

5s - A Ray for Performance Improvement

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The fast changing world and face of various economies have generated lot of complexities in the business environment. The success mantras that govern the success in modern organizations are stiff competition, innovation and research. The key factor for the growth and development of the 21st century organizations is the intellectual capital assets. The consistent performance and the all round success are the keys of governance for corporate executives who need to work and perform under all circumstances. Organizations are striving hard to adopt creative and innovative practices for performance improvement of the workforce. The present paper is conceptual in nature and aimed to relate the 5S Japanese Management philosophy for performance improvement of their workforce.

INTRODUCTION

Empires of the future will be the empires of the mind, says Sir Winston Churchill. And the former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam identifies India's human resource base as one of its greatest core competencies in his book, *India 2020: A Vision for the new Millennium*. All this not only recognizes the importance of knowledge possessed by individuals in determining the destinies of nations, but also subtly hints that the intellectual, cultural, social, economic and political empowerment of the individuals is the basis on which the modern world will be constructed.

Due to the effect of globalization and increasing competition in the market the contemporary business scenario has become more dynamic and is changing radically. Talent management practices in the contemporary scenario have been witnessing a sea change. Talent identification and its subsequent development is the key factor and HR is the main facilitator. A perfect balance between individual aspirations and organizational interest is essential. In fact this is the beginning for motivational theories and scholars researched on how to motivate employees to get the best out of them—which they are capable of and paid for. An organization's survival greatly depends on its ability to efficiently manage the available resources and remain competitive in a continually changing business environment. In such a situation, employee performance and productivity have ceased to be mere administrative matters but have now become essential elements of a broader key business strategy.

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Performance Management:

Organizations are collective of individuals are run and steered by them. It is through people that goals are set and objectives are realized. The performance of an organization is thus directly proportional to the sum total performance of its employees. Peter Drucker could not have been more right in saying, "An organization is like a tune; it is not constituted by individual sounds but by their synthesis." According to author Martinez J, Performance management (PM) is the "measuring, monitoring and enhancing the performance of staff "- using a range of Human Resource Management (HRM) tools such as ;job description, supervision, performance appraisals, continuous education, rewards and career development. Performance Management is a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organizational performance. As such, it establishes shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved.

The main objective of PM is to motivate the workforce to work on five dimensions

- Quality performance
- Continuous learning
- Cost conscious
- Punctuality
- Self esteem and self actualization.

Every organization is striving hard to improve the performance of its employees by introducing various creative methods. Apart from various factors cleanliness at work place do can catalyze the performance of the employees. To substantiate this, an attempt is made here to relate it with '5s 'Philosophy.

What is 5s ?

Five S is an integrated Japanese concept for proper housekeeping and they call it as "workplace management". Like other Japanese management philosophy such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Kaizen, Just -In-Time (JIT) and Lean Production 5s helps a company improve its productivity work efficiency and quality. 5S is a personal disciplinary development that promotes attitudinal changes and habits. It demonstrates a strong relation between physical environment at workplaces and productivity. This philosophy helps to improve the quality of work life by minimizing waste. The main motto behind 5S is that the self disciplined person can accomplish his task efficiently. According to Japanese effective work place management calls for five steps viz Organizing, neatness, cleaning, standardization and discipline. Japanese explains this in their own language with 5 words that begins with S. So the name Five S is arrived at taking the first letter S of all these five activities.

- SERI ___ Organizing or Re-organizing
- SEITON ___ Neatness
- SEISO ___ Cleaning
- SEIKESTU ___ Standardization
- SHITSUKE ___ Discipline.

