

ADOPTION OF 5S/WORKPLACE ORGANIZATION LEADS TO AN INCREASE IN WORKPLACE SAFETY AND PRODUCTION EFFICIENCIES

ABOUT CHEMTOOL, INC. - ROCKTON PRODUCTION. Located in Rockton, Illinois, with 500 employees, Chemtool is an industry leader in manufacturing and formulating grease and functional fluids.

THE CHALLENGE. Prior to working with IMEC, part of the MEP National Network™, Chemtool operated on an old school system and had no knowledge of lean principles. They ran everything by slapping equipment in place and going with however things flowed. The disorganization and often crowded storage areas led to poor production efficiency and higher safety risk than they would've liked. To create and maintain a well-oiled machine (operation), Chemtool adopted the 5S Workplace Organization methodology as a good place to start by getting equipment and supplies in a spot that was useful to improve production efficiencies and continue meeting the gold standard for customers.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. The company originally worked with IMEC at the end of December 2018. The initial training included the 5S concepts of Sort, Set, Shine, Standardize and Sustain. This training was well attended with a cross-functional group of employees in the class, and they went through one of the easier areas to see how well they handled it internally. After a few months and seeing the benefits of the first training on the test area, they engaged IMEC a second time in March 2019 to conduct a program focusing on "train the trainer". To support the initial training, they applied 5S to a more complicated area to make sure they were really grasping the principles. This time around, the IMEC expert conducted oversite training and through observation, supported Rich Roehrig, Continuous Improvement Coordinator at Chemtool, as he led the training. Since then, Chemtool has been successfully implementing the techniques learned from the 5S training. With a goal to be fully implemented through the facility by the end of 2019, they are already 42% there - thanks to how they've broken out the areas - and they are keeping on track with results to improve safety, quality, production efficiency, and waste reduction. 5S is the foundation for all of the continuous improvement efforts at Chemtool. This sets the groundwork for their future problem solving initiative, and then they'll act on implementing more lean concepts. The 5S implementation at the Rockton plant aligns with several other ongoing projects. There is a big 2019 cost saving initiative and a full lean implementation (not just 5S) for a visual factory, and this training is proving to be a significant contributor to all of their goals and objectives for this year.

"There is nothing better than watching the people doing the work every day take ownership of the process and do it with enthusiasm. The training we received from IMEC got us started down that path, and it's the best path we could possibly be on."

-Rich Roehrig, Continuous Improvement Coordinator

RESULTS



Improved cost saving



Lowered safety incident rate - safer work environment



Improved production efficiencies



Lowered quality incidents



Reduced waste

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