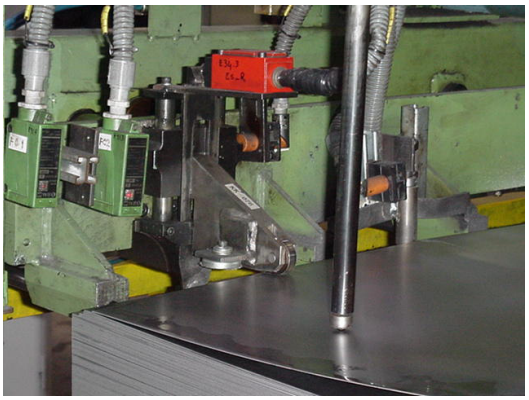
Welding machine team improves productivity by 50,000 barrels a year by reducing short stops

Greif Europoort (previously Van Leer) is a manufacturer of steel barrels for the storage of foodstuffs and oil products. Several years ago, Greif Europoort started the WCM programme. Operators and mechanics now work together in SGAs and Total Clean Outs to improve productivity in many small steps and with permanent results.

Every shift we lost more than an hour's production as a result of short stops

By using the OEE Toolkit® we discovered that in addition to longer - and therefore more obvious - halts and faults a more important reason for production losses are what are referred to as “short stops”. These short interruptions of the production process have various causes and last from a few seconds to several minutes (by definition, not longer than five minutes).
On average, production at the welding machine was interrupted seven times an hour by short stops, in total a loss of production of more than one hour each shift. It was decided to address the problems starting at the start of the production line. To do so, an SGA team was assembled consisting of operators and mechanics who were trained and coached through a thorough problem analysis by Blom Consultancy.



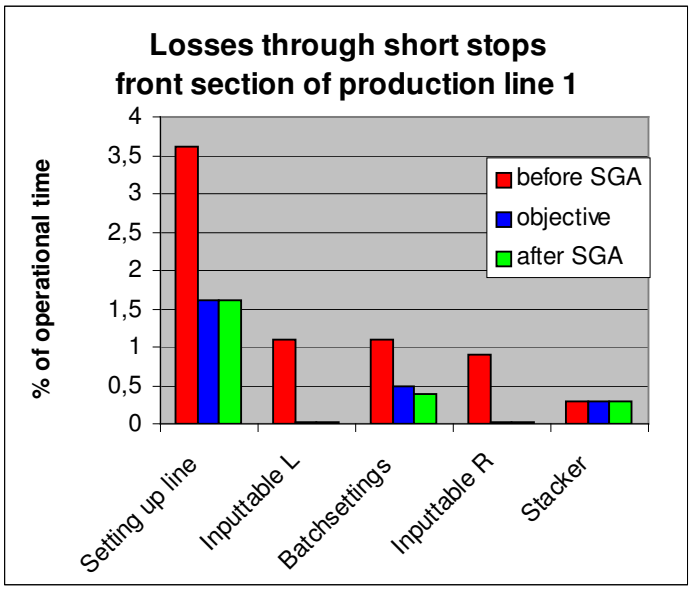
The problems were exposed through accurate measurements and a thorough analysis of the root causes

By recording every short stop with a stopwatch for a week, we obtained a clear picture of the location, the number of short stops and the loss of production time these short stops caused. This allowed us to quickly identify the major source of short stops.
By using extensive brain storming sessions, we identified every possible cause and identified the root cause by using a fishbone diagram.

What struck us was that there were more root causes for the same short stops and that these were certainly not all of a technical nature. All in all, with a couple of good agreements, a change to the control program and a Saturday with the entire team working, cleaning and inspecting, we quickly, cheaply and efficiently achieved our objective. Without major investments!

Results

And with success, because we saved more than 22 production minutes each shift.
But what is even more important is that there was an extensive transfer of knowledge between the operators and the mechanics and that we have learned from each other. That took us some time, but it provided the operators and mechanics with a fantastic stimulus to continue with improvements. From the original team, two new improvement teams have been created. Moreover, by making a simple change to the program, we included the automatic registration of faults and halts so that we can monitor them continuously.



"We will also implement these solutions on the other production line"

"We now see that we are in a position to address long term causes of annoyance and at the same time to also achieve a major increase in output"