

## 5 Secrets to 5S

Rolling out 5S seems like a simple enough task, and after reading any article it seems like anyone can do it. While 5S is simple, experience matters in the deployment of 5S, and this comes from experience. The 1<sup>st</sup> time I attempted in rolling out 5S, it failed miserably. However, I learned from that experience, and now that 1<sup>st</sup> warehouse is still sustaining their results.

The 1<sup>st</sup> S is Sort in which tools in a workplace are sorted through for only necessary items. The key to sorted is to have management support to literally sort through everything and disregard items that are not necessary. This event is usually referred to as a red tag audit. When red tagging items, associates are asked place tools in categories like “daily use” or “trash.” Employees are always reluctant to dispose of tools ore equipment because of the “what if” scenarios. That is one reason why items are not immediately thrown away, rather held for a team or management to review.

The next is Set in Order where employees are encouraging to place tools in an order to reduce motion and searching in a work place. To novice, set in order could be done incorrectly because items may be randomly “sorted” on a table or wall. The key is to place the most frequent items with “Point of Use Storage” (POUS). POUS is a critical step in 5S and Lean Warehousing to make efficiency gains. Another step in Set is created a map or diagram to describe all tools in a specific area. This allows everyone to see what’s available before they even enter the area.

Shine is the 3<sup>rd</sup> step in 5S, and this is synonymous with housekeeping. If you have a good housekeeping program in place, the Shine step is interchanged with that step. If you don’t have a housekeeping program, 5S and Shine, will require a complete cultural change in the approach to the workplace and operations. Typically, the catch phrase is “5 minutes of 5S” to remind employees housekeeping is a part of their daily responsibilities.

Standardize comes after set and shine, and I would recommend a network or company approach. The goal of standardization is to provide references and order between work stations and departments. The goal isn’t to make everyone a robot or work boring, rather easy to cross train between departments and on-board. Again, I recommend standardization after 2 or 3 areas have been “5S” in the workplace for several weeks.

The last and final step in 5S is sustaining. There are several factors that impact an organization to continue the results from the previous 4 steps. However, I’ve found two tools that are beneficial for keeping up the momentum. One is an owner, clearly assigned to an area. The owner of the area cannot be management or a supervisor, but an operator or material handler. The owner can be giving 5 minutes to 5S the area daily. The other critical tool is the audit. The 5S audit can be done a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The key is the results must be posted and a cadence to the schedule. As Deming said, “what gets measured, gets improved”.