

The Consultants Guide to  
**Successfully Implementing 5S**

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## Preface

When I was first introduced to the 5S system, I thought “this is pretty lame”. What a convoluted process for workplace cleaning!

The more companies I visit, the more I see this thought re-enforced. Managers tell me they have done 5S ... many times. They say they have effective visual management systems in place and TPM is running well. Yet, when I walk through the plant, I see little evidence of managing visually. When I ask about signals, check sheets and standard work instructions I get the “deer in the headlight” stare.

In many lean implementations, the leaders try to implement more complex visual systems, like kanban, flow lanes, or production boards, when the discipline of 5S is not in place. After all, that’s the fun part of lean – I love it when a plan comes together! After several of these struggles as a manager and a few years as a consultant, I came to realize the true power of the 5S system. You have to learn to walk before you can run.

5S is not about housekeeping. It is not just keeping the workplace organized. It is about instilling the discipline in the work area to keep only what is needed there, and having a home for everything. It is about understanding visual queues – to see at a glance when things are going well, and when they are not. Without the discipline of 5S, lean simply does not work.

A lean sensei may look at a process and say 'this is good 5S'. They are not referring to the housekeeping in a workplace. 5S goes beyond just housekeeping and cleanup. The sensei is referring to the workplace organization and flow. Good 5S means waste is eliminated and the workstation is an example for lean processes.

Done right, 5S will draw other lean tools into the work center ... as the need is identified. As people begin to understand the work

flow, waste becomes apparent and the need for pull, visual queues and making problems visible become priority. The culture changes to a questioning and learning environment where continuous improvement is expected. When that happens, you have begun the transition to a lean enterprise.

This book is short and to the point. This book will guide you through the process of doing 5S right. Do it right and you won't have to do it again – your organizational culture will never be the same. Hold on – its a good - and fun - ride on the journey to lean.

### **Bonus Content**

Thank-you for purchasing this book. When the first 5S consultants guide was released 2 years ago, our readers told us they appreciated the approach and were delighted that they had found a tool to take them to the next level. 5S is that tool. With this latest release, we wanted to ensure our readers stayed current with the latest ideas in lean thinking. We decided that once you buy the book, updates should be available for free. So as our customer, you can visit our website, download the latest version as an ebook, send us your comments and suggestions, and download bonus content on line. Simply set your browser URL to our website, <http://www.leanjourney.ca> and enter the keyword B5SG in the get-it box. From there, you will be able to register for FREE bonus content with our compliments.

Best Regards and Best Success on your Journey to Lean

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## **So ... what is 5S anyway?**

5S is a workplace organization and continuous improvement system that lays the foundation for all other lean improvement activities. By starting your lean journey with 5S, we will discover the tools and techniques required to be successful in eliminating waste from our processes.

5S is not a system, or program that can be started and completed. It is a continuous improvement process that provides a never ending methodology to continuously improve your operation. It has been proven to work in any business, every sector, all industries, in any country and has been instrumental in changing the culture of organizations worldwide.

Many companies profess to have “done 5S” many times before. These comments, and the mindset “it won’t work here – we’re different” are common in facilities that have not fully understood, embraced or maximized the benefits that can be achieved through the concepts of lean thinking.

The company renowned to have the most success in implementing lean – Toyota, consistently states that they “have so much more to learn” as they travel on their lean journey.

## **What do we mean by lean?**

Lean is a process management philosophy. It is a business model that delivers superior performance for customers, employees and stakeholders. By focusing on the customer, defining value and eliminating waste in a process, it has consistently delivered more from existing resources with little additional cost. Lean is a mindset that demands continuous improvement and care for people that results in the elimination of waste from processes.

Visit the web site

**<http://leanjourney.ca/guides.php>**

to purchase this book.

## The 5S system

Many organizations introduce 5S to simply clean up their work areas and this has led to a perception that 5S means clean up the workplace.

Properly used, 5S is a workplace organization system that will drive lean methodologies and tools into your workplace in a controlled and systematic manner. Don't confuse "controlled and systematic" with "slow". Most 5S implementations progress very quickly and the "learn as you go" model makes progress on your lean journey a reality.

Lean is a journey, not a destination. Even the very best at implementing lean thinking commonly say they still have much to learn.

I wish you best success on your journey. With this guide to the 5S system to shepherd your progress, I'm confident of your success.

Feel free to contact me with comments or questions. I look forward to hearing from you and about your successes or challenges.

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### **About NBI (a shameless plug)**

NBI provides services that are customized for each of our customers.

