

Boral Bricks has a winning Team at Bringelly

Boral Bricks, part of the NSW Clay & Concrete Division, recently completed their second CTPM Cycle with three improvement teams in their two Western Sydney brick plants.

The Bringelly brick plant, which churns out 50 million bricks and pavers annually, formed a Cross-Functional team made up of operators and maintenance personnel to focus on improving OEE for their main plant bottleneck, the Setting machine. The Setting Machine is a complex multi robot system that unstacks dried bricks from the dryers and forms up the brick packs onto the kiln cars for firing.

The Bringelly Setter Team, naming themselves the “A Team” for the 12 week cycle, successfully exceeded the team mandate of 20% OEE improvement. Navigated through the cycle by Andrew Corish, CTPM’s Managing Navigator NSW, the improvements came through reduced stoppages due to alignments and minor equipment malfunctions.

A further major improvement realised by the team has been the reduction in manual intervention by the operator to ensure it keeps running. Reducing the ‘touch time’ has had major affect on reducing minor unreported downtime, reducing operator frustration and fatigue and in turn reducing the risk of safety incidences occurring. The most profound visible affect of the teams’ improvement has been noticed by visiting management.

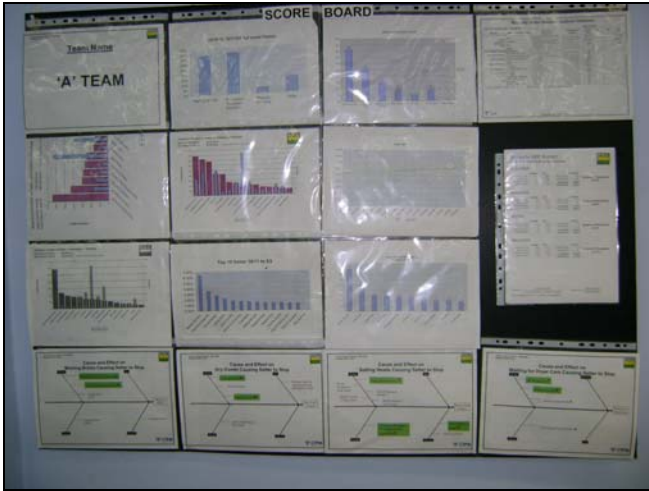
Quoting Mr Ross Baxter – NSW General Manager, “It’s the first time in a long time we have seen kiln cars queued up full of bricks waiting to be fed into the kiln. A direct result of the bottleneck being relieved at the Setter.”



***Above:** Operator Chia Diep explains some direct benefits from the “A Team” improvements to the setting machine area at Bringelly.*

The team has also focused on bringing the Setter back to its “as new” condition. Over the 12 week cycle it was very apparent that the operators and maintenance personal involved with the machine became a closer cohesive team and there was collective agreement as to what was needed to bring the machine back to as new condition. A planned upgrade programme has been drawn up and approved by management to optimise the equipment. The remaining improvements identified by the team will be implemented in accordance with the team’s improvement implementation plan developed and owned by the team.

The team took the opportunity at the end of the cycle to present their analysis and findings to the NSW Clay & Concrete Management Team. The presentation involved all team members explaining their role and the collective improvements they have made. The Team were keen to recommend that the next TPM activity focus on Clay Preparation & Extruder Areas to reduce further variation at the Setter by getting the ‘green’ bricks right first time!



Above: One of the A Team display boards showing the Cause & Effect diagrams developed by the team.

During the early stages of the cycle a new plant manager was appointed to the site. Larry Shone – Plant Manager Bringelly, had not been exposed previously to the CTPM process and quickly jumped into supporting the team. The last word should be left to Larry who had to hit the ground running with the guys:

“It was very refreshing to see the level of commitment and structure that this process brought to the site and the team.

It has really set up the way for the future for us and we are now looking forward to utilising these new found skills to help us fine tune the rest of the site.

The results speak for themselves and this has gone a long way to get even the sceptics and critics on board with us for future success.”



For further information about TPM³ – Australasian Lean or the Lean & TPM Forum 2008, please contact Andrew Corish, CTPM Managing Navigator NSW, on 0419 876 363 or CTPM Head Office on 02 4226 6184 or visit www.ctpm.org.au