

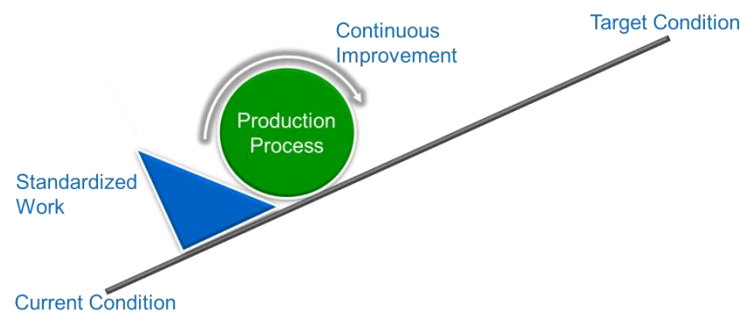
Creating Alignment with the Leadership Team Part 6

By Harold Chapman

STANDARDIZATION

Last month we began with an introduction to the principle of Process Centered which states we should focus on not only results but also the process that was used to achieve those results.

This month, we are going to discuss how standardization impacts our effectiveness with being Process Centered. Standardized tasks are the foundation for continuous improvement and employee empowerment. In order to ensure process centered, our main focus has to be on sustaining improvements. The world tends toward disorder unless a countermeasure is put in place. Standardized Work is that countermeasure that prevents regression of improvements over time.



The graphic above shows how standardized work serves to sustain our continuous improvements toward our target condition. To truly have Standardized Work we must have two things in place:

- Work Standards
- Standard Working

In all cases, we will see evidence of Work Standards inside businesses. These work standards are the results of engineers pouring their knowledge into a document to ensure the process is defined. However, what we don't often encounter in business is Standard Working. Standard Working means we are checking that the standards are being followed. A well-developed work standard is useless if it isn't being followed.

STANDARDIZED WORK

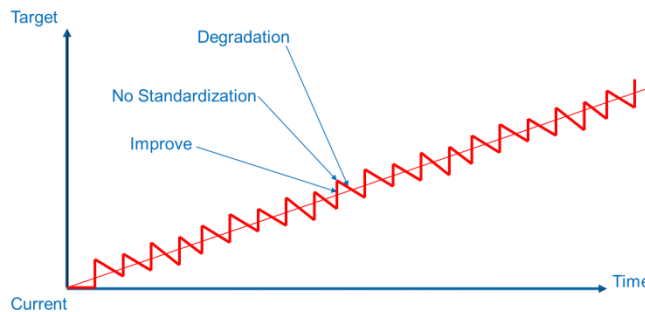
Standardized Work is intended to allow us to use stable, repeatable methods everywhere. Standardized Work is the foundation for flow and pull in a process. The Work Standards are designed to capture the accumulated learning about a process by standardizing today's best practices. However, we must allow creativity to improve the standard, and then incorporate that standard into the new work standard, so that when a person leaves the process, we can hand off the learning to the next person.



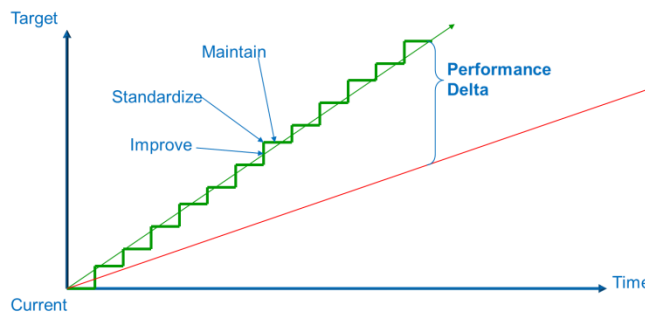
STABILIZE BEFORE IMPROVING

While a lot of companies try to jump straight into the improvement cycle, at Drive Inc., we stress the importance of stabilizing first, which we call “Stabilize Before Improving.” Stabilize Before Improving is a constant process by which we standardize what we do, THEN improve to make it better, safer, and easier. In this case, standardization IS improvement. Through this stabilization process, we will create work standards. Work standards are the safest, healthiest, best, and easiest way to complete a task. As we mentioned above, following these work standards requires self-discipline. A friend of mine spent some time in Toyota City studying the Toyota Production System. One night while having dinner with one of the Toyota executives, he leaned over and asked the executive if he thought the Japanese were smarter than the Americans. The executive responded with, “Absolutely not. Americans are some of the smartest and most innovative people on the planet. However, we [the Japanese] are more disciplined. We create a plan and we follow that plan. Americans create a plan and immediately start violating the plan.” I feel like there is some truth to that statement. Our problem is the fact that we are not following the standards we have created. Standardized Work is designed to create the needed discipline, and it is the leadership’s duty to ensure standard working.

Without Standardized Work, it takes much longer to reach the target condition. The graphic below shows the result of improvement efforts where there is no standardization.



With Standardized Work, incremental improvements build upon each other and the target condition can be achieved quickly. The graphic below shows the impact of using standardization to sustain the gains of each improvement. If done correctly, we can actually get a high performance with less improvement activities.



Do you have work standards? Do your leaders ensure those work standards are being followed? If you answered NO to either of these questions, Drive Inc. can help. We have experienced professionals who can coach your team through the process of gaining alignment around this principle. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491. Stay tuned for next month's newsletter when we will further discuss this principle to ensure your leadership team is aligned.