We lead organizations to a different place. We challenge your current reality. We enable leaders to realize their dream. We empower people to become extraordinary. We guide organizations to become the benchmark.

We'll help you work ON your business, instead of IN your business, an important distinction to grow your business. Build the freedom to do what excites you.

Business as usual is a bust. NBI ... stimulating the thinking and action that help people make their situations more successful and meaningful.

## About This Book

This book is the first in the series of “the consultants guide” created by Norm Bain, founder of NBI.

5S was chosen as the topic for this first book because 5S is the first lean tool that many companies look to when embarking on their lean journey. There are many resources available that describe the tools in the lean toolbox. The lean tools have often been characterized as just common sense. As I tell many of my clients, common sense just isn't that commonly applied. While the tools of lean thinking seem simple, implementing them successfully in an organization can be challenging. Sustaining the implementation is by far the biggest challenge.

This book was written from the perspective of an implementer. I was a student of lean for many years, and spread the word as a teacher when I first became a consultant. After several years of consulting with companies, I began to identify the underlying keys to lean, and learned how to successfully implement the lean tools in organizations in ways they could be sustained.

That is what differentiates this book from the others available on lean. As a consultants guide, I focus on how to successfully implement the tools for the long term. Using the tools is one thing. Teaching them to others is a good next step. Learning how to implement sustained change is what a good consultant does.

It is my hope that this book makes good consultants better, and makes organizations successful at sustaining the change required to becoming a lean enterprise.

## **About the author**

Norm Bain is founder of NBI, a business improvement company based in western Canada. He is a business process specialist who successfully leads organizations through step change improvement. His diverse background includes work assignments in all functional areas of business and in many industries. Having worked with people from the floor to the board room, he readily appreciates, diagnoses and resolves the issues facing leaders throughout the organization.

## Glossary of terms

5S	5S is a workplace organization and continuous improvement system that lays the foundation for all other lean improvement activities.
5Y	A root cause analysis system for issues. Keep asking why until the root cause of an issue is identified.
Benchmarking	A process for comparing your implementation to other areas, locations and industries with an eye toward continuous improvement.
Continuous Improvement	A never ending cycle of adding value and eliminating waste from processes
Customer	The person or organization for whom you make a product or service.
Flow	A process where material continually flows through a value stream toward the customer
Gemba	The place where the work is done
Kaizen	An improvement process where ideas are generated and implemented with the people who are doing the work. Kaizen when done correctly, humanizes the workplace, simplifies the work, and teaches people how to learn to spot and eliminate waste in their processes.
Kanban	A signal to initiate pull in a value stream
Lean	Lean is a process management philosophy, a business model that focuses on the customer, defining value and eliminating waste in a process.
PDCA	A process management cycle Plan-Do-Check-Act
Pull	A system in a value stream where a signal is sent by the customer to a supplier for material

## Glossary of terms

Red Tag	An identifier placed on an object in a work center that identifies an item as not being required in that area.
Red tag Area	An area that is visually defined in a work area where red tagged items are placed awaiting disposition
Safety Map	A map of an area that identifies the hazards, their locations, corrective actions and assigns responsibility for resolution.
Scan	Identifies and defines the target area in 5S.
Set in order	The 2 <sup>nd</sup> S in 5S. Determine where things belong and establish a home for everything.
Shine	The 3 <sup>rd</sup> S in 5S. Clean everything in the area, and use cleaning as an inspection tool
Sort	The 1 <sup>st</sup> S in 5S. Sort out all the things that are required in the work area and separate those that are not used regularly.
Spaghetti Diagram	A map of an area that defines and displays the flow of people and material through a process.
Standardize	The 4 <sup>th</sup> S in 5S. Establish standards for the workplace, including color codes, placards, inspection items for cleaning, methods for doing work.
Sustain	The 5 <sup>th</sup> S in 5S. Create a management system to ensure the system maintains itself and the operation is continually improved over time.
Value Add	Where value is added to a thing. In lean thinking value is defined as (a) The customer cares about it, (b) The activity physically changes the thing, (c) It is done right the 1 <sup>st</sup> time

## Glossary of terms

Value Stream	In a process, product passes through all activities of the value stream in order and at each activity the product gains some value.
Vision	A view of how a workplace would look or feel if issues were resolved
Waste	Activities that do not add value to the process
Workplace	The place where work is done
Yellow Tag	An identifier placed on an object in a work center that identifies an item as being defective or requiring repair.