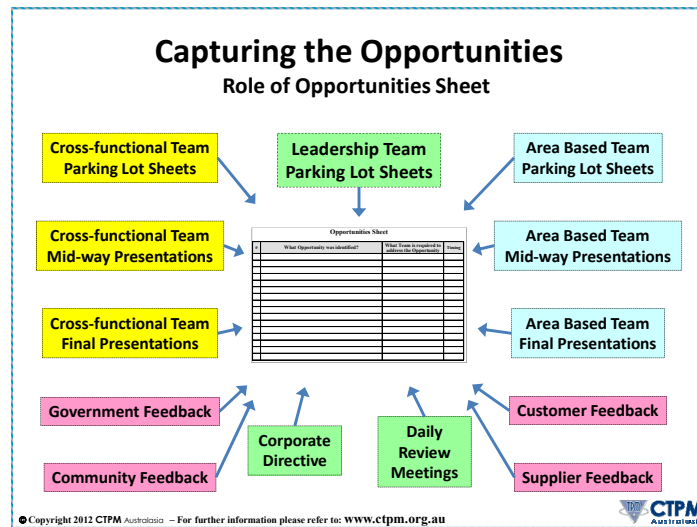
Then there is the need to monitor and control all the agreed projects along with their sub activities through the one Site Leadership Team so that their impact on Frontline resources can be limited to an agreed level.

## Managing the TPM<sup>3</sup> Activities to avoid Future Shock

From a TPM<sup>3</sup> perspective our general rule of thumb is all people on site (apart from dedicated improvement support staff such as your TPM<sup>3</sup> Co-ordinator) should ideally be only a member of one Cross-functional Team and one Area Based Team at any one time.

A key aim or goal of TPM<sup>3</sup> is to create an environment where ultimately all people will be involved in Area Based Team improvement activities for 5% of their time (eg Work Area Management or Operator Equipment Management) and in Cross-functional Team improvement activities 5% of their time so as to develop their problem solving skills which can be utilised to better achieve the production plan along with releasing the potential of the site's people to contribute to strategically driven improvements.

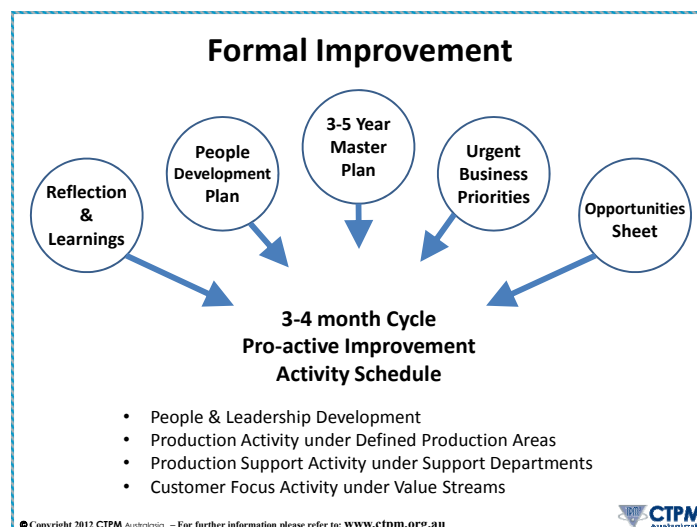
As such, as the TPM<sup>3</sup> journey progresses, possible Cross-functional Team improvement activities will be identified from various sources which should be captured on the Site Leadership Team's Opportunities Sheet or similar tool:



It is only by documenting all possible Cross-functional Team improvement activities and any other improvement activities in a standard format and prioritising such on a regular basis (pre-cycle strategy or quarterly review workshops) can the changing needs of the business be incorporated into the resource allocation and prioritisation of the activities.

Obviously, the resource allocation to formal improvement activities (how many do we initiate at any given time) becomes a key task for the responsible Leadership Team.

Below is a summary of the sources of information which should be used by each Leadership Team as they prepare their next cycle's improvement schedule.



**For more information about preventing Future Shock or CTPM's approach to Proactive and Reactive Improvement, please contact Ross Kennedy at CTPM Head Office on +61 2 4226 6184 or email: [ross.kennedy@ctpm.org.au](mailto:ross.kennedy@ctpm.org.au) or visit CTPM's web page at [www.ctpm.org.au](http://www.ctpm.org.au)**