

'Free' water runs shirt operation

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hotel work and has not had the opportunity to analyze his water bills for savings.

LARGER UNIT IN LONDON

However, Frank Hudani, who has Texmain Cleaners in London, Ontario is using the larger 300-gal. dual-pump unit, which has saved him 40% on his water bills since it was installed in September 2007. His Free Loader™ provides water to the following: a 110-lb Milnor washer, a 50-lb Maytag washer, a 30-gal. boiler and his washrooms. ■

Fabricare Canada is pleased to be able to bring its readers information about this new made-in-Canada technology. To learn more, contact Lorne Tontegode at lorne@langstaffequipment.com or check out www.langstaffequipment.com.

PEOPLE

CONGRATS!



PAUL LANGEVIN

HARCO QUEBEC INC. announces the appointment of **Paul Langevin** as its dry cleaning sales representative for Quebec and the Maritimes. Paul is well known in these areas and old friends may call him at 514-947-7285.



HOWARD HERMAN

WASCOMAT CEO Neal Milch announces the promotion of **Howard Herman** to the position of president. Howard has been associated with the company for 36 years.



DAVID TINGUE

TINGUE, BROWN & Co. has named **David Tingue** president and CEO. He represents the fourth generation of the Tingue family to manage the organization.



JOE FAZZARI

COLMAC COIL announces the promotion of **Joe Fazzari** to the position of vice-president. In addition to sales and marketing departments, he will handle strategic planning, business development and new product selection.



RICK LUND

R&B WIRE PRODUCTS, INC. announces the hiring of **Rick Lund** to the newly created position of director of sales. He brings wide industry experience, especially in the health care field.

OBITUARY

Paul Rodd, president of Lindsay Cleaners Ltd. of Lindsay, Ont. passed away March 4. Both he and his father Ivan were presidents of DCLI/OFA. He is survived by his wife Anne, daughter Kayle, son Kevin, his parents, two sisters and two brothers.



PAUL RODD



MEMO to management
by Lorne Tontegode

Importance of transparency

Sign, sign, everywhere a sign. These lyrics from a song by Five Man Electrical Band in 1979 are a comment on how the world is full of signs that have created a type of pollution. Don't Walk on the Grass! No Parking! No Loitering! These are examples of signs we often see. They can have purpose but often they are overdone.

Imagine, however, a world where there aren't any signs at all, and you can quickly see that there would be challenges. How fast am I allowed to drive on this highway and not get fined? A sign can tell you.

NEXT TOYOTA RULE

The next rule of the Toyota Production System is 'Use visual controls so no problems are hidden'. In your plant, you already have some of this visual control in place. When a presser sees clothes in front of the press, he or she knows that they are to be pressed. If the solvent is low in the sight glass of the cleaning machine, you know to order some more solvent. (Make sure you ask yourself if the consumption rate is okay as well.) Because of these visual controls, you don't have to tell the presser what to do or open the dry cleaning machine to look inside.

THE OBVIOUS

Visual controls are signs, you can see them. Examples of visual controls are sight glasses, readings on a weigh scale, written instructions, empty or full baskets. They include the 'Open' sign for the cleaning machine door, the oil-level indicator on a compressor, the indicator lamp on an iron to tell you it is on, and many other common signals. Get the picture? Without these indicators, you would have to guess or waste time figuring out the status and what to do next.

THE LESS OBVIOUS

Beyond these examples that you already have in place, I would like to explore others that you may not have considered. In prior articles, I have discussed the need to have instructions written down so that procedures are clear for everyone.

This is important because although you may have a good idea on how to do something, there are times when someone else will have to step in. If this person has a visual control, such as a sign with clearly written instructions, they will do what you want. Your business is too valuable to risk confusion.

Visual controls by simple signs can save time because your employees don't have to go and ask someone for help. They can reduce errors because the correct way is clear and there aren't any language barriers. If there is a language barrier in your plant, have your signs translated as needed. These can boost morale since everyone is included, and no one will be frustrated by not understanding the instructions.

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Importance of transparency

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DOWN TO SPECIFICS

If I walk into your plant as a customer, would I know what your hours of operation are? Would I know what your policy is regarding damaged garments? What about pricing? Do you take credit and debit cards? These signs make customers feel at ease.

In the plant, will I see pipes that are clearly marked so the mechanic knows which valve will shut off the press he is working on? Are there clear instructions on which program to run for dark clothes? How about when and how to blow the boiler down?

Visual controls by signs can help you as well as your employees. For your employees it is a matter of clearly showing them how you want to run your business. For you, it is a way of not having to keep everything in your own head. I know as I get older and busier, I have less room for trivial things. If they are written down, you can back off and know that the procedures for running the plant are available to everyone. Creating good visual controls doesn't need to be complicated either. In a

world-class factory, you will see signs that are engraved in plastic or on metal plaques, also binders with professionally produced instructions. You will also see bins that are colour coded, and racks and flooring that clearly show where to place items.

In your 'factory' you can go as simple or elaborate as you wish. I personally like the shirt boards that are used for folded shirts. They usually have a bright white side that you can write on with a black marker. Grab some thumb tacks, tape or string and you are all set. Later on, you may want to do something more permanent

when you are sure the information has stood the test of time.

GET STARTED NOW!

If you can get started on this right now, you will be on your way to improving productivity and reducing waste. If you can't do it now, tie a string around your finger or write a note on the palm of your hand. These 'visual controls' will help you to remember to do it when you have time. See how that works! ■

Lorne Tontegode is general manager of Langstaff Equipment Services Ltd. He may be reached at lorne@langstaffequipment.com.

marketplace



If your customer's garments still look **dead** after cleaning, maybe they just haven't been **DYED!**



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