5S Guide

An introduction to the 5S method and practical tips for implementation in any facility

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Contents

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Introduction

If your company is like most organizations, you're searching for a competitive edge. Something that will **reduce costs**, **increase sales**, and make you **more agile** in a changing business environment.

You've found it.

Simply put, *5S is a systematic approach to workplace organization*.

But it's also much more than that. 5S is about efficiency, competitiveness, and survival. It is a deceptively simple system that creates an organized and productive workplace.

It's not just about cleaning up and eliminating toolboxes. 5S creates a workplace environment that can adapt and succeed.

Chaos and unproductivity are your enemies; organization and efficiency are your allies.

If implemented correctly and followed diligently, 5S will lead to:

- **Lower costs**
- **Better quality**
- **Improved safety**
- **Increased productivity**
- **Higher employee satisfaction**

From the offices of upper management to the workstations in the factory, the power of this system will quickly reveal itself in your bottom line.

The Five Pillars

Originally developed by Hiroyuki Hirano for manufacturing companies in Japan, the principles of 5S translate well to the laboratory, the repair facility, and even the corporate office. Almost any work environment will benefit from the structure and efficiency this model provides.

5S is sometimes called the **five pillars** because just like the physical pillars that hold up a structure, 5S has five elements that support the effectiveness of the system.

And just like the pillars of a building, if one was to weaken or fail, the entire structure would fall.

The five steps/pillars of 5S are:

1 Sort

2 Set in Order

3 Shine

4 Standardize

5 Sustain

Sort

Sort is the process of removing all the items not needed for current production from the workspace.

整理

Original Japanese word:
Seiri

5S begins with the **Sort** step. Sort is the cornerstone of 5S and will help get rid of problems such as:

- **Tools and materials impeding workflow**
- **Wasted time looking for parts, tools, and products**
- **Stockpiling unnecessary and expensive inventory**
- **Safety hazards resulting from clutter**

The goal of Sort is to eliminate all the unneeded tools and materials and create a space free of clutter. This allows for a workflow free from distraction.

A good rule of thumb is: "If you do not use it on a daily basis, throw it out." Leave only the things you absolutely need to get your job done. This includes tools, materials, and machinery.

When executing the Sort step, you must be vigilant and ruthless. Doing this first step correctly will lay the groundwork for 5S and ensure a successful implementation of the 5S model.

Identifying unneeded parts and tools is not always an easy task. Employees and managers get so used to the chaos that they don't even see it anymore.

5S has an effective tool that will help you with your sort process: red tags.

Red Tags

Red tags help you identify objects that need to be removed from the workplace.

When you see something you think may need to be removed, you put a red tag on it. This lets everyone know this item needs to be evaluated.

On the red tag, indicate what action should be taken:

1. **Leave the item where it is**
2. **Relocate the item**
3. **Dispose of the item**
4. **Recycle the item**
5. **Place in "Red Tag Holding Area"**

The Red Tag Holding Area is a location where items are placed until you determine their value.

For example, say you have a tool you haven't seen anyone use in a long time, but you aren't sure you should get rid of it. Place it in the red tag holding area with a date on it, perhaps for a month from now. If that date passes and no one has used the tool, you can safely assume it's not needed and remove it from the workplace.

On the other hand, if you determine an item is still needed, remove the red tag and find an appropriate location to store it.

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Set in Order

Set in Order is the process of putting everything in a place that is easy to get to. All items should be clearly marked so anyone can easily find its proper home.

整頓

Original Japanese word:
Seiton

Begin the **Set in Order** phase of 5S only when the Sort phase is complete. This phase will be useless if there is unnecessary clutter in the workspace.

The goal of Set in Order is to create a standardized and consistent way to store and retrieve tools and materials. The key here is standardization. The user must develop this system based on how often the tools and materials are accessed and the process that uses them.

