



The True Power of Continuous Improvement

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WestRock



Company Overview - WestRock

WestRock partners with customers to provide differentiated paper and packaging solutions that help them win in the marketplace. Key products include paperboard, specialty packages, boxes and displays. The company's 45,000 team members support customers from more than 300 locations around the world.

WestRock's Performance Excellence group helps to foster and grow the company's **culture of continuous improvement** through employee **engagement and empowerment**.



Objectives for Today



- Using a real-life example, demonstrate the impact of employee-led change
- Share information on the method and tools used
- Inspire you to harness the full power of continuous improvement in your workplace

Discover the impact of employee-driven transformation



The Case Study



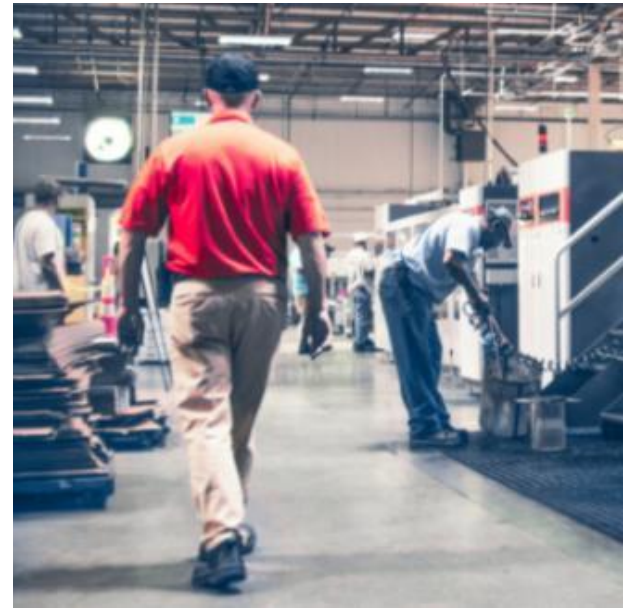
- Assembly plant with over 200 employees
- Low productivity, quality, and employee morale
- Multiple resources previously deployed with limited results
- Site no longer profitable

Plant facing imminent closure – last-ditch rescue attempt



Go to the Gemba

- **‘Gemba’** – place where the work is done
- Seek deep understanding of the current situation
- Listen to the voice of the people and process



Findings:

- Frantic, frenzied ‘fire-fighting’
- Lack of application of lean manufacturing methods
- Focused on results vs. process
- Demoralized but highly capable workforce



“Start With Why”

You must define your **why** before you can begin with the **what** and the **how**.

María Reyes McDavis

- Formed plant ‘steering team’ to guide effort
- Used a ‘strategic A3’ to:
 1. Set the vision
 2. Chart the course
 3. Evaluate results

