

Make it Easy to do the Right Thing

By Harold Chapman

FORCED TO CHOOSE

Have you ever been placed in a work situation in which it was so difficult to do the right thing that you were forced to choose between doing the right thing and violating a policy or procedure to get things done? Those of us at Drive have seen that many of the people we have had the pleasure to work with have been placed in this precarious position.

How many of us have heard the stories (prior to Sarbanes-Oxley) of people writing multiple PO's or capital requests to get under the Delegation of Authority (DOA) limits? We experienced this once when we needed fans for the shop floor during sweltering heat. The leaders decided to work around the system to do the right thing for their people.

FIFO EXAMPLE

Another example we see is when people are asked to follow First In First Out (FIFO), but the materials are arranged in a manner in which FIFO is hard to follow. We can't tell you how many times we have seen the following scenario:

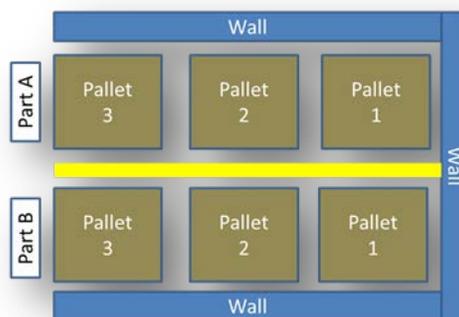


Figure 1: Top View of Pallet Storage

The storage system for the pallets is designed to prevent FIFO, since there is only one entry and exit point for the pallets for each of the part numbers. Then the material handlers are instructed to follow FIFO. You can be assured they will follow FIFO while you are checking, but when you are not checking and they get busy, what will happen? The



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FIFO EXAMPLE, CONTINUED...

answer will be evident by how much dust is on pallet one in the above example. FIFO is extremely important. An everyday example of FIFO is milk storage at our local supermarkets. The milk is presented to us in FIFO order. However, many of us have violated FIFO by reaching past the first carton of milk to get one with a later date.

GREAT EXAMPLE

The picture below shows a piece of equipment designed with the principle of “making it easy to do the right thing” in mind. The lubrication points are located at the walkway to allow easy access. Had the designer of this equipment failed to consider the operator and maintenance technician, the lubrication points might have been hidden under the cover on the fan. To lubricate the machine, the operator or maintenance technician would have had to climb over the walkway railing, remove the cover, locate the lubrication points, and apply lubrication. This is not the case in the example below, since the designers made it easy to do the right thing.

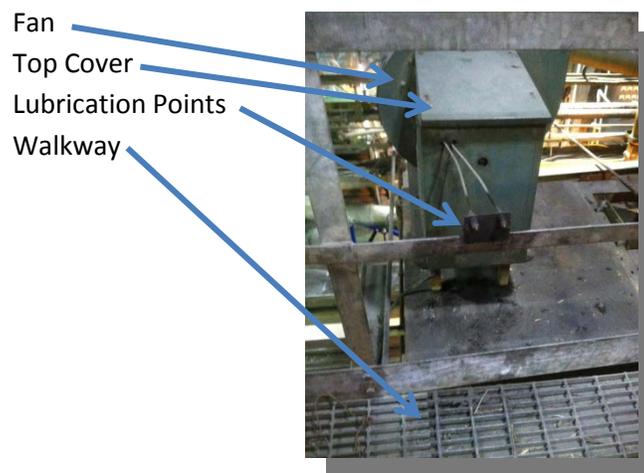


Figure 2: Lubrication Made Easy

WHERE THE WORK IS DONE

The same scenario plays out in office and service industry environments. In a recent episode of “Undercover Boss,” the CEO of a food chain was blown away by how bad the working conditions were in the lowest performing store in the franchise. Many of the tools the team needed were missing and about half of the equipment was broken. It was clear the team was struggling to get by, and thankfully for them, the CEO got a firsthand glimpse of the problems. Once the CEO of the franchise saw these issues, he immediately had them

WHERE THE WORK IS DONE, CONTINUED...

corrected, so it would be easy for the team to do the right thing. Unfortunately it took a reality television show to motivate the CEO to go out to where the real work is done. Although I believe “Undercover Boss” to be a valuable show that encourages top leaders to go to where the value is being created, I believe excellent leaders should naturally visit the place where the work is being done to determine if the processes in place are making it easy for their teams to do the right thing.

DEVELOP BRILLIANT PROCESSES

By compelling our people to support the principle of making it easy to do the right thing, we place the responsibility on leaders, designers, engineers and support staff to design systems, processes and products that support the value added employees. While this will take more time in the upfront planning process, the results are seen for the life of the system, process, or product.

Our focus must be to develop brilliant processes that can be run by average people. Too many times we see processes that are broken, yet we expect our people to give a heroic effort to get the expected result. We need processes that allow effortless quality. If we don't establish these effective processes, our people will be focused so much on simply getting by that they are unable to focus on improving the process.

If you are looking for a partner who will help make it easy for your teams to do the right thing, we can work with you to develop brilliant processes that drive solid results to the company's bottom line. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491.