Some guidelines to consider:

- ☑ **If items are used together, store them together.**

- ☑ **Put frequently used items closest to the user.**

- ☑ **If possible, devise a let-go system in which tools are attached to a retractable cord and automatically go back to the stored position.**

- ☑ **Place items so the user doesn't need to bend or twist much to access them.**

- ☑ **Arrange tools and materials in order of use.**

The Set in Order step utilizes several strategies to accomplish its goals.
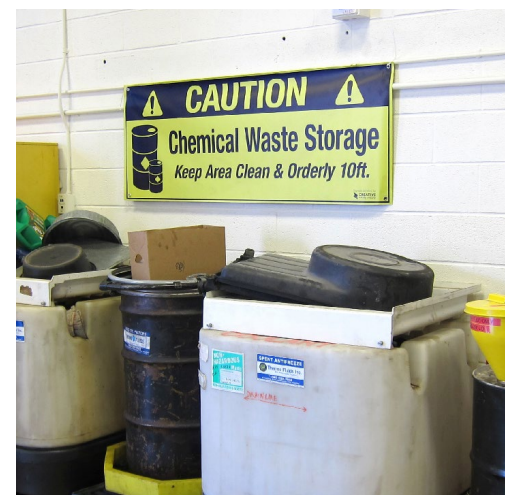
Labels and Signs

A key component of any organizational program, **labeling** is the easiest way to quickly and visually identify proper placement of tools, materials, and equipment.

For example, drawers of tool chests can be labeled with their contents so employees can easily find what they need. The floor can even be labeled indicating where trash cans, machinery, and other equipment should be placed so these things always find their way back to where they belong.

This type of labeling makes it easy for even people unfamiliar with your system to locate items and return them to the right places. It also helps with sustaining organizational processes because once everything is properly labeled, it's easier for employees to keep 5S in focus on a daily basis. If they ever forget the location of something, the answer is right in front of them.

In addition, larger signs, banners, and posters can be used to convey messages of organization or safety, including reminders of the 5S process. Large signs can be posted above storage areas, for example, to facilitate clean-up at the end of shifts.

Together, these tools create a great backbone for any visual organization program.

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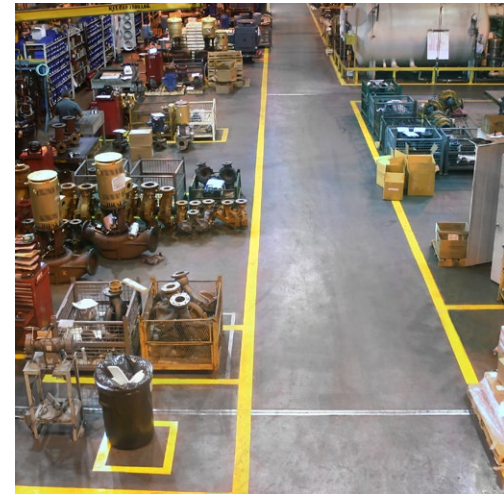**creativesafetysupply.com/labeltac**

Line Marking

Painted or taped **lines** are often associated with safety (pedestrian paths, forklift and equipment paths, etc.), but they are also very useful for marking work areas, as well as locations for pallets, raw materials, finished goods, shipping, and other static locations.

By marking the boundaries of these areas, you'll make it easier for employees and visitors to make sense of space.

Industrial floor tapes are preferred to painted lines as they are more resistant to foot and forklift traffic and don't require long dry times. They are also easy to clean and require little upkeep. These tapes come in many colors and sizes so you can create a marking system that makes sense for your facility.

Often, companies also use thinner vinyl tapes (0.25" to 2" width) of different colors to mark workbenches and work cells. These tapes can create visual cues or indicate the locations of tools/equipment that shouldn't move. This helps keep work areas clear of clutter and keeps these static items in their optimal positions.

These techniques can be used for work cells of any kind. They will improve workflow and result in improved productivity. Additionally, misplaced items and equipment are easy to spot.