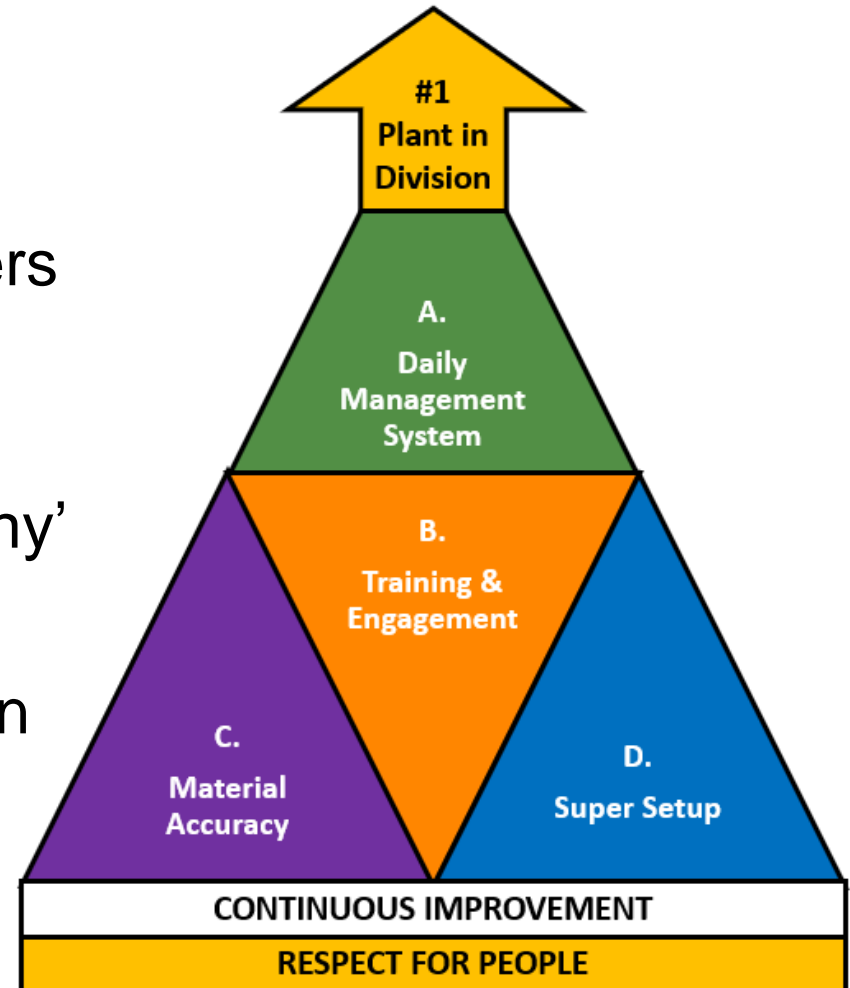
Our ‘Why’:

- “To ensure security for our jobs, selves, and families”
- “To become the top-performing site in the division”



Focus, Focus, Focus

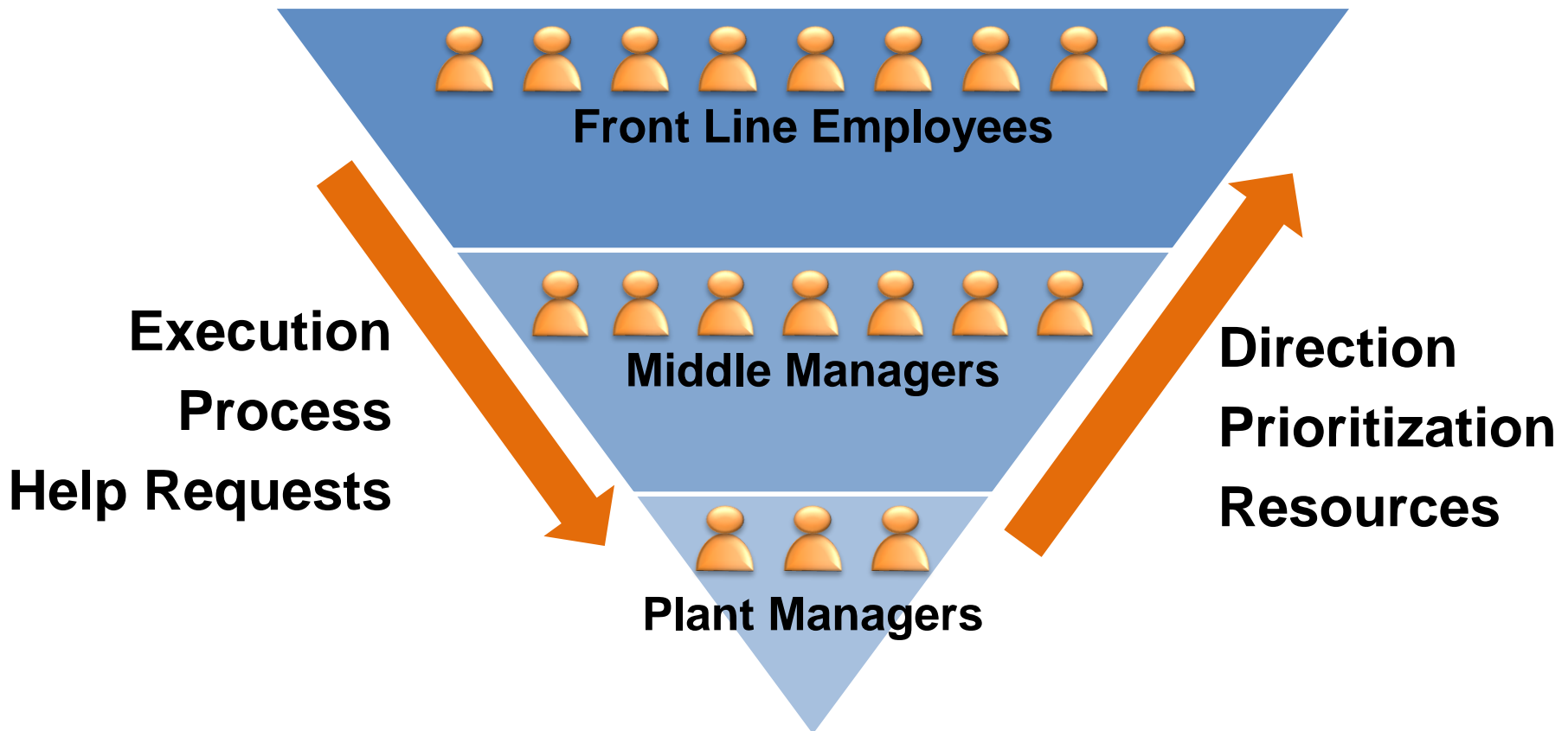
- Avoid a ‘scattershot approach’
- Let the data and process owners identify the focus areas
- Prioritize opportunities – the ‘**critical few**’ vs. the ‘trivial many’
- Assign owners of each area of focus and build course of action



