

Kaizen Done Right at SHURflo

By Karen Trisko and Brent Duggleby

It is rare and admirable to see a company use KAIZEN (the Japanese term for continuous improvement) as intended rather than as discrete or special events. SHURflo LLC, a division of Pentair, Inc, in Cypress CA is a shining example of "Kaizen Done Right." Lorene Houser (pictured here), SHURflo's Manager of Lean, gave an in-depth tour and explanation of how the company manages its work cells using kaizen continuous improvement methods, lean techniques, and recognition programs. SHURflo makes small high-performance recreational vehicle, food service, industrial and water purification industries. This 200 employee, \$100 million company is a leading supplier in its industry, distributing its products globally.



Sometimes people make improvements only when something is broken or when the boss requires it. The real intention of kaizen, however, is for every work area to *continually* seek improvements and make them without being asked. Alas, even the most competent employees and managers need a system for guidance and accountability. Leaders must therefore use a system like SHURflo's to ensure that continuous improvement actually is continuous.

SHURflo manages continuous improvement using a regular assessment conducted by its management team, which includes parent company representatives. SHURflo earns a score on each of these assessment categories (shown below), which are essential components of a continuous improvement system, especially those organizations striving to be "lean" with minimal non-value added work or wasteful practices.

Integrated Management System Assessment Categories

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strategy Deployment2. PIMS Planning (Pentair Integrated Management Systems)3. Safety4. Quality Measurement and Control5. 5S6. Visual Management |  | <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Standard Work8. Process Design9. Resource & Daily Management10. Total Preventive Maintenance11. Inventory Management12. Supplier Development |
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When the company achieves pre-determined levels of performance on the assessment and company goals, a profit-sharing payout is triggered, providing additional paid days off and other awards. Here are a few highlights of the practices SHURflo uses to constantly improve results.



1. Work is organized in cells that produce certain types of products using one-piece flow. One piece flow is singularly important in production so that work in process is minimal and inventory is kept to a minimum.

2. Each cell is set up following lean principles, with a management board, graphic work instructions, mini-when particular material is needed, shadow boxes belong, clearly labeled tools, equipment, and supplies, that are updated throughout each day.



visual production markets that visually flag defining where fixtures as well as results charts

3. Each cell follows 5S principles daily and conducts a weekly self-assessment posted on its cell's production board. Five S is an acronym that stands for Simplify, Straighten, Scrub, Standardize, and Sustain. At SHURflo, employees in work cells that fulfill each "S" element in monthly audits by management team receive small incentives and recognition.



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4. Management expects every cell to have a problem undergoing analysis and improvement *at all times*, with the program defined and progress posted on the cell's work board. Additionally, a 3-5 day kaizen event occurs in the facility almost every week, involving employees at all levels. Participants work full-time on improvements during each kaizen event, while cross-trained employees carry out participants' normal work.

Experts agree that organizations striving for excellence should devote 3-5% of their workforce's effort to improvement. SHURflo makes such investments and enjoys rising revenues, customer loyalty, and ever-improving profits. You can talk with Lorene Houser at upcoming CCE events and Orange County Sterling Council events which operate under her leadership as a member of the board of directors.

This effective and efficient improvement system is highly integrated, addressing all of these Items in the Baldrige Criteria: P2c Performance Improvement System, 1.1b Senior Leadership Communication and Organizational Performance, 2.2 Strategy Deployment, 4.1b Performance Analysis & Review, 5.1 Work Systems, 6.0 Process Management, and 7.0 Results.

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