

STANDARDISED WORK

Standardised work – easy to write or say, not at all easy to achieve.

Work is standardised when what is actually happening on the shop floor or at the service front is in accordance with the documented standard. Anecdotal evidence from many workplaces would suggest this is very hard to achieve. Perhaps this is because when the two don't match there is often intertwined reasons connecting knowledge, skill, will, state of the processes and nature of the work. A special mindset with a longer term view is required.

The business benefits of work that is standardised is plain to see – predictability in safety, quality, productivity and cost. Is such predictability worth striving for? One would think so.

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Standardising work is not going to be easy. People have a standard error rate of 1 in 10,000 where care is required and 1 in 1,000 for simple routine tasks.

Data reference: Human Interface/Human Error by Charles P. Shelton, Carnegie Mellon University 18-849b, Dependable Embedded Systems, Spring 1999.

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What you will see in a work area truly practising standardised work

- ▶ Work standards arranged in a sequence that flows.
- ▶ Work standards containing three elements – takt time, sequence and “in control/out of control parameters”.
- ▶ Team members who accept the standard as the “best known way today”.
- ▶ Team members who can follow the standard.



Takt time connects the rate of demand from the customer to the time available to produce or provide the service. It is important to understand this as there's no point in sinking resources into something that has overcapacity.



Sequence is concerned with achieving a SMOOTH working pattern – no waiting time, work starts and stops at the same place and that WIP is delivered just in time – required amount in spec only when needed by the next operation.

“In control/out of control” parameters are those parameters that are crucial to the supervisor for detecting if the process is under control or not. To be able and capable of detecting abnormal situations is crucial to the supervisor and their team.

Getting to work that is standardised

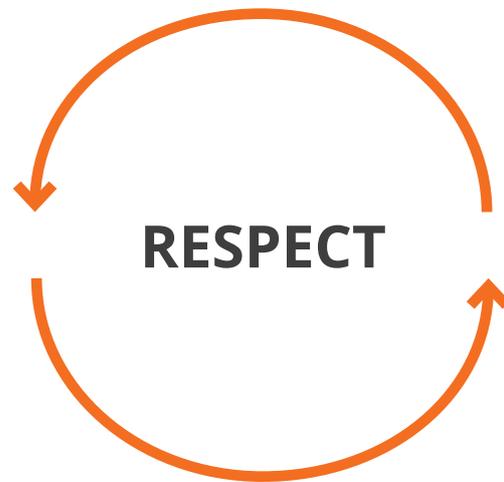
Implementing standardised work is a commitment reaching far beyond the templates.

It requires deep skills from supervisors, something a company like Toyota takes for granted since they develop supervisors over a long period of time (minimum of 10 years!)

The standard package of skills are the “4 J’s” from TWI (Training Within Industry):

1. Job Instruction
2. Job Relations
3. Job Methods
4. Job Safety

These are all engrained in the culture and used everywhere. The first step of establishing processes and work that can be standardised will use these skills then, to actually get to the point of work that is actually standardised, they will be used further.



GIVE RESPECT GET RESPECT

It is worth noting that the skill of Job Relations assist in building respect for people without which work that is standardised simply will not happen.

One might be thinking now “well, the answer is automation”. The number of people doing actual work is declining, as it has been for the last 150 years, but we still have millions and millions of people going to work every day. Those people produce things and services and will continue to do so for a considerable future. To think that in the foreseeable future we can supersede the need for work that is standardised might be foolhardy.

*Joakim Bjurström of Business Through People Scandinavia was the source of much of the content of this document.
Thank you Joakim.*