

Leader Standard Work

By Drive, Inc.

SUSTAINING GAINS

One of the top struggles in any organization is the sustainment of efforts, which is a byproduct of maintaining order through standardization. Often, leadership believes that if they tell the organization to do something, it will get accomplished and continue to get accomplished until told not to. However, this is not the case. The old adage, “You get what you INSPECT, not what you EXPECT” continues to be proven over and over. So, how does one implement a systematized method of “inspection” that ensures standards are followed and improvements are sustained? Leader Standard Work (LSW) is the best known method today to ensure that important items are checked and verified at the right frequency. One can consider Leader Standard Work the Control Plan for Leadership.

STANDARDIZED WORK

Standardized work is a combination of work standards and standard working, shown as a calculation here:

Standardized Work = Work Standards + Standard Working

Leader Standardized Work is focused on the Standard Working piece of the above equation. We have noticed that many companies have what they call “Work Standards,” but very few actually ensure those standards are being followed (standard working).

“Standardized Work without Leader Standard Work is a complete waste of time.” – Taiichi Ohno, father of the Toyota Production System

LSW ELEMENTS

Leader Standard Work documents and defines expected behavior for the leaders. It is a layered by level list of normal tasks that must be done to sustain the lean management system. It typically includes checks of subordinate’s standard work, meetings for daily accountability, continuous improvement projects, and control plans. The focus of the checks is on the value added process. It is documented for all levels of leadership and is written for the role, not for the person. This ensures that as people rotate through the different leadership roles, the system continues to operate normally. LSW directs the leader to validate visual controls and specifies the frequency at which each task should be completed (hourly, daily, weekly, etc.). Aside from the technical aspects, Leader Standard Work also translates lean principles into clear, specific, and measurable expectations. As with any standard, Leader Standard Work is expected to be continually improved and built upon as the lean management system matures. The proper use of Leader Standard Work will help the business to drive continuous improvement at all levels. The combination of all the leader standard work activities defines our systemic management structure. The four key elements to Leader Standard Work are:



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- Going to the place where value is being added (gemba)
- Utilizing visual controls and indicators
- Identifying deviations from standard
- Engaging people in countermeasures to deviations from standard while modeling appropriate behavior through the Socratic method

Following these four elements will better sustain safety, quality, morale, delivery, and cost.

BENEFITS OF LEADER STANDARD WORK

Leader Standard Work is a powerful tool to send the same message of direction from all levels of the management team. Through Leader Standard Work we align and link all levels of management toward common goals. It creates a linkage between expected versus actual, which leads to continuous improvement.

“Leader Standard Work is about discipline, sustainment, and accountability. Expecting discipline, sustainment, and accountability without Leader Standard Work is a fantasy.” – Mike Rother

Another useful outcome of Leader Standard Work is its focus on defining behavior:

- Behaviors and actions for leaders to model
- Behaviors and actions that can be checked
- Behaviors and actions that are coachable and teachable

Leader Standard Work provides a convenient, repeatable, and methodical way to get managers to focus their attention on the process that provides the results, which is opposed to simply watching the results and expecting them to change, or worse, declaring that the results changed without a full understanding of how the results are achieved. It is a focus on the X's that lead to the big Y's. The stability of the current process as verified through our checks will serve as a baseline for further business and process improvement. Leader Standard Work also provides linkage of best practices through leadership transitions - new leaders benefit from predecessors. This ensures we have legacy leadership versus a change in direction during each leadership transition.

HOW LSW IS USED

The approach to Leader Standard Work is very simple. It is printed, carried, and used as a hand-written list to remind each leader of their daily and weekly responsibilities. A leader will document daily notes, observations, and requests for action or follow-up, disrupters, and action items. It is not simply a checklist. The most important aspect of the Leader Standard Work to the leader's boss is the uncovering of items (disrupters) that prevent them from following their Leader Standard Work. Leader Standard Worksheets are working documents, so we can constantly update to the changing conditions in the business. Each leader must ensure all subordinate's standard work is followed and complete.



"When leaders neglect to inspect that which they expect, they have abdicated their roles as leaders in the organization." – Mike Huszar

VISUAL CONTROLS

Leader Standard Work will take leaders to visual controls. Leaders must scrutinize these visuals, processes, and data daily. The goal is not to get through the process as quickly as possible. You may have experienced this in restaurants. You can tell when the manager is “checking the boxes” with their dining area walkthrough versus when the manager is truly observing and engaging in the dining room walkthrough.

When a deviation from the standard is found during the execution of Leader Standard Work, the leader must help the team determine what steps to take, when to take those steps, and by whom. Some great examples of visual controls are:

- Operator Standard Work
- Operator daily maintenance boards
- 5S daily task boards
- Process control boards/charts, equipment calibration signoffs, etc.

A properly designed visual control should show “Normal” versus “Abnormal.” This deviation should be evident to anyone visiting the process. When at the visual control, the leader should:

- Verify visual controls in place and up to date
- Ensure the System is working properly
- Verify execution to standard (or visual controls)
- Ensure “abnormalities” are clearly documented
- Ensure appropriate response to deviations

Do your local leaders conduct Leader Standard Work? Are you struggling with sustaining gains? Drive can help. We have a team of proven experts in improving business performance, front line leadership coaching, and we offer a 200% guarantee on implementation work so that there is no risk. For a no-obligation introduction meeting, please contact Paul Eakle at paul.eakle@driveinc.com or 865-323-3491.

