

December 25, 2023

Executive Message

Christmas Puzzle

Every year, traditionally, we put together a Christmas puzzle as a family project. To be honest, it is my wife's thing. She loves puzzles and she likes how everyone in the family, sorta', hangs out and talks about 'whatever' when trying to find how each piece magically fits together.

At first, the task seems impossible. All puzzle-goers know that the first step to successfully putting together a puzzle is to get all the shapes turned right-side up. The second step is to work on the edges and the third step is to group like colored pieces together and then arduously attempt to hook the pieces together.

Large, complicated puzzles can take days to finish—even longer.

The reward, of course, is when the last piece finally slips into place and the entire puzzle is finished.

The opposite is true when 99% of the puzzle is completed but one or two final pieces are lost never to be installed—it is very frustrating to be so close and not seal the deal, so-to-speak.

I want to liken our family's Christmas puzzle to the work-about at All Metals Fabrication. To be clear, there are, quite literally, hundred, if not thousands, of moving parts travelling, now-a-days, through multiple buildings. On top of that, there are hundreds of processes, micro-processes and systems at play. On top of that, there are dozens of hands that can touch both parts and processes.

Needless to say, sometimes it is hard to fit everything together just right, yet that is exactly what we are trying to do—at the end of the day, we are trying to fit hundreds of parts, processes and people into a final masterpiece that is a successfully built puzzle.

With this metaphor in mind, I would ask each person inside the company to consider all the little things that must happen to successfully finish the puzzle. No person, no matter what your position, is excluded from the puzzle work. The smallest detail of mis-placing a work order, or not tagging a part, or moving parts without letting anyone know, or not signing off a work order, or not building a router correctly, or not specifying the right material, or scratching a part, or forgetting to get a material quote, or ... the list could go on-an-on, is exempt.

The point is that every single piece counts. Any one missing piece, no matter how seemingly insignificant, will wreck the puzzle.



So, the point, hopefully obvious by now, is that every person, every position, every process is vitally important. No one, absolutely no one, resides in a silo unconnected to the rest of us.

A little illustration might be helpful. Many, many years ago, I was an afternoon delivery driver for our metal shop. I would finish a morning worth of school and then show up right after lunch to deliver parts. My job (without crashing, losing my load, or smashing them with straps) was to deliver the right parts to the right customers and then collect paper work (or a signature) that the parts had been dropped off.

Back then, our shipping tickets were hand made in three-piece carbon copied form. The customer would sign the top copy and I would rip off the carbon copy behind and give it to the receiver. My job was to bring the top copy back to the office and set it in a “parts delivered” box.

I did this religiously although I did not understand why. One day, I was late getting back from deliveries to the shop and was scurrying to get home for some event (I cannot remember what). I decided that dropping off the original copy in the right place was something I could do the next day, so I left the forms on the truck seat.

When I got back the next afternoon, the forms were gone and I, frankly, soon forgot all about them. Well, several weeks later, I was approached by the owner and he asked me where the signed copies were. I reluctantly told him that I had lost them, not explaining that I was in a hurry that night and left them, on purpose, in the truck.

He was very upset and informed me that those signed forms were absolutely necessary, both as proof of delivery and as a tickler to remind the office team that these parts were delivered and ready for billing. I had just assumed that the office knew the parts were delivered (after all, they are the ones that told me to deliver them.) It gets worse, I also found out that this customer was refusing to pay because the company did not have a signature verifying that they were received.

We ended up having to make the parts again even though I absolutely knew I had delivered them.

Needless to say, I was in hot water and also learned a valuable lesson that my one, seemingly very insignificant omission, had cost the company a significant amount of money. I was one of the smallest pieces in that cog of events—just deliver the finished parts and return the paper work, but my role was still vital—extremely vital!

I had, essentially, messed up the puzzle.

Back to where I started, putting a puzzle together can be fun despite the challenges. When everyone is working together and realizing that each individual contribution is important, it can be done! So, take a moment to consider—no matter what your contribution is, large or small—that you are an important player to fit our AMF puzzle together every single day!

Thanks so much for all your efforts, and lets please keep improving, piece-by-piece, bit-by-bit—I love all the effort and I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Rich Marker

Employee Spotlight

Jose A.

What's something about you (a fun fact) that not many people know? I like the adrenaline of mechanical games.

What is your favorite hobby? Going with my family to the park.

What's the first concert you ever attended? The first concert was in Mexico with a band called "El Recodo"

What's the next place on your travel bucket list? The next place on my list is Hawaii

Are you currently binge-watching any shows? The Neighbors

If you had to eat one meal every day for the rest of your life, what would it be? Ribeye Steak

What's one thing you can't live without? Music

Where is your favorite place to be? My favorite place is at my house with my family.

