



The Centre for TPM (Australasia)



Networking Meeting Write Up Tasmania 29/6/06

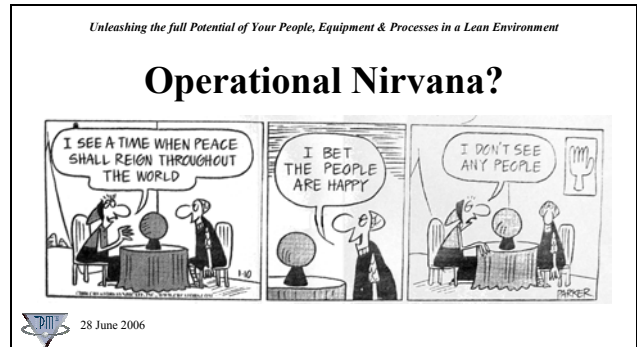
It was the attack of the white shirts at Tasmania's Learning Group Meeting, held at the Elizabeth Town Café (ETC).



Not intending to be colour coordinated, Tim O'Shea, TPM³ Senior Navigator and Simon Hodgson, TPM³ Regional Manager VIC / TAS led a small group of people from companies including Simplot Devonport, Carter Holt Harvey Pine Panels, J Boag and Son, Comalco, and Fonterra Wynyard in a discussion about "Engaging Your Employees"



After initial introductions, a short presentation was delivered by Tim O'Shea about "Engaging your employees". Whilst engagement is clearly key for operational excellence, often the focus is upon the machines rather than the people. Operational nirvana in a mass production environment can sometimes be seen as a factory floor devoid of "interfering operators". But how do robots help identify improvement opportunities? In fact, when looking at a factory, employees are the only long term asset which actually appreciates in value as you invest in additional skills and experience. Equipment, plant, and other fixed assets all depreciate. People are the key to improvement and through engagement the improvement can be sustained.



Although engagement is a simple word, encouraging that engagement can be difficult. Many organisations are "initiative overloaded". Sometimes people have been hurt by previous initiatives and are less willing to engage. One of TPM³'s strengths is its ability to support engagement by focussing on some of the frustrations and issues facing operational staff. Through supported teams individuals have the opportunity to address problems and issues, make mistakes and learn, and to finally to be successful and start the change process.

Through all of this, leadership remains the key. Leadership needs to be appropriate to the team's development and needs to change as the team changes. This does not mean that the team should be pampered, as this will surely lead to chaos; nor does it mean that the team should be pummelled, which may give a short term result whilst engendering fear and disloyalty. Only engagement gives employees the opportunity to contribute and to grow. To do this we may need to change our style. From giving directions to asking questions, from telling to listening, by clearly addressing the "what's in it for me", by listening even more, and then providing the resources and support to allow the team to make their own decisions within appropriate boundaries.

Improvement activities can only truly be sustained when your employees are engaged.

The learning group then broke for networking tea and coffee.

For further information about TPM³ contact Tim O'Shea – TPM³ Senior

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