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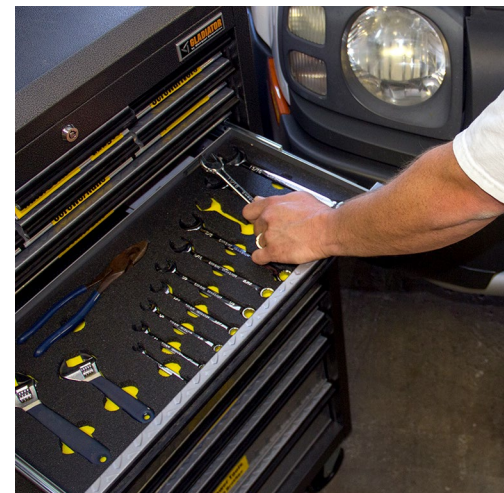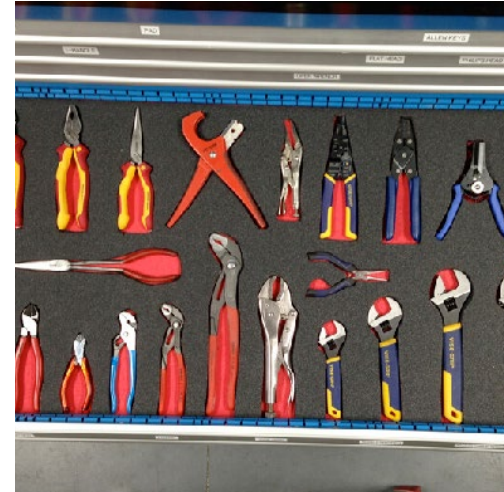
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Tool Foam

For tool drawers, you can use customizable foam to create a tool organization system to prevent tools from going missing. This foam can also help protect your toolbox and tools from damage.

This customizable foam is usually available as part of a kit, which means you will receive two pieces of foam in contrasting colors. The brighter color foam is placed in the bottom of the drawer. You trace the outlines of your tools on the second piece of foam and cut them out using a foam-cutting knife. Then when you place that layer of foam into your drawer, the brighter color beneath will show through, highlighting any missing tools.
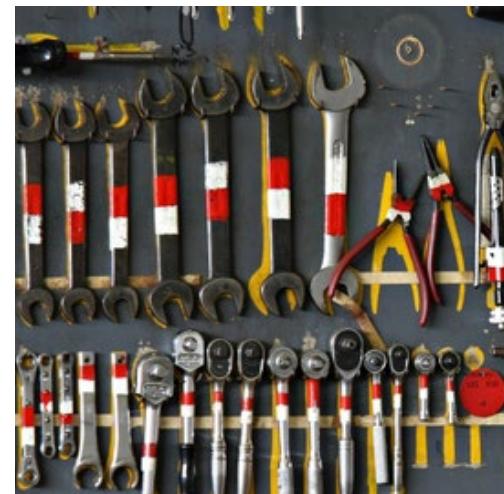

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Shadow Board / Tool Outlining

Tool outlining means creating a visual outline of your tool so you can quickly return it to its proper home.

For pegboards and other hanging tool systems, this is done by placing painted or vinyl cutouts of your tools behind those tools. Vinyl tool outlines work well since they are easy to apply and require no maintenance. This method is called shadow boarding.

These methods of organizing tools are simple but effective. They make organization more visual, which makes it easier for people to follow your organizational protocols without too much thought.

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Shine

**Shine means removing all the dirt
and grime and keeping the workplace
clean on daily basis. You want to get it
clean and keep it clean.**

清潔

Original Japanese word:
Seiso

You eliminated clutter with Sort and you organized with Set in Order.
Now it's time to sanitize with **Shine**.

When you implement this step, two things will happen. First, your
employees will like coming to work in a clean environment. Second,
because you are keeping the equipment and your surroundings
in great shape, you will have fewer injuries and fewer equipment
breakdowns. That means greater productivity and fewer costs.

In the 5S system, cleaning is everyone's responsibility. Although
you may still use a janitorial staff to tackle large jobs, the detailed
cleaning will be done by your employees. You must train your staff to
view dirt and chaos as an intolerable situation.

