400 – Kaizen Projects/Activities

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Overview

Kaizen projects are high intensity, high output, all-hands on deck team activities that incorporate several lean tools. Productivity gains, quality improvements (scrap reductions), and/or labor savings are often key outputs of kaizen activities. A Kaizen event comprises the use of pre-requisite knowledge of lean tools and establishes an improved process state from the current condition.

Objectives (Pre-determined by Management)

- Productivity improvement of 25-30%
- Quality improvement of 50%
- Uptime improvement (reduced equipment downtime)
- Labor savings
- Safety improvement or increased awareness
- Improved employee morale
- Reduced process lead-time.

Topics (Examples, TBD by Management objectives)

1. Cycle Time and Takt Time
2. One piece flow
3. Constraints
4. Process layout
5. Defects
6. Lead Time

Activity

The start of all Kaizen (Continuous Improvement) activity is aligned to management's objectives for improvement. Teams collect data, analysis results, implement improvements based on data, create new or revise existing process layouts, rewrite process steps, and record after process results. The team works together to achieve a "better process state" and records before and after results.

Course Timing

Kaizen project vary in length. Some projects can be achieved in a couple of days while others take a week to complete. Kaizen activities require classroom training and instruction and many hours of work on the shopfloor or gemba. Trial and error is a common practice when seeking improvement so often time changes made one day are changed the next based upon new learning or data. (Note: To ensure customer deliveries are met, kaizen events require advanced planning which probably require inventory levels be increased for a short period, one week, to create a buffer to prevent late deliveries to the customer. Management will be appraised prior to beginning any kaizen project.)

Materials

Overhead projector
Slide Show Presentation
Blank sheet of paper
Stop watches
Calculators
Flip charts
Clip boards
Pencils
White Board/ Markers

Participants (6-10)

Process Operators
Manufacturing/Process Engineer
Quality Engineer
Manager/supervisor
Executive Management (Report Out)
Scheduler
Maintenance (Ad hoc)
Tool Room (Ad hoc)
Indirect Material Buyer

Milestones

Pre-Requisite – All Fundamental Orientation Courses (101-105); Takt Time

Incorporation of all lean principles in developing an improved process.

10 Day Review

Team Leader reports status of revised process using same metrics from Kaizen workshop. Team discusses if any changes need to be made and if improvements have been sustained.

90 Day after Kaizen Activity

Same as above. Initial kaizen project should have all "To Do" items completed. Changes can be made during the process to ensure performance has been achieved. Metric tracking is a must to validate the kaizen event.