

Sort

Overview of Module



To sort simply means to remove unnecessary items from the workplace that no longer add value.

Now these items can be anything. A few simple examples of these “items” could be that old phone book from 1996... to the obsolete tooling crammed in your already over capacity warehouse... or the excess paperwork devouring your office.

So no matter what the item is, in the end, all we need to do is ask the question... do we really need this? And as many lean practitioners are fond of saying... when in doubt, sort it out.

Why Sort?

1. First of all, sorting can lead to a much safer workplace. By clearing out the items you no longer need people will have more room to work and things like trip hazards and items falling off shelves will be greatly reduced.
2. Additionally, sorting also improves work flow since there is less clutter to deal with.
3. Next, done correctly, sorting will most definitely increase productivity in both production and office environments. I've personally seen examples of productivity improving as much as 50% after simply sorting and clearing out unneeded items from a work cell.

Involve Accounting Department

It's extremely important to involve your sites accounting or controller's office in any sorting activities since some items may still have book value and will need to be properly accounted for.

So make sure to include them... heck you might even invite them to help out. You never know they may love the opportunity to go to the gemba right along with you!

3 Step Sorting Process

1. Evaluate and take pictures of the work area. To help you get started we've provided a 5S evaluation form in the resources section. It's also extremely important to take pictures during this evaluation step since referencing them after improvements have been made can be very enlightening.
2. Identify and red tag the items you no longer need. In the next module we'll explain exactly how to go about red tagging since, while it's not a complicated process, there are some traps to avoid.
3. Decide what to do with the tagged items. Again, in the next module we'll offer some suggestions as to how you might be able to clear some things out while also helping others.

Key Terms

- Sort: To remove unnecessary items from the workplace that no longer add value.
- Red tag: A red colored tag used to identify items no longer needed in a particular work area.