ERROR REDUCTION

By Martin Lush

PROBLEM

One of our clients was unhappy with their annual $1.2 million error bill and unnerved by their legacy risk. Most deviations were excused as human error, and over 68 percent of incidents reoccurred. What did they do to reduce their bill and sleep easier at night?

SOLUTION

NSF provided customized education on error prevention, which gave the client a greater understanding of the top ten error prevention practices. During our customized workshop we looked at their error trends. Most were due to procedural problems, non-compliances, errors and mistakes. Through the training, the client:

> Identified the latent failures that needed fixing, using the Klein Process. These included:

- Excessive detail making SOPs over complicated and impossible to follow

- Not enough use of pictures and schematics

- Too many cross-references to other documents and SOPs

- SOPs written in a language users couldn't understand

- Lack of user ownership

- SOPs written to satisfy the auditor, not the user

- SOPs not available in the workplace

> Simplified processes. Using our simplification process, they removed unnecessary detail to create userfriendly documents

> Stopped training, started educating. Instead of the "read and understand" approach to training, we introduced them to the 10/20/70 approach to education, which consists of ten percent factual content, 20 percent practical exercises and immediate practice using case studies, and 70 percent practical application, reinforcement and coaching in the workplace. This simple model has since transformed their business

> Embedded the top ten error prevention practices. During our workshop the client developed the following rules:

- Think error chain, not root cause

- Start the investigation within 30 minutes, from where it happened, not from behind a desk. No exceptions

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- Focus on fixing the latent errors. Fix the system, not the person

- Think PACA, not CAPA (prevention, not correction)

- Start measuring what matters, such as repeat incidents

RESULTS

After 18 months, the client has achieved:

> Reduction in repeat incidents from 68 percent to less than five percent

> Savings in direct labor costs of $900k and falling

> Severe quality incidents down by 37 percent

> Less waste not yet quantified

> Faster cycle times

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin Lush has over 30 years' experience in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry. He has held senior management positions in QA, manufacturing, QC and supply chain auditing and has conducted audits and education programs for many hundreds of companies in over 25 countries.

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