



The importance of standard work

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When talking about the importance of standard work in the roll out of continuous improvement training we are often faced with a response that says 'It doesn't apply here because everything we do is different' or 'we have standard operating procedures already'. However, if you break down a process to its most fundamental elements, there is always a level at which standardization is possible. The issue we find is that standard operating procedures, work instructions, analytical methods and training guides rarely contain enough detail to actually ensure a process is performed in a standard way.

What we mean by standard is, everybody, doing it exactly the same way, every time. This is a way of working that will not change even if the operators or trainers change, unless a conscious decision is made to do so. Now ask yourself a question; do you really have this?

A good standard means you:

- Avoid unnecessary motion and wasted effort dealing with the variable process output
- Improve safety
- Prevent equipment damage
- Increase consistency between operators
- Develop a foundation for process improvement
- Establish a stable and predictable process

At Envigo we recognize that we have many good ways of performing our processes but not everything is standardized.

Summary for a single process

In 2015, there were 8 incidences where one of our processes failed to deliver the specified outcome; this was 0.014% of the total time the process was performed. Equivalent to 1 defect every 7142 times the process was performed.

In the first half of 2016 there were 15 instances where the same process failed to deliver the specified outcome; this was 0.007% of the total times the process was performed. Equivalent to a 1 defect every 14285 times the process was performed.

Pursuit of perfection begins with a standard

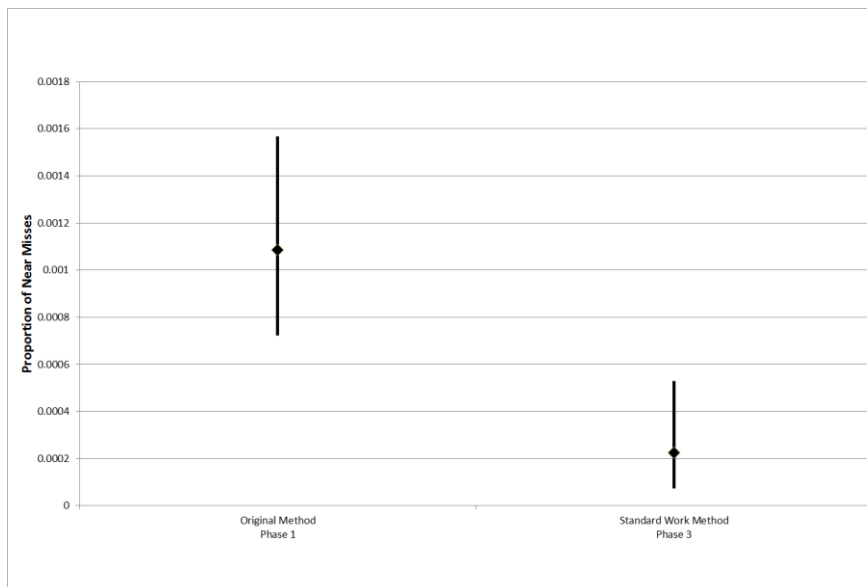
For this process it was important to remove defects completely.

Through videos and walking the process, a group of operators were able to understand the current way of working and then design the new standard. The following table shows a summary of the process that we went through.

The importance of standard work

Stage		Description
Plan	1	Empower a group of People
	2	Establish a goal
Do	3	Understand current Way of Working (WoW)
	4	Find a better sequence/ new method for task
	5	Make workplace easy
	6	Find a great way to train and support the standard
Check	7	Test proposed Standard Work Instruction
	8	Evaluate the test
	9	Build Consensus
Act	10	Establish new Standard Work Instruction
	11	Train new Standard Work Instruction
	12	Maintain & challenge new Standard Work Instruction

Near misses could be measured in real time so these were used as an effectiveness check of our new process. Before introducing the standard way of working we measured near misses as 0.11% (1 in 909). Following standard work implementation the near misses dropped significantly to 0.023% (1 in 4347). Extrapolating out to actual defects we would expect this to result in a new defect level of 0.0014% (1 in 71478). A reduction of 80% when compared to our old process.



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Conclusion

Although a target of zero near misses has not been reached, a significant reduction in near misses and no actual defects have been observed. Where there are near misses the first question to ask; **'Was the standard followed?'**

Having a standard in place is only the start and builds a great foundation from which to improve. A standard itself may not solve 100% of the problem as it takes discipline to follow a standard. Standards are part of the culture of an organization, it's what you do when no one is watching that counts.