

KAIZEN – A case study

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate objective of manufacturing industries is to increase productivity with high quality. At present, many manufacturing companies are facing problems such as high quality rejection, high inventories, high lead time, high costs of production, and inability to cope with customer orders.

By implementing and practicing the lean production system many problems can be solved without employing high-tech and high-cost approaches but by involving people on the shop floor in Kaizen activities. Kaizen is one of the powerful tools of lean manufacturing. Kaizen refers to continuous improvement in performance, cost and quality. Kaizen ensures that manufacturing processes become leaner and faster, but eliminate waste (problems) where value is added.

The main objective of this paper is to provide a background on kaizen, present an overview of kaizen concepts that are used to transform a company into a high performing lean enterprise. A case study of implementation of Kaizen's has been discussed.

Keywords: Kaizen, Lean Manufacturing, Muda, Lead time...

I. INTRODUCTION

Kaizen means improvement. Moreover it means continuous improvement in domestic life and working life. Kaizen means continuous improvement involving everyone - from top management to managers and workers, when it is practiced in workplace (Bead, 1988).

The Kaizen philosophy has been implemented in organizations around the world as a way to improve production values while also improving employee morale and safety. The Kaizen philosophy may be applied to any workplace scenario due to its simple nature. Taiichi Ohno and Shigeo Shingo developed it at Toyota. The kaizen is important tool for Lean Manufacturing, the Toyota Production System (TPS). Just in Time other effective manufacturing strategies. (Koricho)

Kaizen - The Definition

Kaizen (K; 改善) is a Japanese term that means continuous improvement, taken from words 'Kai', which means continuous and 'zen' which means improvement. Some translate 'Kai' to mean change and 'zen' to mean good, or for that better (Pillay, 2001).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature that mentions Kaizen is often emphasized small group activity such as quality circles and/or suggestions made by individual workers. In TPS (Ohno, 1986), which explains kaizen methods are useful to increase the productivity and product quality.

Suzuki (1987) explains that Kaizen is a philosophy widely practiced to belief that, that there is no end to make a process better. Each small improvement consists of many levels of development. Mainly used for improving manufacturing processes.

Truan (1992) describes that, Kaizen is much more than just a means of improvement, since it speak to the day by day obstacles happening in the work environment and the way in which these obstacles are solved. Kaizen can be applied to where no need of improvement.

Dodds (1993) describes that the best approach to accomplish principal change on the shop floor is to empower operators to create their own particular measures, to adjust business procedures and to utilize them to drive their Kaizen activities.

The author clarifies that operators are the specialists and once they understand that they are the one, who is going tackle the obstacles, and afterward everything they need is some direction.

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