

Saving Big \$ from nothing but Crumbs

For the second year running **Simplot – Ulverstone, Tasmania** has had one of its many successful TPM³ teams make it to the “Aussie Cup” team competition final at the CTPM Annual Forum held in Sydney on the 17th August 2009.

The so called “**Kung Fu Panda**” team gave an insightful and humorous presentation on how they could save their site at least **\$700,000** per annum in crumb waste management costs by using the Micro New Equipment Management (NEM) methodology to select appropriate new equipment.



The “Kung Fu Pandas” cross-functional team was set the challenging task of determining the requirements of improving crumb waste, through capital investment to eliminate both safety and environmental hazards and to reduce the associated costs of managing crumb waste on their Process lines which produces frozen products such as chips and potato battered products.

The presentation kicked off with an explanation of why they chose the team name of “Kung Fu Panda”? The reference to the martial arts animation comes from this question “How do we chop crumb into fine particles?”

So what is crumb or the more correctly termed battered crumb? It’s a bi-product in the production of battered potato products that is generated at the fryer operation. Considering that the Ulverstone site intakes some 220,000 – 240,000 tonnes of potatoes per annum this was always going to be a huge challenge as was Po the Panda’s.

The Kung Fu Pandas had a simple but challenging plan, to investigate new technology and equipment that would;

- Improve oil recovery from crumb;
- Reduce paper filter usage ;
- Reduce the casual labour and manual handling required to dispose of the waste; and
- Become more environmentally friendly.

The existing Paper Filter system in use was estimated to be costing over \$500,000 per annum in oil and associated costs. By conducting extensive investigation the team was able to gain better understanding of the current crumb waste management costs and the problems / issues that any new system would need to address to obtain the improvements listed above.

After much hard work and investigation the team decided to conduct trials on two different types of systems, the first being a Belt Filter system. Even though this system eliminated the need for filter paper, reduced oil absorption

and landfill, it wasn't good enough for the team.

The second machine trial proved to be even better than the Belt Filter system. This machine was able to separate the oil and sediments even more effectively. The second machine was able to demonstrate further reduction in waste and prolonged oil life.

On this basis the team recommended the purchase of this new type machine which once installed would generate the projected savings of approximately \$700,000 per annum.

One of the key parts of the teams presentation was their lessons learnt. They are as follows:

- All the project requirements (safety, environment, quality, production usage, maintenance) must be fully understood and addressed before recommending a go ahead on any new equipment or process.
- You must undertake the necessary planning and investigation up front to understand exactly what all the current problems and issues are, so that the team can fully comprehend what needs to be fixed or improved (before you go looking for alternatives).

- Involve all the stakeholders in the NEM process were possible to promote good communication between departments and the project team. It also helps with the acceptance of new ideas.

The team finished its presentation with the following remark:

“...its is great to be seen as one of the best teams or a winner, but the real reason for why we are involved in TPM³ teams is to have our people working together better and to follow a process so we can be more successful than we already are now”

CTPM would like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate “Kung Fu Panda” team on their excellent achievements and for being runners up in this year's Aussie Cup (Cross-functional team category).

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