

5S Philosophy

Based on Japanese words that begin with 'S', the 5S Philosophy focuses on effective workplace organization and standardized work procedures. 5S simplifies your work environment, reduces waste and non-value activity while improving quality efficiency and safety. The philosophy originates from a manufacturing environment, but why not use it at home too(?) - I try (more or less) to apply to this basic and simple philosophy in (all) of my daily choirs

	Sort – (Seiri) the first S focuses on eliminating unnecessary items from the workplace. An effective visual method to identify these unneeded items is called red tagging. A red tag is placed on all items not required to complete your job. These items are then moved to a central holding area. This process is for evaluation of the red tag items. Occasionally used items are moved to a more organized storage location outside of the work area while unneeded items are discarded. Sorting is an excellent way to free up valuable space.
	Set In Order (Seiton) is the second of the 5Ss and focuses on efficient and effective storage methods. You can ask yourself these questions: What do I need to do my job? Where should I locate this item? How many of this item do I really need? Imagine how much time is wasted every day looking for papers, files etc.? Such items should have a logic location where they can be found. ">"A place for everything and everything in its place."
	Shine (Seiso) Once you have eliminated the junk that has been clogging your work areas and identified and located the necessary items, the next step is to thoroughly clean the workspace. Daily follow-up cleaning is necessary in order to sustain this improvement.
	Standardize (Seiketsu) Once the first three 5S's have been implemented, you should concentrate on standardizing best practice in your workplace and methods. Think of what McDonalds, Pizza Hut, UPS, Blockbuster and the United States Military would be without effective work standards.
	Sustain (Shitsuke) This is by far the most difficult S to implement and achieve. Human nature is to resist change and more than a few organizations have found themselves with a dirty cluttered shop a few months following their attempt to implement 5S. The tendency is to return to the status quo and the comfort zone of the "old way" of doing things. Sustain focuses on defining a new status quo and standard of work place organization.