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Spring Cleaning

It is now Spring in the UK and traditionally a time for cleaning the house – Spring Cleaning. It can also be an opportunity to take a look at ‘house keeping’ in an organisation. One of the tools that might be considered is the 5S Methodology.

The 5S methodology is a systematic approach to establishing and maintaining housekeeping standards. With this method, divisions or departments within organisations adopt and implement their own housekeeping programme as a means of improving quality, safety and productivity.

The Programme: This programme is based on the Japanese 5S Housekeeping programme (Ho, 1995)¹ which has been successfully adopted in a number of organisations. The 5Ss referred to are based on the Japanese words:

- i) Seiri or Sorting (clearing out or arranging).
- ii) Seiton or Simplifying (configuring or tidying).
- iii) Seiso or Sweeping (cleaning).
- iv) Seiketsu or Standardising (clean condition or cleanliness).
- v) Shitsuke or Self Discipline (culture, training or breeding)

Seiri or sorting (Clearing out or arranging)

This refers to clearing out anything and everything that is not required in the workplace. Photographs (coloured with photograph dates) can be taken of the workplace before starting the clearing out process. This is to benchmark or identify the current status and later to show what improvements have been made. A tagging system can be used by the personnel responsible for the area to identify any items or documents not directly involved with their work place or surrounding area.

Seiton or simplifying (Configuring or tidying)

The tasks or activity areas need to be organised or configured in order to ensure that items are located correctly and can be easily found. Every desk and storage area could have its own address. In this way the whole area can then be organised into an address grid. The various work areas, desks, copying, stores, cabinets, etc. could be (colour) coded.

Seiso or sweeping (Cleaning)

The purpose of cleaning is to maintain the workplace in a suitable condition for the activities and tasks that need to be performed. This is achieved by ensuring that all excess material or documentation is suitably located or disposed of. All areas that have to be cleaned should be clearly identified with responsibilities allocated and frequency pre-determined.

Seiketsu or standardising (Clean condition or cleanliness)

The work area needs to be maintained in a clean and tidy condition at all times, with no accumulation of unnecessary items or documentation.

Shitsuke or self discipline (Culture, training or breeding)

A working environment needs to be created that welcomes constructive criticism and supports an improvement culture. This environment is essential if problem points are to be quickly and easily identified and rectified.

International and Private Standards

ISO have recently released a brochure that explains the difference between International Standards and ‘private standards’. The reason for bringing out this brochure is the growing concern over the increasing number of ‘private standards’ that have the

potential for creating confusion in the marketplace and may introduce barriers to trade. It recognises that these standards, developed to meet the needs of specific sectors, may be valid and serve a useful purpose, but they should not be confused with ISO standards.

The ISO brochure says, “Coherence, harmonisation and a closer level of cooperation between the developers of private standards and the formal International Standards system needs to occur.”

The brochure, “International Standards and ‘private standards’” is available free of charge from www.iso.ch

Information Security Standard

The ISO and IEC have published a further information security standard in the ISO 27000 series. The new standard is designed to work with the ISO/IEC 27001 and 27002 standards and does not modify and/or reduce the requirements of them. ISO/IEC 27003:2010, Information Security – Security techniques – Information security management system implementation guidance” gives advice that will be useful to all organisations regardless of size or sector. The standard looks at the process of Information Security Management System specification and design and gives help on how to obtain management commitment. It also explains how to design and plan the implementation to ensure success.

Prof. Edward Humphreys, Convenor of the group that developed the standard has said, “By using ISO ISO/IEC 27003:2010, the organisation will be able to develop a process for information security management, giving stakeholders the assurance that risks to information assets are continuously maintained within acceptable information security bounds as defined by the organisation”.

Further information can be found at www.iso.ch

Worker Memorial Day

The UK will celebrate Workers Memorial Day on 28th April – on this day we remember the thousands of people who have died, been seriously injured or made ill through their work. Yvette Cooper, the Work and Pensions

Secretary of State, said, “I am delighted to announce that the UK will officially recognise Workers Memorial Day. This is a tribute to all those who have campaigned long and hard, including bereaved families, trade unions, campaign groups and many other organisations and individuals. For the first time, the UK will join countries across the globe in remembrance of all those killed at work and for the families they have left behind, and the many more who have been harmed. It is also a spur to greater efforts to improve health and safety for today’s and tomorrow’s working population.”

For further information, please visit www.dwp.gov.uk

UK on track to meet Carbon Budget

Under the Climate Change Act, progress towards meeting the UK Carbon Budget has to be reported annually to Parliament. The results for 2008 were recently reported and showed that the UK was on track to meet its budget. Joan Ruddock, Energy and Climate Change Minister said, “The emissions score card shows that the UK’s climate change policies are working and that we’re on track to meet our carbon targets. Since 1990, the UK’s emissions have been cut by 22%, which means we’ll more than meet the international commitments we made. We’re putting in place policies to make the low carbon transition by supporting investment in clean energy, in insulating homes and creating green jobs.”

The annual emissions statement can be found at www.officialdocuments.gov.uk

One element of the support is the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme which will require large public and private sector organisations like supermarkets, hotels, hospitals, local authorities and central government departments, to improve the energy efficiency of their estate. They will be required to take part in the scheme from the 1st April 2010. The scheme is mandatory and will save participants about £1 billion per year by 2020 through cost effective energy efficiency measures.

You can find further information at www.decc.gov.uk/crc

Skills Investment

Key programmes have recently been launched by the UK government to ensure industry is supplied with the key skills needed to support growth in the future. New National Skills Academies (NSAs) are to be developed to cater for five new sectors

- Rail engineering
- Logistics
- Green building services
- Biotechnology
- Composites

The NSA for Power is already open and altogether the academies will attract more than 300,000 into training programmes over the next four years.

A national skills audit has also taken place. This was commissioned by the government and the results set out the current standing of UK skills and those that will be needed in future years. Further information can be found at www.bis.gov.uk/skillsaudit

ISO Guidelines for Electronic Medical Records

Two new ISO documents have been published that should protect the security of medical records. ISO/TS 21547:2010, Health informatics – Security requirements for archiving of electronic health records – Principles, looks at all aspects of archiving from maintenance through to eventual destruction. Guidance for implementing the requirements can be found in the companion standard ISO/TR 21548:2010 Health informatics – Security requirements for archiving of electronic health records – Guidance.

Pekka Ruotsalainen, Project Leader for both documents said, “Most countries now rely on electronic patient information, ISO standards offer solutions to help ensure the privacy and longevity of this data independent of technology. As globalisation progresses, patient information is increasingly being transferred across national borders, further highlighting the need for global specifications to address these issues.”

For further information please visit www.iso.ch

Is European Regulation just a burden?

Many organisations view European Regulation as merely burdensome, and yet the access to the internal market it provides does give substantial benefits to the member states. A recent report challenges the way European institutions make decisions and argues for smart EU regulation. Ian Lucas, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, said, “In the UK better regulation is an essential element of creating the right environment to help businesses start up, invest and grow and build a prosperous, fair and safe society. Putting better regulation solutions into practice across Europe will have an enormous impact, not only saving money but promoting economic growth and allowing business to prosper. This report is an opportunity to set out a strong new approach for Europe and encourage the European institutions and other member states to seize this opportunity for further reform and improvement, making policy-makers and officials more accountable to the people of Europe”

To view the executive summary please visit www.berr.gov.uk/files/file54781.pdf

1.(Ho, 1995) TQM An Integrated Approach (Samuel K Ho) 1st Edition ISBN 0749415614
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