WRITING Analyzing a business as a consultant

You are an efficiency expert, like Mr. LeBlanc from the podcast. You have been asked to analyze a local business with the hopes that you will be able to offer some suggestions that will result in cost savings for the owner.

You will observe the retail business of your choice for one hour. It is a good idea to take notes, draw diagrams, and time the workers, as this analysis will help you discover inefficiencies in the existing job duties. If you want to do anything that could disrupt the business, you should ask the workers for permission first.
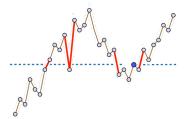
The next stage is to analyze the inefficiencies that you have found, and choose two of them to discuss in detail in your report. For each of these two problems, you must classify them according to the Tim T Wood acronym. It is possible for a specific problem to have two or more causes, so keep this in mind during your analysis. After this, you will offer some solutions to these two inefficiencies according to the 5S solutions. It is also possible for several solutions to apply to one inefficiency problem.

You should follow the formatting and layout guidelines from the "Style - Formatting business writing" section of this textbook, and your report should be more than two pages in length. This does not include any pictures, drawings, or diagrams that you may choose to include in your report.

Please make sure that you have not chosen the same business to analyze as another student. This project requires that each student choose a different business. There are some restrictions on the type of business, too - you must choose a retail business, not a service-based company, and it is a good idea not to choose a food service or medical company.

Imagine that you are writing the report for the owner of the business. Therefore, you will not need to include any research about the history, operations, or size of the company, as the boss will be familiar with this information. You should also write in a formal style, as befits a consultant presenting their findings.

No quotations, citations, or the like are to be included in this report. You must write the whole report yourself.

WRITING Sample Consultant's Report

The following is a brief sample of an efficiency consultant's report using the Tim T Wood and 5S analysis tools. While I encourage you to read this and use it to help you organize your thoughts, you must not use it as a template for your writing.

The analyst has observed that the employees wear hats while working in order to show off the company's logo. The analyst believes these hats make the staff work very slowly, mainly because the hats are very large. The hats do not match the company's image, which promotes speed and efficiency. Two solutions are offered - changing the size of the hats, or eliminating the hats altogether, with benefits suggested for each choice.

SAMPLE REPORT EXCERPT:

The first problem I saw was that the workers were wearing very large hats. Because of the size of the hats, the staff cannot function at an optimum speed. The company wishes to promote itself as a fast alternative to other businesses, and these hats give the opposite impression. This could be a Talent issue, where the managers do not realize the effects that the hats have on the company's image, but it may also be a problem related to Motion. If it is a Motion problem, the hats force the employees to move more slowly than they would otherwise be able to. If the company wishes to demonstrate its speed, these hats are in opposition to that goal.

To solve this problem, I recommend that you Standardize your employee clothing. By exchanging the large hats for smaller ones, your employees will be able to move more quickly around the work area, thus showing your company's speed. You could also Sanitize the hats, perhaps by supplying headwear of a different design. Using visors, headbands, or similar apparel will ideally allow the employees to promote the company image in a more positive way while permitting faster and safer work.

by Dave Henderson, Wednesday, September 4, 2013