Where is the best place you've traveled to and why? In Los Cabos, San Lucas, Mexico because it is a very beautiful place that that takes away your stress.

What's the weirdest job you've ever had? Milking cows

Any favorite line from a movie? Spider Man

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be? Airplane Pilot

What's your favorite indoor/outdoor activity? Playing Football



Quality Message

Santa's Workshop Quality Quiz" - All Metals Fabrication Christmas Edition

Get ready for a festive and fun way to check your understanding of quality related topics, using scenarios from Santa's workshop! I've been grilling and writing about these all year so now it is time to test your knowledge.

1. **Santa's Inventory Check**:

- **Question**: In Santa's workshop, keeping track of materials to avoid over-ordering is essential. Which quality principle does this practice best represent?

- a) Lean Manufacturing
- b) Six Sigma
- c) Just-In-Time Production
- d) Total Quality Management

2. **Elves' Workstation Organization**:

- **Question**: The elves keep their workstations organized with only necessary items in their workspace to maximize efficiency. This is an example of which 5S principle?

- a) Sort
- b) Set in order
- c) Shine
- d) Standardize

3. **Toy Testing Protocols**:

- **Question**: Before any toy leaves the workshop, it goes through rigorous testing. This is akin to what aspect of quality assurance in manufacturing?

- a) Inspection
- b) Calibration
- c) Validation
- d) Verification

4. **Dasher's Process Improvement**:

- **Question**: Dasher suggests a new method to speed up sleigh loading. What quality methodology is this an example of?

- a) PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act)
- b) DMAIC (Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control)
- c) Kaizen (Continuous Improvement)
- d) Root Cause Analysis

5. **Santa's Delivery Metrics**:

- **Question**: Santa tracks his on-time delivery rate each year. This metric is crucial in which quality management principle?

- a) Customer Focus
- b) Leadership
- c) Evidence-based Decision Making
- d) Relationship Management

6. **Waste Reduction in Toy Making**:

- **Question**: To reduce waste in toy production, the elves focus on using materials more efficiently. This is an example of which Lean principle?

- a) Value Stream Mapping
- b) Muda (Waste elimination)
- c) Jidoka (Automation)
- d) Genchi Genbutsu (Go and See)

7. **Quality Policy in Santa's Workshop**:

- **Question**: Every elf knows the workshop's quality policy by heart. Why is this important in a quality management system?

- a) Helps ensures compliance with regulations
- b) Helps in decision-making
- c) Provides a basis for setting quality objectives
- d) All of the above

8. **Sleigh Maintenance Schedule:**

- *Question*: The sleigh undergoes regular maintenance to ensure safety and reliability. This is similar to which practice in equipment management?

- a) Total Productive Maintenance
- b) Predictive Maintenance
- c) Preventive Maintenance
- d) Corrective Maintenance

9. **Gift Packaging Standards:**

- *Question*: All gifts are packaged following specific standards. This standardization is key for which aspect of quality?

- a) Consistency
- b) Efficiency
- c) Safety
- d) All of the above

10. **Feedback from the Children:**

- *Question*: Santa reads children's letters for feedback on toys. In a business context, this is similar to which practice?

- a) Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- b) Market Research
- c) Quality Audits
- d) Benchmarking

11. **Santa's Supply Chain Management:**

- *Question*: Santa must coordinate the delivery of raw materials to his workshop from all over the world. This is an example of which quality management concept?

- a) Supplier Relationship Management
- b) Customer Relationship Management
- c) Inventory Management
- d) Resource Allocation

12. **Elves' Continuous Training:**

- *Question*: To keep up with the latest toy-making techniques, elves undergo regular training. This practice aligns with which aspect of quality management?

- a) Knowledge Management
- b) Competence, Training, and Awareness

- c) Operational Control
- d) Performance Evaluation

13. **Rudolph's Route Optimization:**

- *Question*: Rudolph uses data analysis to find the fastest route for Santa's sleigh. This is similar to which business practice?

- a) Statistical Process Control
- b) Supply Chain Optimization
- c) Lean Six Sigma
- d) Risk Management

14. **Gift Wrapping Precision:**

- *Question*: Elves are trained to wrap gifts with precision and care. This reflects which principle in quality control?

- a) Process Approach
- b) Standardization
- c) Defect Prevention
- d) Continuous Improvement

15. **Post-Christmas Feedback Analysis:**

- *Question*: After Christmas, Santa reviews feedback to make next year even better. This is similar to which quality management process?

- a) Corrective Action
- b) Management Review
- c) Internal Auditing
- d) Continuous Improvement

Encourage your teammates to take the quiz. It's a fun and engaging way to learn and reinforce quality principles this Christmas season.