

## Upskilling and application of 5S as one of the foundations of a lean business



### Background

The client company is a provider of advanced composite materials and technologies. Having previously applied the principles of 5S in other areas of the business and seen operational and efficiency improvements, they wished to further apply the approach in an attempt to sustain a culture of continuous improvement, while using a successful, standardised and structured approach.

### The Challenge

The company are making a transition from the traditional manufacturing model and have a vision to become a leaner organisation.

With the acknowledgement that their employees are the only people that can bring the change required, the managers of the production area agreed that it was necessary to educate them in one of the foundation tools of any lean business.

Although some of the workforce had heard of 5S before, not all necessarily had the understanding that 5S transcends beyond a 'housekeeping exercise' and does in fact underpin a profitable organisation and a lean culture.

### The Objectives

To upskill and ensure team members have an understanding of the 5S principles and how to apply them to their working environment using a structured approach.

### The Industry Forum Solution

Following the traditional 'learn by doing' approach, Industry Forum developed two 1 day 5S workshops that consisted of a mix of theoretical training, a short example and practical activity.

The team were led through the 5S teach point and played the 'numbers game' before carrying out an assessment of the current 5S condition in their target areas.

The 5S numbers game is a simple but practical example that presents the 5S concepts to the team and demonstrates how to practically apply it.

This interactive example clearly highlights the efficiency improvements that can be gained by applying 5S.

All participants then went into the target area and worked together to remove all unnecessary items from the area (Sort) and arranged the work space to ensure that it was safe, organised, and promoted an efficient, clean workplace (Simplify).

Coaching was given to the team to develop visual standards in the form of 5S checksheets (Standardise) to help maintain the standard of the activity and guidance on how to sustain 5S across the organisation (Sustain).

### The Benefits

- Improved visual management in the target areas means teams can easily and quickly identify abnormal conditions and act on them before they manifest into major issues.
- All excess consumables were returned to stores, freeing up valuable space lineside and reducing the clutter. Items are now easier to find in the area.
- Better organisation in the target area(s) means that the team can ensure time isn't lost searching for key equipment and materials.
- Identification of overproduction and countermeasures put in place to eliminate it. This led to a reduction in inventory.
- Obsolete plant equipment removed from area. This not only decluttered the area, but also meant that essential items could be stored closer to point of use, and improved safety.

### The Customer's View

"With the help from Industry Forum, we as a business have learned the key principles of 5S. This training has helped our business successfully implement 5S within our busy production facility. We now have a structured and standardised approach to 5S".

**Neil Worthington, Production Manager**