This must be a culture that is followed from the CEO down to the
apprentice.

Standardize your cleaning program for best results. Train your
employees to do it correctly. Make sure they know what they
are responsible for and give them the tools to do the job. Utilize
checklists and diagrams for consistency.

Inspection and Maintenance

Cleaning is not the only facet of Shine. The daily Shine ritual should also include **inspection** and **routine maintenance**.

As your employees are doing their daily cleaning routine, they should be inspecting tools and machinery for damage as well. Include this in the daily checklist to make sure it gets done.

Periodic routine maintenance should also be done at this time. Some examples are checking the oil level in machinery, tightening up belts, hoses, nuts, and bolts, or checking if tools need sharpening.

The goal for Shine is to keep everything in great working order so it lasts as long as possible and doesn't break down.

Clean and properly maintained tools and machines also increase safety in the workplace. Fewer injuries and less downtime equate to higher morale and higher productivity.

What if an employee sees a pool of oil that wasn't there before or notices a safety hazard?

If it's a quick fix, put a maintenance tag on it and notify your supervisor. If something needs further evaluation, there should be a maintenance log you can fill out that will ensure further action.

And don't forget your computers and other office equipment! They need to be defragmented (PCs) and air-dusted periodically to keep them in good condition.

Everything is coming together. The groundwork has been set for a successful 5S implementation. Now we move on to the pillar that will be the glue that keeps it all together: Standardize.

Standardize

Standardize creates a system of tasks and procedures that will ensure the principles of 5S are performed on a daily basis.

清掃

Original Japanese word:
Seiketsu

We all have our own way of doing things. This kind of individuality is great in our personal lives because it makes life more interesting.

But non-conformity can be unproductive in the workplace. If your employees start doing things their own way, then things will start to get missed and conditions will slowly begin to deteriorate.

The **Standardize** pillar utilizes a set of schedules and checklists that can be easily followed so each step of 5S is performed exactly the same way every day.

This way, each employee knows what he needs to do, when he needs to do it, and exactly how to do it.

There is no room for uncertainty.

Standardize uses three steps to make sure that the 5S pillars are getting done consistently and correctly:

1) Make sure each employee knows his responsibilities.

If employees don't know exactly what is expected of them, then how can they do it?

They should have a clear understanding of their daily and weekly Sort, Set to Order, and Shine tasks. Their responsibilities should be clearly written out on a checklist or a chart so they can be easily accessed throughout the day.

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2) Make it a part of their daily routine.

If you train your employees correctly, they will execute the steps of 5S without even thinking about it.

"That wrench is out of place. Its home is here." -or- "I know the next tool I need is the screwdriver because my tools are stored in the order that I use them."

No extra thought is needed; employees flow through their daily routine because they can see that it makes sense.

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3) Periodic evaluation.

Once the steps are in place, you can evaluate performance at regular intervals.

You can either form a committee made up of employees from different departments or assign evaluation to department supervisors. Either way, you will need a system to ensure tasks are consistently getting done.

Standardize is essential to the success of your 5S implementation. If your staff has procedures to follow to complete the steps, you will ensure long-term success and reap all of the rewards of 5S.

Sustain

Sustain gives your staff the commitment and motivation to follow each step, day in and day out.

躾

Original Japanese word:
Shitsuke

Once you start the 5S method at your business, you will see improvements very quickly. But the key to long-term success is simple: diligence.

Have you ever gone on a diet to lose a few pounds? In the beginning, you really keep at it. You stay away from those French fries, eat more fruits and veggies, and may even go for a jog a couple days a week. You lose six pounds in two weeks.

But inevitably, you start to slip. You're out with friends and you indulge in dessert. Or you hit your favorite fried chicken joint. It's only this one time, you say. Before you know it, you're back to your old bad habits and have gained all of your weight back.

That's just human nature. If there is nothing to keep you motivated, you will start to cut corners and slip. The fifth pillar, **Sustain**, is designed to keep your staff motivated and on track.

