

WHERE DOES CHANGE START?

Steve Krar

Change must start with the suggestions of **everyone** in a company to a program of continuous improvement, firstly in how their own work can be made easier and more efficient with little or no waste. Secondly in improvements that have a positive effect on the financial health of the company; it is not a case of **working harder**, but **working smarter**. Workers and management joining forces and working as a team that has a definite goal of improving the workplace to make it more efficient can accomplish this.

Small Improvements

Everyone in the company should commit to a program of offering one suggestion a month on how their own work or the company's operations could be improved. The following recommendations can be used for submitting ideas:

- Each idea/suggestion should be something small that can be applied quickly and give almost immediate results.
- People should be encouraged to submit small ideas to change their jobs for the better.
- Take only 3 minutes to write the suggestion down so it becomes a permanent record.
- Discuss all ideas with the supervisor before implementing them.
- Review the effect of the suggestion and see if it can be further improved.

Workers the Experts

It is wise to tap the knowledge that workers have gained from years of experience in performing their duties; who understand the job better.

- Company should recognize the contribution of individual workers.
- Workers take pride in their recognition and feel they are an important part of the team.
- This pride will have a tendency to spread to all the workers.

From Ideas to Success

The best way to turn ideas into success is by management unlocking the creative potential of every employee and involving them in the Kaizen approach, which is to make many small changes quickly. Kaizen is changing the process and/or the creativity of the means for improvement; the best method used yesterday may not be good enough today. The Supervisors face the challenge of stimulating employees to be motivated, become more excited about their work, and become actively involved in improvement activities. This is a major challenge for supervisors to ask the



workers what suggestions they may have to remedy a problem, instead of telling them what to do. It is very important that each worker suggestion receives the courtesy of a reply and is credited to that worker, otherwise improvement suggestions will soon stop coming. Quick and Easy Kaizen (a term used in Norman Bodek's book *The Idea Generator*) is a very simple but powerful way to encourage change within a company, change that will stimulate workers to become more motivated, more excited, more involved and make workers feel better about themselves and the companies for which they work.

The Kaizen Challenge

- **Find Better Ways to do Things More Efficiently**
- **Do not use Yesterday's Methods in Today's Manufacturing World.**
- **Come up with New and Better Ways of Doing Things**

The Employees' Challenge

Quick and Easy Kaizen is a method of encouraging employees to come up with small ideas and implement the ideas themselves. It gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work, and encourages them to implement the changes that may have met resistance had the changes been company initiated. The result of the new ideas has a tendency to energize the workplace and gives the workers a feeling of contributing to the competitiveness of the company and its financial success. Where all employees are active in improvement methods, in all areas, on a regular and continuous basis, they help to build an aggressive and strong company that can compete with any in the world

Motivating Employees

Quick and Easy Kaizen is a simple and effective way to encourage people to come up with small ideas to change their jobs for the better. This inspires the employees and encourages them to experiment to experience the fun and satisfaction of coming up with a new idea that can solve a problem, to implement a solution and write up the idea to display, and share with others. It will challenge employees to turn their own ideas into success for the company and for themselves. The end result of this exercise is a big improvement in people's attitudes about themselves, productivity, quality, and safety will improve, costs will go down, and the customers will be satisfied.

The following points should assist in motivating employees:

- Involve all employees on a continuous, daily basis so they feel part of the team.

- Ask employees to find a better (new) way of doing things more efficiently, easily, more comfortably, eliminate doing things that are not necessary, and with better quality.
- Stop, reduce, and change old methods that are not as efficient as those that will make the job easier, faster, and more accurate with less effort.
- Have them consider the following questions about their work on a regular basis:
 - Why am I doing this and can some steps be eliminated?
 - Are there other, more efficient ways of doing the same thing better and easier?
 - How are progressive companies doing the same thing?

Imagine the feeling of being told by management that the idea submitted was wonderful and that fellow workers are using it and improving their jobs.