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THE VOICE OF THE GEMBA

Letting workers speak for themselves.

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Let employees drive innovation: Too often we fail to consider people's ideas. Andy Brophy of Lean 2 Innovate Thinking discusses how important idea management is to drive improvement and innovation.

A view from the shop floor: LMJ meets practioners, teams and machine operators from three companies, and asks what their take on lean is.

A lean education: Koot Pieterse of South Africa's Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University analyses the role of lean in tertiary education.

First steps: In this issue, the journal travels to Eastern Europe, for its special on lean in Hungary.

Bicheno's Hansei: In this new column John Bicheno sums up the most important lessons we can learn from the latest issue of LMJ.

The steady expansion of a lean programme: In the Lean Diary, manufacturer SCGM shares the most recent progress made by the company through its lean programme.



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The steady expansion of a lean programme

SCGM's CEO, *Sandra Cadjenovic*, gives LMJ an account of what the company has accomplished on the field in the last month.



Dear reader,

My "power rangers" (as I call my employees, since they are the real power behind this company) and I always look forward to update you on our activities, sharing with you both good and bad news on our lean programme. This is what happened since the last article was published.

INJECTION MOLDING

We have been very busy this month. We have received a lot of orders, plenty of which we have delivered, but we also had to deal with some unpredictable problems such as electricity shortages, which have hit us often lately. It stopped our production line for some time, but not our people. Each time we received a notification that we would be lacking power in the next few hours, a part of the plant would organise to proceed with 5S. Just a reminder, we have applied it first in the tool shop, and then in the assembly facility. This time it was the turn of injection molding, where people work three shifts, machine only stop at weekends and where, frankly, 5S is most needed. A team of five people gathered and started sorting and then throwing out all the old granulate sacks, broken tools and old documents. They cleaned all the machines and changed the layout of the department. At the end of the day, injection molding was waiting for the second shift with completely new looks and everything in the right place.

SAFETY IMPROVED/ENVIRONMENT TO BE

This was also a month characterised by a lot of focus on safety and the environment, during which we were working hard to solve our "before" situations. We moved cables and pipes higher up so that nobody risks tripping over; we applied brakes to carts with wheels; we freed pedestrian walking zones from obstacles; we protected bare electrical wires; and we fixed heavy, but movable wooden shelf parts to their frames.

BEFORE	AFTER	DESCRIPTION
		Hanging cable has been put up
		All the electric wires have been coated
		Pedestrian zone has been cleared out
		All the cables have been removed
		Path to fire-hydrant cleared
		Heavy shelf boards fixed

There were some issues that we could not solve by ourselves, for which we needed the help of managers. The biggest one was poor ventilation. Evaporation from granulate milling and drying, gas exhaustion from a forklift, heat coming from working machines, along with temperature rising as summer kicks in, made breathing of the shop floor very hard (as it was mentioned in the previous article, people came up with safety and environmental remarks, and ideas on how to solve them. On their list, ventilation was the number one issue). The Safety Team and the owners had a meeting about possible countermeasures and, according to the action plan produced, a new ventilation system will be installed by the end of June. This is another example of how higher and lower level can cooperate towards a common lean goal.

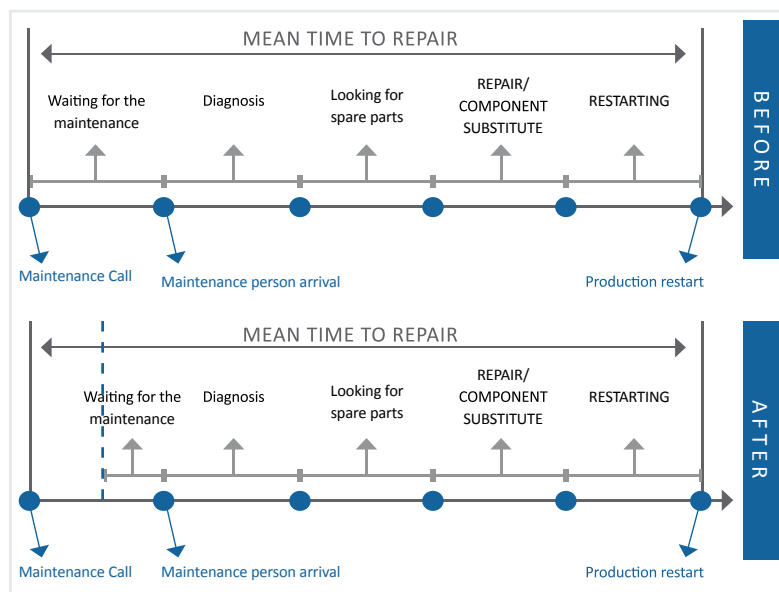
PROBLEMS

Not everything is going smoothly. Although resistance to lean has decreased and sometimes completely disappeared, there are some people who still don't accept it. They mainly belong to the older generation, used to the old way of working. They think that lean is insulting to them and that we are just "playing". An example was the signs on machines. They are mainly warnings, but there are also signs explaining specific procedures on machines that one could find in various languages but not in Serbian. One of the objectives was to translate the instructions and make them understandable to the operators, thus preventing risks of injuries in those places. When the time came to stick them on the machines, one of the workers got really upset, saying: "This is my machine and I have been working here for six years straight. Are you telling me I don't know how to operate it?" His colleagues and the safety team leader explained that it is for his safety, but also that of his new colleagues, and he agreed. Reluctantly, but he agreed. Yes, we have accomplished a lot so far, but there is always more room for improvement in the company's mindset.

AUTONOMOUS MANAGEMENT

We also made a step forward in Autonomous Management, the pillar we introduced in the previous month which will combine autonomous maintenance (with the aim to ensure proficiency of personnel in using equipment) and planned maintenance (with the creation of a zero-defect culture). To make it fully understandable for you, we will go back and explain what the current state was. Since we have not had an internal maintenance person, whenever a machine stopped due to a breakdown, an external one would have to be called and hours would pass before the problem was solved.

In other words, if we compare a machine to a patient and a maintenance person to a doctor, when our patients were in need of care they had to wait for their turn, for the doctor could have had other patients to look after first. To cut the waiting time, we employed our own maintenance person. Now, whenever there is an emergency he is there in no time. Thus we have decreased MTTR.

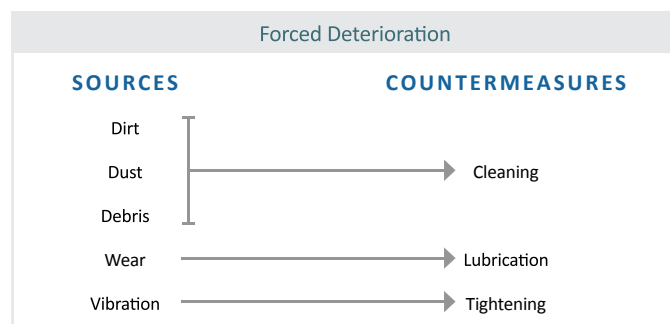


NATURAL AND FORCED DETERIORATION

Even though we have a doctor on our side, our aim is to make patients completely healthy, that is, to have zero-defect equipment.

In time a machine deteriorates, for either natural or forced causes. Our objective is, first, to bring our forced deterioration line closer to a natural deterioration line and then work our way from there to a zero-defect line.

From the figures you can see what the common causes, but also the counter measures, are.



We have done the initial cleaning (we previously mentioned 5S applied in injection molding). Visual management is really important for guidance, so we are about to apply red tags on all the hard-to-reach and quality- and safety-critical places.

You'll read more about it in our next article.