LEAN The GRUNAU Way

Lean Line

To continually examine our processes to provide greater value to our customers without waste.

Logical Problem Solving Tool = A3

A Lean tool that Grunau started using last year when solving problems is called an "A3" which is basically a format to organize your thought processes. The A3 is a simple one-page document that can be shared with others for clear communication about the problem and solution.

You could think of the A3 as a storyboard that shows the logical steps to take to solve a problem. It can be completed by one person or by a team. The A3 prevents us from putting a quick-fix bandage on a problem and instead directs us to a long-term solution.

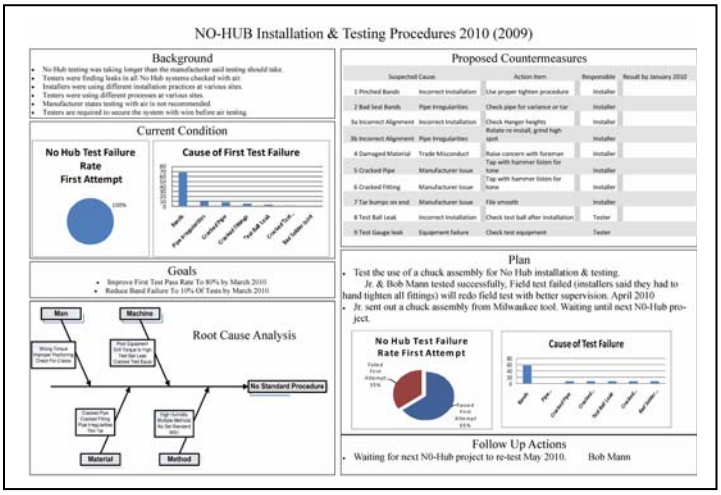
There are 7 steps shown on the A3 that guide you in the process of solving a problem:

1. Background = Establish importance of item and why you are talking about it.
2. Current Conditions = Identify the real problem & where things stand today. Important to KNOW conditions by observing actual work; can't base on assumptions of what you think may be occurring.
3. Goals = Write the specific outcome expected.
4. Analysis = Identify the root cause of the problem. Only by figuring out the root cause, can a long-term solution then be determined.
5. Countermeasures = List the countermeasures (or experiments) to take to reach the goals.
6. Plan = Identify the countermeasures to be used; what activities & who will accomplish to implement changes.
7. Follow-up = Ensure the improvements made a difference. Share knowledge with others.

The easy-to-read A3 has been used to solve problems our company was facing including the following items:

- Hardware Box
- No Hub Procedures
- Video Conferencing
- Safety Budget
- Daily Huddle
- Material Handling

While the official "A3" is on an 11x17 piece of paper (which is called an A3 size of paper and thus the name of the Lean tool), here are some examples in a smaller format for sake of illustration only.



If you have a problem that you'd like to try solving using the A3 way to organize your thoughts, contact us for more information and assistance to help get you started.