

ONE-PAGE INFORMATION - KAIZEN No.16

Published by S. Yoshida, GTR Institute, Toyota Japan E-mail: gtr-inst@wta.att.ne.jp

■ Continuation is Power, but Difficult

Toyota Motor has been doing “Jishu-ken” for more than 30 years as the basis of Kaizen ; continuous elimination of Muda from all manufacturing and business processes.

Jishu-Ken, translated as Self-Study Groups of Kaizen, is carried-out involving all its group companies. They hold a big annual presentation conference of Jishu-Ken in Toyota City where participating companies explain about how they improve productivity, quality and cost. Honda Motor and Calsonic-Kansei have been holding the International Quality Circle Convention for more than 15 years : inviting foreign group companies to Japan.

A Quality Circle is a small problem-solving group, first established in early 1960's in Japan, which is regarded as the basic model of the today's Gemba Kaizen Workshop (in most cases 5 days). When Quality Circle was first introduced in 1967 to the Western countries (USA, West European countries) by Dr. Deming and Dr. Juran, U.S. Quality specialists, many companies of the West started Quality Circle as an industry fad. However, Quality Circle does not exist today in those countries. It died except at Japanese transplants and some very few companies. Why does Kaizen phase out and disappear in the Western world? There are a few important reasons behind it. No management support, short-term result-oriented management, lack of support system and poor training system are some of them. Today, many U.S. and Western European companies are sending Kaizen specialists to Japan trying to know how to re-vitalize Kaizen activities.



KAIZEN TOOL BOX #10 --- Cassette Technology

- To Reduce Tool Change-Over Time Within Production Cycle Time -

In 1980's American took up the nation-wide campaign for set-up time reduction of stamping dies after they came to know that a big gap existed between US auto industry and Japanese counterpart in 1980's. U.S auto industry took more than one to three hours to change over stamping dies while Japanese did it in less than 10 minutes. Change-over time reduction was prerequisite for Just-In-Time production. This campaign was nick-named SMED, a queer Japanese-English technical jargon meaning Single Minutes of Exchange of Dies. Today many Japanese companies including Kyosan Denki, and Gife Body complete the change-over within the cycle time without any production loss. This revolutionary change-over operation is made possible through so-called the “Cassette Technology” in which all jigs and fixtures are confined in the standard cassette necessitating no adjustment.