

## Viewpoint on Manufacturing:

# What is the Value of a 5S Program?

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## **What is 5S?**

5S stands for five Japanese words that embody the key steps in organizing the workplace for higher productivity. The main idea is that a clean and organized workplace makes it quicker to locate the needed tools or parts. Deterioration of tools and equipment is also identified before it becomes a catastrophic work stoppage.

## **So What are the 5 Steps?**

The five steps with their English counterparts are ...

- **Seiri**            **Sort**
- **Seiton**        **Straighten**
- **Seiso**         **Sweep & Shine**
- **Seiketsu**     **Standardize**
- **Shitsuke**    **Sustain**

### **Sort (Seiri)**

Start by eliminating the clutter at each workstation by sorting the useful from the unnecessary. The only things that should remain in a work area are the parts, tools, & instructions needed to do the job. In doing this you make the necessary items easy find and free up space. No longer will your people waste time looking through the clutter to find that part, that tool or that document.

### **Straighten (Seiton)**

Then make a place for everything that remains and put everything in its place. In doing so, organize the workplace in such a way that these items are EASY to see, EASY to get, EASY to return. So you will think about where you want to place everything in the workplace. Now you're making it even quicker to get that part, that tool, or that document.

### **Sweep & Shine (Seiso)**

Now, clean up the work area; sweep the floors, clean the equipment, dust the shelves and work surfaces. Maybe even repaint the equipment. Why? Who likes to work in a messy place? Your people will develop pride in their workstation. After all, who doesn't want to be part of something, to be appreciated for making a difference?

It also makes for a safer workplace. Each time you do this you may find a frayed wire, a leaking fitting, a broken switch or something else that is starting to fail. Getting those things fixed promptly can prevent an injury or an unanticipated outage.

### ***Standardize (Seiketsu)***

The first three steps are really about doing an initial housekeeping. This step is about doing it on a regular basis. Here checklists are established for what is to be done and schedules are established for when it is to be done. You do this so that you can maintain what you've gained in doing the clean-up.

### ***Sustain (Shitsuke)***

It's easy to drop back into the old ways of doing things. To make sure that your hard won gains are maintained, you audit the workplace periodically to see that clutter is not creeping back, everything is in its place and the workplace is being cleaned regularly. Then, you follow up on any discrepancies to make sure the deficiencies are addressed in a timely manner.

## ***Where can you use a 5S program?***

Obviously you can use it on the production floor, but it can be just as helpful in the office. Think about it. How much time do your office people spend shuffling through folders or documents to find something that is routinely needed, looking for a catalog or supply? The safety issues exist in the office too.

Look around and think about where your business could benefit from the efficiencies of having a clean and orderly workplace.

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- Quickly come up to speed in a situation,
- Work with people at all levels in an organization,
- Formulate an viable action plan,
- Organize, motivate and lead groups of people to achieve the desired results, and

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