Take concrete steps to make sure 5S doesn't fall by the wayside. The five suggestions on the next page can help Sustain 5S and keep your program functioning well.

Assign the time to do it.

Give your staff the time to do the steps correctly. For example, designate the fifteen minutes before lunch and shift end as Shine time. During this time, their main focus is cleaning and organizing according to their checklists.

Start from the top.

Your whole organization must be on board if 5S is going to work in the long run. If your employees see that management is not following the steps, do you think they will continue to do it?

Create a reward system.

Have friendly competitions between departments each month and reward the winner. Buy them lunch, let them go early one day, or give them priority parking. It doesn't have to break the bank; you just want to show them your appreciation for a job well done.

Get everyone involved.

Form a committee made up of employees and supervisors of different departments. Their job will be to oversee the implementation of 5S for a fixed period, maybe six months. Then you can rotate in new members.

Let them see it.

Posters, banners, and newsletters can be a constant reminder of the importance of 5S.

Safety

Safety is an ongoing process supported by nearly all pillars of the 5S system. It is often considered a "6th S". Companies that include this step refer to the system as 6S.

Traditionally there are only 5 pillars or steps in the 5S system, but many companies and organizations opt to add a sixth pillar: **Safety**. This system is then usually referred to as "6S".

Safety plays a critical role in any company and goes hand in hand with proper organization, so it makes sense to highlight it at the same time as 5S. In fact, implementing the 5S model is a huge first step to creating a safe environment for you and your staff.

What are some other things you can do?

- Make sure your employees have the correct equipment for their jobs. Hardhats, coveralls, gloves, and steel toe shoes are some typical items required in a warehouse or manufacturing complex.

- Train your staff to use the equipment correctly. Heavy equipment, electronics, forklifts, and power tools are all dangerous to those who use them incorrectly.

- Easy-to-understand labels, signs, and other markings contribute to creating a safe, visual workplace.

- Train your staff on exactly what to do in an emergency. From small incidents like cuts and bruises to larger ones like injuries and fire, each employee should know what they need to do or who they need to notify.

Summary

5S is a system, a philosophy, and a culture.

The true power of 5S reveals itself when your whole organization embraces its ideals and your employees see that your business is transforming itself.

The 5S model for workplace efficiency and organization is both powerful and simple. It has the potential to transform your company into a safe and productive warehouse, manufacturing facility, or office.

One of 5S's most powerful attributes is that it's a **visual model**. Each tool has an outlined home and each pathway is marked with lines. Vision is our dominant sense, and because 5S uses colors, lines, and labels to organize, following the steps becomes second nature very easily.

Remove the clutter with Sort, organize with Set to Order, clean with Shine, set your routine with Standardize, and motivate with Sustain.

It's that easy.