Team created logo to symbolize effort



Leadership Coaching



Leadership – mobilize others to achieve a shared vision



Leadership Gemba Walks



Daily purposeful walks on the floor

- Model the desired behavior
- Reinforce the right process and provide coaching
- Identify problems, ideas, and opportunities to provide support
- Recognize and appreciate
- Get to know your employees!

Walk the floor with purpose of understanding and engaging



Daily Management System

- Process for measuring and responding to performance
- Key elements – Safety, Quality, Production
- Set targets, review and respond to gaps
- Process owners report out
- Leaders provide feedback and coaching



DMS – checking the heartbeat of our performance health



Training on Lean Methods



Ongoing cycle of training

- Transfer knowledge
- Provide safe environment to practice new skills
- Give ongoing feedback and coaching to close gaps
- Pursue mastery

Focused on developing front line leaders to coach others



The Gold Mine of Employee Ideas

- Actively solicit ideas from everyone, but especially those who do the work
- No idea is too small. Look for 'quick wins'
- Prioritize and select which improvements to pursue
- Encourage experimentation with solutions



Don't let the gold mine of employee ideas go to waste!



Employee Driven Improvement



Examples:

- Team member saved 2 hours / day with simple idea
- Setup crew developed their own standard work
- Associates designed and built their own tool boards, spread to Maintenance
- Kaizen event run by line leaders improved efficiency by over 200%

Empower those who do the work to improve their own work



Closing the Loop – Appreciate and Sustain

- Realize the power of a simple “thank you”
- Communicate the ‘wins’
- Celebrate with the team
- Systemically ensure the gains are sustained
- Motivate and challenge by raising the bar



Appreciating and sustaining are critical to continued success



Experience the Transformation



The results:

- “People are smiling more...the culture is changing”
- Employees self-motivated to make improvements
- Unprecedented gains in productivity
- Leadership final decision to keep the plant open

Over 200 empowered employees saved their own jobs



Reflect on Lessons Learned

“Hansei” – deep reflection for purpose of future improvement

What Went Well:

- Strong leadership support
- Coaching and development of plant leaders
- Leveraging employee ideas and giving ownership of improvements



Areas to Improve:

- Engagement of off-shift
- Change communication
- Sustainment process

Reflection – how we improve the way we improve



Creating Waves of Excellence



- Trust the process will lead to the right results
- Fully leverage employee ideas for improvement
- Enable process owners to drive the changes
- Acknowledge and sustain the gains!

Supervisor testimony: “I learned that when you **empower your people**, you can just stand back and **watch the magic happen.**”



Thank You!

Your opinion is important to us!

Please take a moment to complete the survey using the conference mobile app.

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The Power of Continuous Improvement**

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