Case Study: UCO Transportation and Parking Services

**Situation**

The Transportation and Parking Service (TPS) department mission has grown over the years. The staff provides parking services for 18,000 students and staff, as well as assist in UCO’s focus on environmental issues. TPS maintains and monitors 55 parking lots for compliance with parking policies and through partnerships with local businesses offers alternative transportation programs: Bum-a-bike, local bus system and Connect by Hertz rental program. TPS evolved and added staff to address new responsibilities, yet the office set-up was adjusted with the “band-aid” method of least amount of change for existing staff. With 22 employees using the open-concept office of 750 square feet, organization was critical.

One of the Lean Tools is 5S Organization System. 5S focuses on organizing the office setting for the most efficient use of space. The S’s stand for Sort, Set-in-Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain.

**Action**

The team of TPS staff defined the purposes that needed to be met on a daily basis. The first step of organizing the office was to sort the unnecessary equipment, furniture, and supplies. Boxes that had been used during previous years to distribute parking permits were discarded, along with rubber mats, old computer monitors, and large storage cabinets that were an eyesore. The second step was to determine the best location for equipment, furniture, and supplies for easy access and efficient use. Zones were set-up for parking attendants, front counter customer service representatives, ticket research staff, and alternative transportation coordinator. Parking attendant’s had equipment scattered in three areas of the office. Relocating the equipment and their desk near the entrance reduced the travel as they prepared for their routes to monitor parking lots. The next step was to shine, which included cleaning surfaces and bundling cords. The fourth step, standardize areas and practices was essential, particularly since students work at the front counter and as parking attendants. Standards were defined for equipment location and use, responses for customer issues, and expectations of performance. The final step of the 5S Organization System is sustain. Returning items to correct locations and standard practices are verbally reinforced and storage areas have labels.

*“Implementing the 5S system in TPS has resulted in a more productive, less chaotic environment. By staff not having to do as much walking or locating resources the noise level in the office has been reduced significantly.”*

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**Results**

The zones defined has effectively reduced distracting traffic by co-workers in the open office area and employees are able to stay on task. Moving the Alternative Transportation Coordinator’s desk from the center of the office where it was visible to the front counter to the side of the office has reduced confusion with customers who did not understand why that TPS employee did not assist them at the service window. In fact, the reorganization has allowed for an open space of 30 square feet in the center of the office to provide smooth flow between zones.

Stress levels has been reduced and the TPS staff often ask, “How can we do this better?” This question has led them to eliminating unnecessary carts at the front window and purchasing durable cabinets to store office supplies that are a height appropriate for office tasks such as collating documents, using paper cutters, etc.

Use of 5S Organization System is an excellent tool to introduce Lean Principles in an office setting. The staff start to explore other processes where waste can be eliminated.