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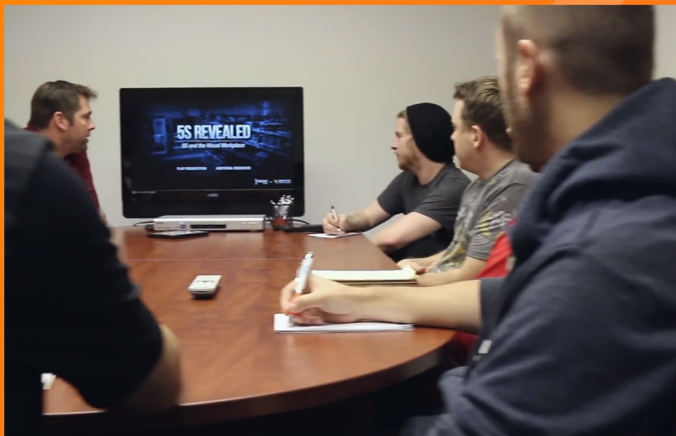
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- A introduction to the 8 Wastes of Lean
- How to implement Sort, Set in Order, and Shine
- The importance of Standardization
- How 5S Standardization teams should work
- Why a visual workplace is essential for safety
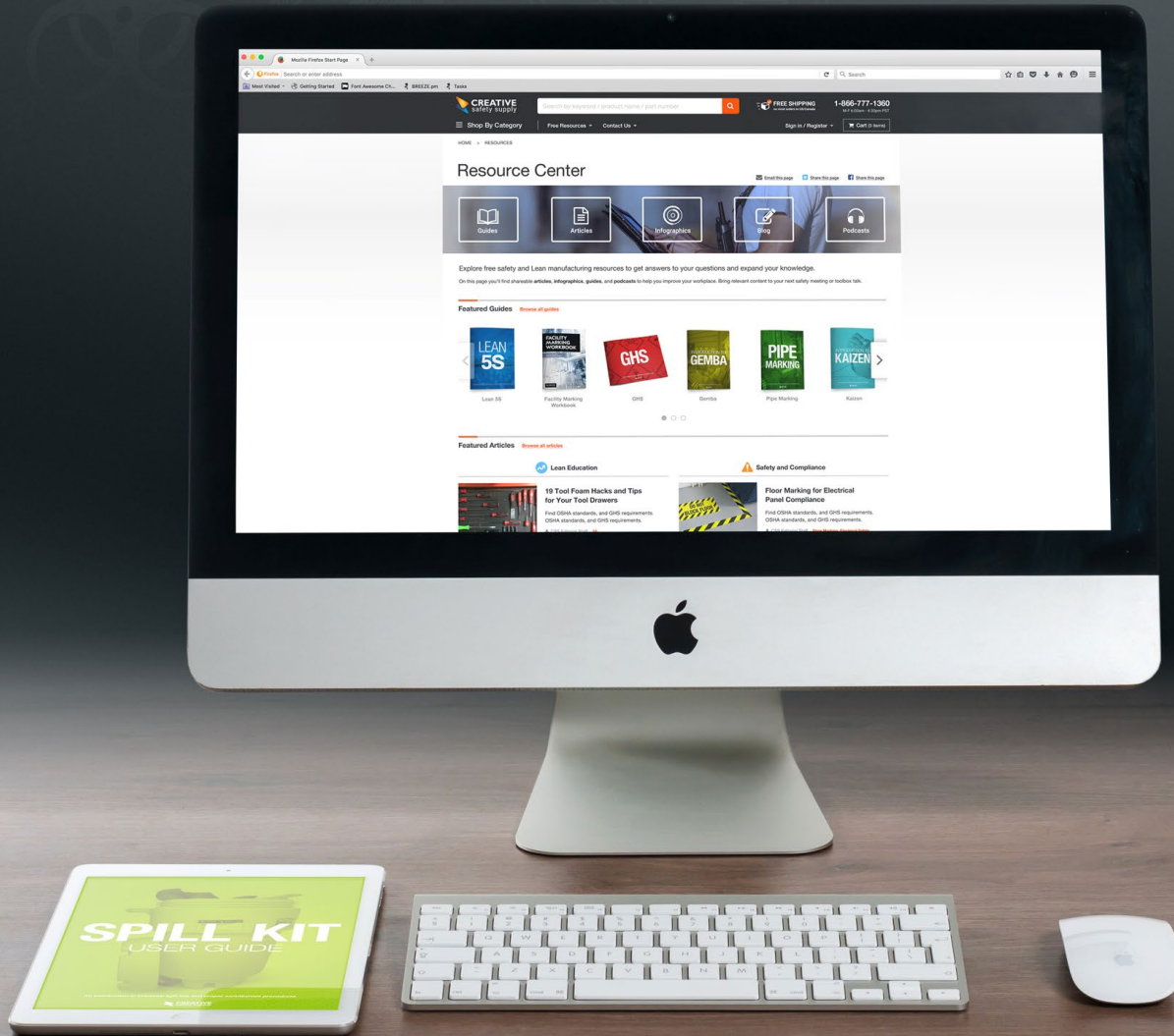- The red tag method

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