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The Goal is lean

There are several reasons a manufacturing plant could be having troubles making money. Using the “8 Wastes” could help point to the problem in the system. Below are one of the wastes and a solution that is being implemented.

The waste that is being addressed is Defects; this is because the plant is heat treating an unusable part. The Quality Control center (Q.C.) is after the heat treat machine. So, when the part is treated it is passed throughout the process then sent to Q.C. If the part does not meet specification then it is scrapped. So, instead of heat treating then checking it, Jonah suggests that they move the Q.C. in front of the machine so that it is only treating useable parts. This, in turn reduces the number of parts at the heat treat machine.

The characters that are eliminating the waste defects are Alex and Jonah. Alex is manager of the plant. He helps solve problems within the plant that lead to him becoming the division manager. Alex’s personality fit perfectly with his position at the plant. He is confident in his decisions. He is a leader; he takes control of situations and makes sure his team is worrying about the task at hand. He is patient and thoughtful; he reflects and analyzes the problems and possible solutions given. Jonah is a physicist and consultant who helps Alex by asking him questions that lead to the answer. Jonah is a very mysterious person; he is always on the move, and nobody can quite understand why he knows so much about manufacturing but is only a physicist. He is also intelligent, modest and caring.

Jonah is dependable and not dependable. Alex never knows where he is in the world so contacting him is difficult. However, he is dependable because whenever Alex gets a hold of him he always calls back and chats before and in between meetings. His attitude was always positive towards comments and questions that Alex and his staff had.

Alex was not dependable in the beginning towards his wife and his family. He would always break dates with his wife and come home later than he said he would, and his wife left him. Then, he got further into the problem, and tried getting his wife to come back home. That is when he became more dependable. His attitude was sometimes negative because he feared that all the people in the plant would be put out of a job including him. However, he has a good attitude towards the suggestions to solving the problems. Also, when Jonah would ask him a question he would find the answer then take the initiative to further his knowledge on the question and answer.

There are several other wastes that could be used to help analyze a plant and the system. They are Defect, Overproduction, Waiting, Non-Utilized Talent, Transportation, Inventory, Motion, and Extra Processing. These all, when use correctly, could point to symptom of the problem, which then helps lead to the root cause.