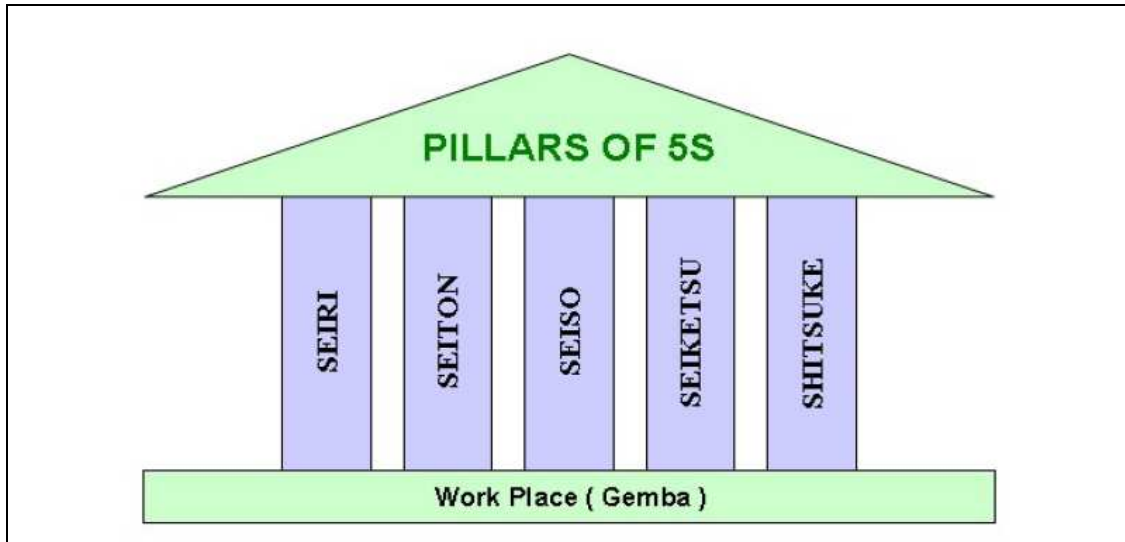


Fig 1: Pillars of 5S.

SEIRI

The meaning of the Japanese word SEIRI is distinguishing or sorting out between the wanted and unwanted items in a place and removal of the unwanted. SEIRI thus means "Organization" or more appropriately "Reorganization". By practicing SEIRI we can discard unwanted things and can stop wastage. Generally we have the tendency to cling to things but the only pitiable part is that when we want them we will not be able to locate them. In this IT age we have things in abundance.

Advantages of SEIRI

- Saving in use of space.
- Removal of excess equipments/ parts.
- Avoidance of error.
- Easy access to things.
- Preventing rusting or damage to materials.
- Reduce inventory by sale of scrap material/excess materials.

SEITON

SEITON means to prepare correctly or straighten. This means maintenance i.e. maintaining things in a right way. Every thing should have a place and they should be kept in that place always. This helps us to pick up things needed at any time without wasting time in searching for them. If we don't find the right material we may use a substitute that may have an adverse effect on quality. Thus it involves safety and productivity and maintenance of quality..

Advantages of SEITON

- Helps saving time wasted for searching of materials for use.
- Creates work effectiveness.
- Creates safety atmosphere.
- Helps in inventory control.
- Improves work place utilization.
- Better identification by using color coding.

SEISO

The literal meaning of the word "SEISO" is "Clean Up" .Such cleaning is not restricted to the machines, tables; kitchen cabinets etc .It should be extended to the entire surroundings. The word "Scrubbing" or "Scrub" convey this activity. In 5S practice, cleaning is looked upon as an activity of every employee from top to bottom. It is a philosophy and commitment to be responsible for all aspects of the things you use and to ensure that they are in excellent condition.

Advantages of SEISO

- Good, neat and clean working place motivates for effective functioning.
- Increases the efficiency of machines and equipments.
- Extends machine and equipment life.
- Creates safe environment and working place.
- Helps in identifying the potential cause of problems.
- Helps in developing the skill of operator for doing autonomous maintenance.
- Reduction of wastage.

SEIKETSU

SEIKETSU is nothing but standardization. In five S this means ensuring whatever cleanliness and orderliness have been achieved through SEIRI, SEITON And SEISO have to be maintained .A strict control over the situation is very necessary. Employees have to sit together and identify those best practices and procedures which need to be followed and stabilized.

Advantages of SEIKETSU

- Proper and nice working areas
- Helps in synchronizing the activities of SEIRI, SEITON and SEISO.
- Helps in educating the new persons joining the area on standard methods in practice.
- Reduction in breakdowns and defects.
- Visual Management improves work efficiency.

It is inculcating self discipline among employees so that the rules of the organization become habits of employees. Kurt Lewis change model of refreezing takes place where in old systems make way for new system with no resistance to change.

