
CASE STUDY

Atlas Copco Huddle Board Implementation



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Introduction:

Atlas Copco in North Bay, ON, worked with PACE to provide LEAN training to key personnel. Upon completion, the continuous improvement culture needed to be embedded and fostered through a means of effective communication.



ISSUE:

Atlas Copco required structure and methods to stay ahead of the competition and keep delivering excellent value to customers with a goal to reduce cycle time and implement innovative long-term improvements to processes. Risks identified:

Need to foster culture of improvement

Improvement of communication on the shop floor

Ability to address issues as they occur, before larger problems develop

BACKGROUND

Established in 1949, Atlas Copco, a Fortune 500 company, has leading positions in sales, service and marketing of air and gas compressors, portable compressors, generators, mining and rock excavation equipment, construction tools, pneumatic and electric power tools and assembly systems.

With more than 750 employees and 200 distributors across Canada, Atlas Copco is known as a leader in innovation, constantly driven to provide high quality, state-of-the-art products, which improve customer efficiency,

cuts their production costs, and respects the environment.

The Huddle Board process is a method of visual management in which employees and leadership “huddle” in front of white boards for short meetings at scheduled times to brainstorm opportunities from improvement. The boards are filled with colourful sticky notes containing ideas for improvement. Agreement is reached on two new ideas, which are then systematically around the board towards “Completed” (with sections such as Just Do It, Under Review, In Progress, Pilot Project, and even Kibosh along the way.)

Huddle Boards serve as a constant reminder that excellence is a journey that never ends, ensuring employee knowledge is leveraged and staff adopt a habit of making small improvements every day, leading to larger, innovative improvements over time through a process of investigation through to completion.

The boards provide permanent locations where anyone can easily view the work of the organization and be inspired to promote innovative change.

VALUE PROPOSITION:

Work with PACE to understand how to implement Huddle Boards and Huddle culture.

HOW IT WAS ACCOMPLISHED:

- ▶ Assessment of current state of communication structures

- ▶ Coaching project managers on effective communication processes
- ▶ Training on implementing Huddle Boards
- ▶ Help to establish permanent Huddle Board locations and huddle meeting schedules

AUDIT FOR SUCCESS

SAMPLE PROJECT:

An internal innovation facilitated by an improved and more effective communications process was the idea to replace plastic labels on drilling rods by using an etching machine to record serial numbers. Eliminating the process of affixing the plastic labels has an immediate environmental benefit, preventing 60 tonnes of non-retrievable plastic waste from going into the ground.

CONCLUSION:

Implementation of more effective communications processes has improved Atlas Copco in North Bay improve morale, decreased defects, increased utilization on equipment, and increased productivity.



Testimonial from Ed Lusk, Bit Plant Production Supervisor, Atlas Copco

We are very proud to be on the leading edge of productivity and innovation by partnering with organizations such as PACE who provide us

with the structure and methods to stay ahead of the competition and keep delivering excellent value to our customers.

In order to make the assessment forms more user friendly/shorter, and to improve access to services for clients, we eliminated the irrelevant questions and reduced the assessment form from 6 pages to 2 pages.

In conclusion, a time reduction of 66% to conduct assessments was accomplished. Assessments went from taking 60 to 120 minutes, to an average of 20 to 30 minutes too complete. As a result, the waitlist for PPOP was eliminated within 2 weeks of implementation.