

5S Methodology

Workplace organisation for operational excellence.

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Audience	Production staff and operational leaders, worldwide
Language	English
Approx. spoken time	3–4 minutes

Production note. Read aloud only the spoken text. Section headings and this note are for orientation and must not be spoken. Numbers and symbols are written out in words so the voice speaks them naturally.

1 — Opening

Welcome. In the next few minutes, we will look at one of the simplest and most powerful habits in any factory — keeping the workplace organised. The method is called five-S. It comes from lean manufacturing, and the idea behind it is easy: a workplace that is clean, ordered and safe runs better, every single shift. By the end, you will know the five steps — and exactly what you can do at your own station tomorrow.

2 — What is five-S?

So, what is five-S? It is a system for organising the workplace and managing it visually. The name comes from five steps, each beginning with the letter S: Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain. The goal is straightforward — more efficiency, more safety, better quality, and a team that takes ownership of its own area. Five-S is not about cleaning for its own sake. It is the foundation that everything else in operational excellence is built on.

3 — The five steps

Let us walk through the five steps. First, Sort. We separate what we need from what we do not. Anything unnecessary is tagged and moved to a defined area, where it can be reviewed before it is removed. Less clutter means fewer hazards and more space to work.

Second, Set in Order. A place for everything, and everything in its place. Frequently used items go close to the point of use, every item and location is clearly labelled, and tools are easy to return. Anyone should be able to find what they need at a glance.

Third, Shine. This is more than cleaning. When we clean a machine properly, we also inspect it — a leak, or a worn part, becomes visible before it turns into a breakdown. We set clear routines: what is cleaned, by whom, and when.

Fourth, Standardise. We turn the first three steps into simple, written standards and visual controls, so the same good practice is followed on every shift. A photo of the tidy station is often the clearest standard of all.

And fifth, Sustain. This is the hardest step, and the one most often missed. Without regular attention, teams slip back into old habits. We keep five-S alive with short daily resets, weekly checks, and regular audits — until it is simply how we work.

4 — Making it stick

How do we make it stick? Start with training, so everyone understands the why before the how. Walk the floor to see the real situation. Give teams ownership of their own area, and recognise the early wins. And avoid the common traps: treating five-S as a one-time event, working without leadership support, and skipping the Sustain step.

5 — Close

Let us bring it together. Five-S is Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain. It is not a cleaning exercise — it is a structured system for efficiency, discipline, and culture, and the foundation for continuous improvement. Pick one step to start with today, at your own station. Small, but real. Thank you.

End of script. ≈ 3–4 minutes. © Gherzi Germany · AMANN Group Learning Hub · LS2 · OPEX – THE AUK WAY.