SHITSUKE

SHITSUKE means discipline. Discipline is following a system, which calls for changing from present unsystematic way of adherence to set procedures. It is inculcating self discipline among employees so that the rules of the organization become habits of employees. Kurt Lewis change model of refreezing takes place where in old systems make way for new system with no resistance to change

Advantages of SHITSUKE

- Promotes habit of working with rules and regulation.
- Creates good working atmosphere.
- Propagates safety.
- Improves culture of the organization.

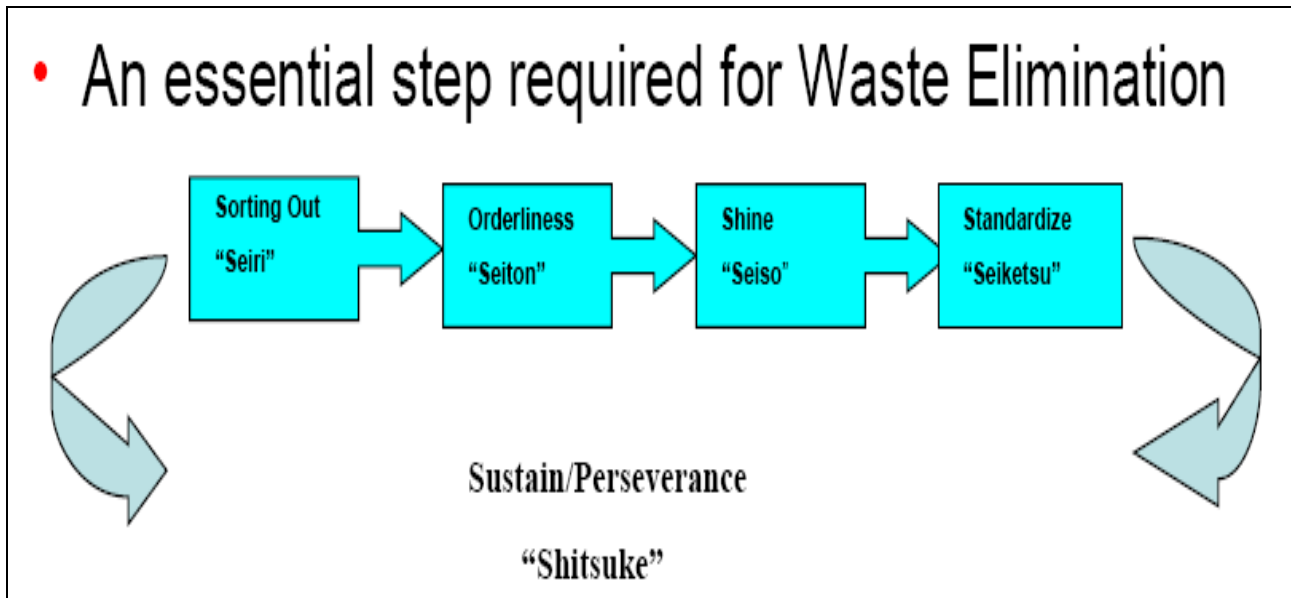


Fig 2: Steps for waste elimination.

If the work place is neat and clean then the way of working will be better. Better workplace will give better working environment. This also changes the employee's outlook and behavior. The proactive measures required for improving the performance at workplace through 5S are:

- Proper planning and training
- Regular survey
- Ground rules for organizing things neatly
- Frequent inspections and feedback
- Assigning roles and responsibilities.
- Providing implements and tools.
- Provide incentives.
- Instructions/ communications should be clear.
- Inculcating the spirit of self discipline among employees.

