

## Can Do approach to Problem Solving @ Snack Brands

Too often when incidents or problems occur in manufacturing and are raised at morning meetings, the follow-up is often rushed with a solution-mode mentality that results in the best work-a-round being quickly implemented to typically only address one of the symptoms.

This was the challenge identified by Carmine Caruccio, the new Continuous Improvement Manager for Snack Brands Australia, Smithfield and Blacktown Manufacturing Sites. He felt there was a much needed opportunity to introduce a more structured and disciplined approach to problem solving at both sites, and as such invited CTPM to assist with introducing our Frontline Problem Solving Root Cause Analysis Program.



**Snack Brands Australia** is one of the largest suppliers of snack foods in Australia. It makes Australia's favourite snacks including CC'S, CHEEZELS, CHICKADEES, FRENCH FRIES, JUMPY'S, KETTLE, NATURAL CHIP COMPANY, SAMBOY and THINS CHIPS.

After discussing the needs of both sites, CTPM, as an approved provider, was able to seek part-qualifications funding through the Smart and Skilled program from the NSW Department of Industry at Parramatta and Bankstown. This training is subsidised by the NSW Government.

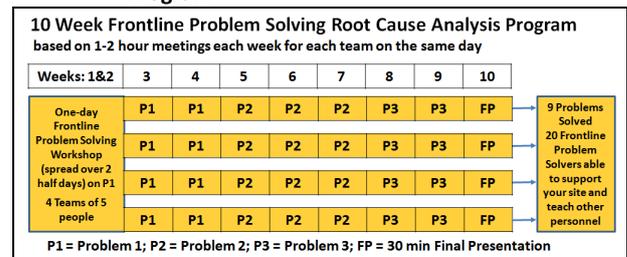
10 employees were identified at each site covering Production, Maintenance, Quality, and Safety to allow the formation of two effective Cross-functional Improvement Teams, who all met the funding criteria. After a formal application, the funding was approved for two units from the Cert III in Competitive Systems and Practices qualification:

- MSMSUP390 Use Structured Problem-Solving Tools; and
- MSS403002 Ensure Process Improvements are Sustained.

Overall the funding covered more than 70% of the cost to the company.

The Frontline Problem Solving Root Cause Analysis Program involved the teams addressing 3 problems from their workplace that were causing significant impact on the business. By each team addressing 3 problems, it would lock in the learning while also having a positive impact on the business's bottom line.

**Figure 1: Frontline Problems Solving Root Cause Analysis Program**

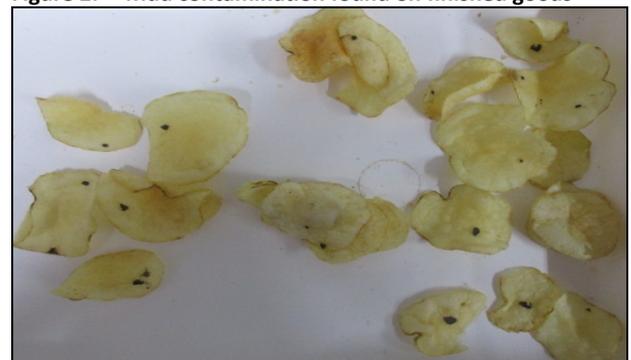


At the end of the program, the 4 teams were invited to Snack Brands Australia Head Office to present their outcomes and learning to Senior Management.

Each team presented 1 of their problems covered during the program. The Blacktown Site presented the problems:

- Receiving unsafe loads from packaging supplier; and
- Excessive finished goods being quarantined due to Mud contamination.

**Figure 2: Mud contamination found on finished goods**



The Smithfield Site presented the problems:

- Excessive downtime to three Processing Lines caused by the Tape Machine; and
- Detected metal contamination in product.

Figure 3: Tape Machine causing excessive downtime



During the presentations it became obvious to Senior Management that all team members were embracing their company values and applying them in the way they approached their problems.

Figure 4: Snack Brands Values displayed in the room



At the conclusion of the presentations, all participants were presented with their Statements of Attainment for the two units of competency they had successfully completed.

Figure 5: Employees receiving their Statements of Attainment



### So what did they learn?

After acknowledging the excellent presentations from the teams, the question that was put forward to all team members – what did you learn?

Some of the comments from the teams included:

- Created a more open process giving more consultation with the workforce;
- Training stopped us from jumping to solution-mode rather than analysing the real problem;
- Found the 7 Step Process very helpful;
- Helps us to be clear on the problem;
- The metal contamination problem could still be there if not using this process as there were multiple sources of contamination;
- Food Industry is very fast paced and hence you tend to always be in solution-mode, hence the disciplined approach makes you sit back and think about the problem and delve into the real issues as we looked deeper;
- Power of cross-functional teams to bring different perspectives to the problem;
- Always wanting to get the line up and running so hence in solution-mode rather than really looking at the problem;
- Gives you a structure to follow and allows you to step back and check whether you have done everything;
- Working in a cross-functional environment was personally very satisfying;
- The importance of the first step of the 7 Step Process – Define the Problem; and
- All speaking a common language, so we have a standard approach.

CTPM would like to congratulate the teams on their effort in reducing their frustrations in the workplace while achieving great bottom-line benefits for Snack Brands.

If you would like to find out more about the Frontline Problem Solving Root Cause Analysis Program or how the Smart and Skilled program in NSW could assist your site in linking your improvement activities to a part-qualification for your employees, please contact CTPM Head Office on +61 2 4226 6184 or Ross Kennedy on 0418 206 108 or via email [ross.kennedy@ctpm.org.au](mailto:ross.kennedy@ctpm.org.au).