Knowledge Folders

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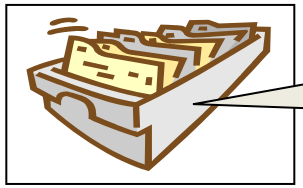
Overview

- Knowledge folders transmit organizational knowledge for an unfamiliar person to competently carry out a specific task quickly and easily.
- In their simplest form, knowledge folders are manila folders arranged alphabetically in an open storage crate centrally located for easy use.
- Knowledge folders maybe part of an IT system after proving how to use the process manually



Each folder has detailed and complete information on how to do something

Knowledge Folders are..

- A means of **standardizing non-standard work**
  - May be part of standardizing work in a value stream
- A manual system for
  - capturing **organizational knowledge**
  - having **complete and accurate information** on how to carry out a task, procedure or process
  - "**one stop shopping**" for the organization
- Easy to develop and update
- Both computer generated paper as well as internal forms, invoices, etc…..
- Maintained using concepts from the 5th Step of 5S, Sustain

What they are not…

- Files on a shared drive
- Software
- The responsibility of only one person
  - e.g. one person maintains the overall system but all knowledge workers contribute to development and periodic review of specific folders
- Substitute for visual controls, on the job instructions, and signs
  - ***Don't use a knowledge folder to instruct other on how to make coffee or use the LCD projector……..***
- Something you can find in books or reference materials (try an internet search….)

Getting Started

- Identify the scope of particular work process with beginning and end points
- Fill out a standardized work sheet

Folder #
Process / Procedure Description:
Company: **Date:**
Prepared by:
Process begins at:
Process ends at:
Revision Dates: **Revised by:**

Process Step	Comment	Responsible person

Think with granularity

Most people familiar with a task may significantly underestimate the actual number of steps that must be done to perform the work competently. Most people would not guess 20+ steps to open and read an email if your computer is not on

1. Open computer
2. Place finger on "power-on" button
3. Depress button
4. Wait for home page
5. Wait for apps to load
6. Put finger on mouse pad
7. Move mouse to "start" icon
8. Click "start"
9. Move mouse to internet provider
10. click icon
11. Wait for IE to load
12. Click on browser bar
13. Type in URL
14. Wait for AOL to load
15. Move mouse to mail icon
16. Click icon
17. Wait for mail to load
18. Move mouse to new mail
19. Click icon
20. Wait for mail to load
21. Move mouse to desired email
22. Highlight and click desired email
23. Wait for email to open

Summary

- Knowledge folders are just one tool in the performance improvement toolkit
- Appropriately used, they help transfer knowledge among workers
- As with 5S and the entire lean journey, "Sustain" is the hard part
  - A little due diligence to maintain the standards you put in place will save your team mates much stress and hassle……