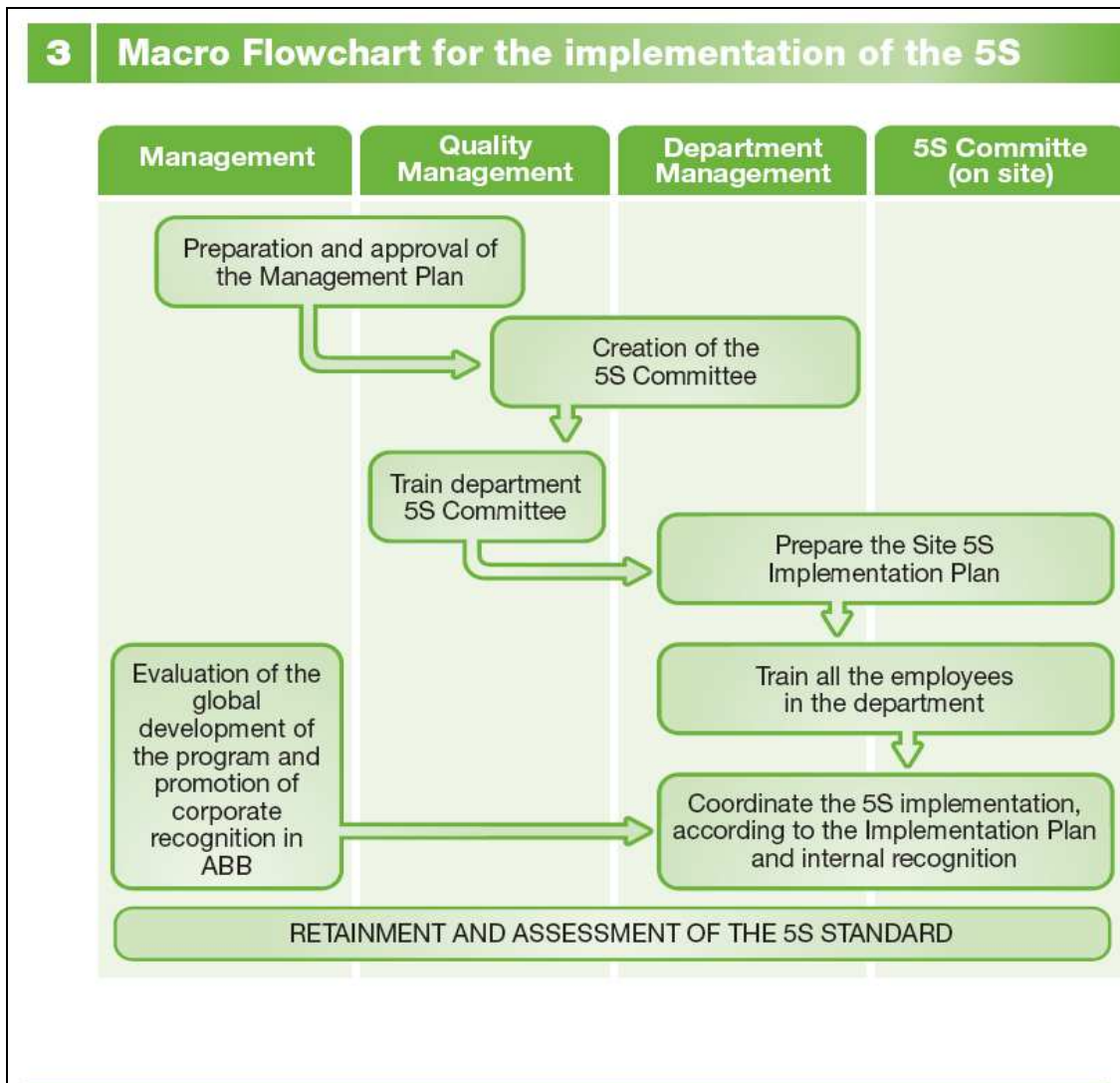


Fig 3: Implementation model of 5S at ABB.

Above all discipline is the hallmark of development. Anything imposed from outside will not yield lasting results. Sustainable development comes from within and if the employees are self disciplined the performance will automatically improve. "People are our most important asset" is one of the oldest aphorisms in business. In effect, successful companies are those that recognize an opportunity to nurture employee performance and are willing to capitalize on the linkage between employee performance and monetary results. An innovative and people friendly system will not only increases the performance of the staff but also help them work together with common goals and fewer obstacles.

CONCLUSION

In view of preceding paras, it may be inferred that above all disciplines are the hallmarks of development. Anything imposed from outside will not yield lasting results. Sustainable development comes from within and if the employees are self disciplined the performance will automatically improve. "People are our most important asset" is one of the oldest aphorisms in business. In effect, successful companies are those that recognize an opportunity to nurture employee performance and are willing to capitalize on the linkage between employee performance and monetary results. An innovative and people friendly system will not only increase the performance of the staff but also help them work together with common goals and fewer obstacles.

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