

The 5S of Workplace Organisation

The 5S routine is the corner stone or bed rock of the lean ethos, it is safe to say that there is no organisation across the world that has achieved lean status that did not begin with and sustain a 5S programme.'

Our 5S programme is a set of techniques that provides a standard approach to housekeeping and sets the standard for a full lean implementation. It is more than just an housekeeping system and some of the elements within the system impinge on other routines and processes.

It originated, as did most of the elements of lean through the teachings of W. Edwards Deming when he was sent to Japan after the Second World War. Taiichi Ohon, chief engineer at Toyota, adopted his ideas, hence the Toyota Production System was born and this later became Lean Manufacturing in the United States.

A cornerstone of 5S system is that untidy, cluttered work areas are not productive. As well as the physical implications of unwanted items getting in everybody's way and dirt compromising quality, we are all happier in a clean and tidy environment and hence more inclined to work hard and with due care and attention.

Naturally enough, the elements of 5S are all Japanese words beginning with the letter S. Since their adoption within Western implementations of Lean, various anglicised versions of the terms have been adopted, the terms used by GHC are listed below.

They are:

- Sort (Seiri).
- Set (Seiton)
- Shine (Seiso).
- Standardise (Seiketsu).
- Sustain (Shitsuke).

The Graham Howard Consulting 5S workshop introduces the delegates to the nuances of the system and expands upon all five sections of the programme. The training consists of a classroom based PowerPoint presentation during which the delegates learn how to use the system within their own workplace. A practical element follows the classroom training where the delegates form teams and conduct a 5S audit in the workplace. This practical element provides the basis for developing a 5S routine within their own working environment and is the beginning of the lean journey.

Course duration:

Workshop (Classroom element) - 4 to 5 Hours.

Practical - 1 Hour.

Maximum number of delegates: Eight (8) per session.