

## 'STANDARDISED WORK' FROM THE SOURCE

As with 'Chinese whispers', interpretation changes over time ...

After spending a week with Mr Isao Kato, Mr Taichi Ono's HR advisor, in Japan at the end of October 2019 it became clear that common understanding of standardised work has developed many shades of grey. When provided with Mr Kato's Step Up Reference Model we realised most of us are at or not much beyond the first step. That was daunting. The good news is a tremendous amount of value can be gained from undertaking just the lower steps.



It's important to first establish common understanding of three often misinterpreted terms – work standards, standard work and standardised work.

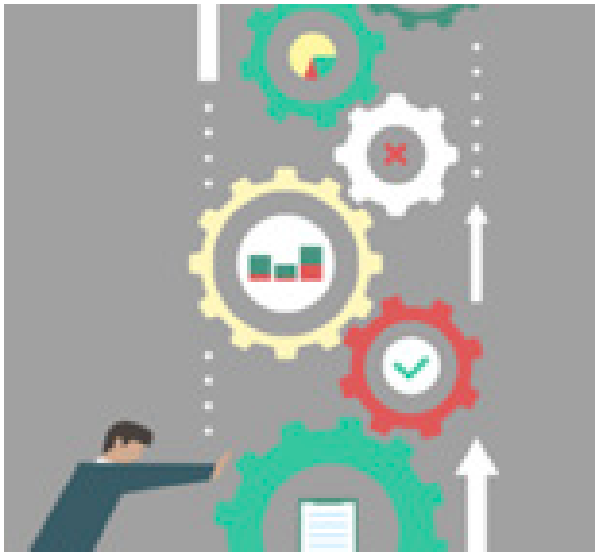
**Work standards** are concrete statements about various work conditions, work methods, work management methods, and other precautions. Essentially there are three types of work standards:

- Those relating to the output, the product or service being provided.
- Those relating to the machine(s)/ equipment that produce the output.
- Those relating to the human that produces the output or runs the machine and/or uses the equipment that produces the output.

Mr Kato hammers the point "Before you can begin with standardised work, you must clarify your work standards."

**Standard work** is a term that refers to a specific task or job for which the *content, sequence, timing and outcome* have been identified. Since the focus is on human motion, standard work is the description of that motion and its interaction with machines and materials.

**Standardised work** is an end condition. It is the end condition that exists in the workplace *after* work standards and standard work have been identified and taught, and both are being followed explicitly.



By the way, building adherence to work standards and standard work comes through effective training and problem solving along which road waste will be reduced.

Mr Kato outlined a series of Step Ups in his reference model in order to attain standardised work. What follows is a very high-level view of this model.

Work standards are at the base. Their absolute primary function is to define 'normal'. They are to include a time component – the standard time to do each element of the work (by the machine and/or the person).

Things to do within Step Up 2 include heavy emphasis on training to the work standard along with developing means by which 'abnormal' can be quickly identified. Balancing the work to takt begins along with work sequencing and WIP for Just In Time. Charts and tools are developed to illustrate.

Within Step Up 3 rapid means of addressing 'abnormal' is developed, along with recurrence prevention. The focus now comes on developing work standards and standard work for incidental tasks and levelling the distribution of work considering volume and workload changes.

Step Up 4 development requires getting to the fine points of standardising work – pursuing very low cycle up and changeover times, multiskilling people and driving genuine continuous improvement. (Genuine continuous improvement is raising the bar, raising the standard.)

Finally, Step Up 5 will see development of a rigorous system of checks and balance for ensuring the effectiveness of rapid response and genuine continuous improvement.

And now ... take a breath. As Mr Kato told us, not every organisation can and needs to get to and through Step Up 5. But substantial benefit will be gained by adopting the philosophies of the reference model to take your organisation as far as is commercially needed.