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## ***Management by housekeeping***

By Paperitalo Staff

Some (many) think housekeeping is just the fad of the week or month. They view housekeeping and organization as an unnecessary waste of time and effort—a burden, not an aid. Common reaction is, “Yeah, well, OK.” As soon as the boss who instituted this policy leaves, things go back to the way they were, if they ever were raised to a higher standard.

Let us go through a little math. How much time do you think you spend looking for things? An hour a day? That works out to 12.5% of your time. Let’s assume you are the norm—if so, you spend 5 – 10% of your time looking for things. If you follow LOC (Lean, Orderly, Clean) principles, you can get this down to 2% or less per day.

Let’s take this a bit further. Assume you have 100 people reporting to you and they are all like you—they spend 10% of their time looking for things. If you can drop this to 2%, you just picked up the equivalent of 8 people’s time. Would you not like to have 8 more people? What is the chance of going up the management ladder with a request for 8 people and being told “yes?” The good news is, you don’t have to, because if you start managing by cleaning up and organizing, you already have them.

There is another advantage that will happen like magic when you have your area of responsibility operating in this manner. Not only does it become easier to manage because you have more time from all of your people, it becomes easier to manage because you can visibly see when anything is out of place. If everything has a place and is normally in that place, it is quite easy to notice something that is not. This is managing by exception.

Don’t think this works? Look at the military, the ultimate management challenge. The military is capable of taking people of absolutely any educational background and accomplishing great objectives with them. They manage by LOC principles. The very first thing they do is teach the soldier to manage themselves—starting with personal hygiene and their uniform. Before they have completed this training, they have the soldier start managing other items. By the time they complete the majority of this training (you never really complete it), a soldier under fire can respond effectively, because where everything is located comes natural for them.

How do you start? Take every level surface (operating floors, basements, roofs, everything) and assign a manager to bring it up to your LOC standards. Have the managers cross check each other’s areas. Do this regularly.

It will take a bit of extra time to start with, but if you concentrate on the most problematic areas first, as soon as they are taken care of, you'll have the extra time you need to clean up everything else. The time savings multiplies as in a snowball effect. Get things clean and organized and keep them that way forever.

Don't want to do this? Consider that perhaps your competitors have. If so, you are starting with an automatic 8% efficiency gap. You have no chance of catching up.

For safety this week, almost anyone can see a facility operating with LOC principles is going to be a safer one than one that is not. Clean up and watch safety improve.

Be safe and we'll talk next week. ##