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LEARNING NUGGET LN-004

# 5S Methodology

Workplace organisation for operational excellence

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*Driving real-time operational excellence — how a clear method and small daily habits turn into a cleaner, safer, more reliable shop floor.*

# What you will take away

A practical, shared understanding of 5S — and how to apply it at the station, every shift, every team.

## 01

### Read the method

Recognise the five steps and what each one means in daily work.

## 02

### Apply it at the station

Turn the method into concrete actions at the machine and the bench.

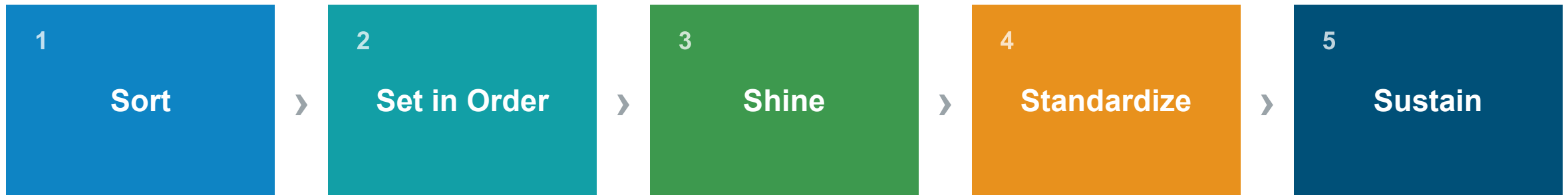
## 03

### Sustain the habit

Use short resets, audits and standards to keep 5S alive — starting now.

# What is 5S?

A workplace-organisation and visual-management system from lean manufacturing — five steps that build on each other.



**Goal: improve efficiency, safety and quality — and give every team ownership of its own work area.**

*Because the steps build on each other, 5S is not a one-off clean-up — it is the foundation that the rest of operational excellence rests on.*

# The five pillars

Each step answers one simple question — and each carries its original Japanese name.



# Sort · Seiri

**Separate what you need from what you don't.**

## Red-tag

Tag unnecessary items and move them to a defined area.

## Review

Check tagged items before disposal, recycling or relocation.

## Result

Less clutter means fewer hazards and more usable space.

# Set in Order · Seiton

**A place for everything, and everything in its place.**

## **Point of use**

Store frequently used items close to where they are used.

## **Label clearly**

Group related items; label every item and location.

## **Easy return**

Make it simple to put tools back in the right place.

# Shine · Seiso

**More than cleaning — it enables inspection.**

## **Clean to inspect**

Cleaning reveals leaks or wear before they cause breakdowns.

## **Set routines**

Define what is cleaned, by whom, and when.

## **Reduce risk**

Use cleaning to spot and remove safety hazards early.

# Standardize · Seiketsu

**Make the first three steps the normal way of working.**

## **Write it down**

Create simple, written standards and visual controls.

## **Every shift**

Apply the same good practice across all shifts and lines.

## **A photo helps**

A picture of the tidy station is often the clearest standard.

# Sustain · Shitsuke

**The hardest step — and the one most often missed.**

## **Stay disciplined**

Without attention, teams slip back into old habits.

## **Keep it alive**

Use daily resets, weekly checks and regular audits.

## **Make it culture**

Repeat consistently until it is simply how we work.

# Implementation & coaching approach

5S succeeds through people and discipline — not through a single event.

## Train first

Build understanding and awareness before action.

## Walk the floor

A gemba walk shows the real, current situation.

## Audit to improve

Audits give objective data and track progress.

## Give ownership

Encourage ownership of 5S at every level.

## Recognise wins

Celebrate quick wins to build momentum.

## Keep going

Treat 5S as continuous, never a one-time event.

# Common pitfalls

Most 5S programmes fail for the same few reasons.

**1** Treating 5S as a one-time project, not a long-term cultural change.

**2** Lack of leadership support and role-modelling.

**3** Missing follow-up processes or structured audits.

**4** Weak application of the Sustain phase.

# 5S audit checklist

Five quick questions to confirm the standard is being held.

**01**

Are tools labelled  
and stored  
correctly?

**02**

Is the area clean  
and free of clutter?

**03**

Are standards  
displayed and  
followed?

**04**

Are responsibilities  
clearly assigned?

**05**

Is there a regular  
review process?

# Start small this week

## EVERY SHIFT

- Keep your station sorted and labelled.
- Clean as you go — and inspect while you clean.
- Put tools back in their fixed place.
- Reset the station before you hand over.

## DO IT THIS WEEK

- 1 Pick one area and run a full Sort.
- 2 Give every tool a fixed, labelled place.
- 3 Set a two-minute end-of-shift reset.
- 4 Photograph the tidy station as the standard.

IN CLOSING

# Sort. Set in Order. Shine. Standardize. Sustain.

5S 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 today, at your own station.

Sort

Set in Order

Shine

Standardize

Sustain