CONDUCTING WORKPLACE EXPERIMENTS

Outcome: A person who can plan a workplace experiment, do it, check what happened against what they predicted, then use what they learned.

Our assumption that people are naturally competent in conducting workplace experiments seems flawed. This is not criticism of individuals; it's a reflection based on the last few years of experience and is classic. How often do we assume competence in foundational basics and that assumption is misplaced?

Furthermore, liberal use of PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) to describe the principle of workplace experiments is accurate. But we find PDCA is not simply understood and applied well. People have heard of it, but we're not so sure they're good at it. That takes practice based on sound understanding …

These things above triggered the development of our 'learn by doing' program for workplace experimenting.

The whole point of experimenting in the workplace is to *learn something in alignment with a goal that can then be used to guide our next step*. That goal may well be an increase in performance to a new mark, or simply a return to standard.

The verb to learn means to acquire knowledge of, or skill in, something through study or experience.

An effective, efficient and fruitful way of learning through study or experience, of going beyond our knowledge threshold, is to think and act scientifically – to conduct workplace experiments with a sound PDCA base.

Your process . . .

TARGET CONDITION

OBSTACLES

PLAN

EXPERIMENTS

ACT

DO

CHECK

www.vwaust.com

Throughout our 1 or 2 day (3 or 4 session) 'learn by doing' program, knowledge moves to essential capability development through designing and conducting at least three experiments.

Purpose and Emphasis of Each Session

Session	Objectives	Emphasis
One (2 hours)	Understanding: • Workplace based scientific thinking. • PDCA as a basis for workplace experimenting. Capability - data gathering.	Scientific thinking and acting toward a goal is a much more effective way of 'improving' than random hunting for opportunities. Sound experiments have four very clear stages. Gathering data is a very important part of experimenting.
Two (2 hours)	Capability: • Identifying obstacles to a Target Condition. • Design, conduct, evaluate a workplace experiment.	Obstacles are the "now we can't do that because ..." Practicing experimenting develops capability.
Three (2.5 hours)	Understanding: • In scientific thinking, data and facts are needed to evaluate a prediction. • Where two base data gathering tools can be used. Capability: • Using two data gathering tools. • Making your experiments visual. • Designing, conducting, evaluating a workplace experiment. Understanding - key requirements for working with others in workplace experimenting.	Using two base tools - spaghetti diagrams and run charts. 'Visual' experiment reporting makes communication effective. Practicing experimenting develops capability. Working with others makes sense but requires certain skills.
If 'in house' then ↓		
Next day	Capability - designing, conducting, evaluating a workplace experiment.	Practicing experimenting develops capability.