

Stabilizing the Shop Floor starting with Job Relations

Training In Industry – A Solution for today Supervisors

During World War II, the men that had been working in the factories were called into service. United States government in preparation for war and based on the experience of WW I set up Training In Industry (TWI) Service. This service was focused on supplying and training resources within our industries. These men that were drafted needed to be replaced by store clerks, housewives and farm workers if the US was going to win the war of attrition. What a monumental effort to increase output of the factories by 100-200% to meet the demand created by the war with workers (store clerks and housewives) with little or no technical skills and in a strange environment with very different expectations to their normal life.

We face the same issue today. Boston consulting estimates about 1.5 million manufacturing jobs will grow in the United States by 2015. Yet today, companies struggle to find resources with the correct technical skills to meet the current employment needs. How can we possibly be ready for the increase of demand? Let's get back to basics and use what worked in a similar situation and what worked for Toyota after WW II, good basic supervision, training and preventive maintenance.

The first step to Total Quality Management, Lean Manufacturing, Six Sigma, or any continuous improvement program is "Stabilize the shop floor". The two things required to accomplish this stabilization is consistent output from operators working with machines. TWI addresses these basic issues by teaching supervisors the basics of Job Relations, how to work with people, Job Instruction how to train people to be successful in their duties and Job Method, how to have people be involved in improving performance. Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) provides the strategy and processes to stabilize equipment failures mode and equipment variation.

It starts by getting people to perform their duties with ownership and pride. This requires them to trust their direct supervisor and work organization. TWI Job Relations teaches four basic foundational elements for good employee relations.

Foundations element for Good Relations include

- Let each worker know how individually they are getting along by making your expectations clear and by encouraging them in ways to improve their performance.
- Give credit when due by looking for unusual contribution or performance and providing positive feedback quickly, while it is fresh in your mind.
- Tell people in advance about changes that will impact them explaining why it is possible while working with them to accept, embrace and improve the change process.
- Optimize each person's ability by finding hidden talents not currently being used and encouraging people to grow by not being a barrier but a supporter.

When there is a need to make a change in performance, Job Method employs a simple four-step process to build trust in the employee by creating a fair and consistent process when dealing with an issue or concern.

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1. Get the Facts (*Be sure to get the whole story!*)
 - a. Review the Record
 - b. Find out what rules and customs supply
 - c. Talk with individuals concerned
 - d. Get opinions and feelings
2. Weigh and Decide
 - a. Fit the facts together
 - b. Consider the interaction on each other
 - c. What are the possible actions?
 - d. Check practices and policies
 - e. Consider the objective and its impact on the individual, group, and production
3. Take Action
 - a. Are you going to handle this yourself?
 - b. Do you need support in handling the actions?
 - c. What are your supervisor's expectations and should they be involved?
 - d. Watch the timing of your action.
4. Check Results (Did your action help performance?)
 - a. How soon will you follow up?
 - b. How often will you need to check on progress and results?
 - c. Watch for changes in output, attitudes, and relationships

Did you accomplish your objectives?