

Created in 1996, Zoolab has become the UK's number one animal handling experience company, working in the education and care sector, as well as recently branching out into the corporate and events sector. With a national network of rangers and an 'animal team' on hand, Zoolab helps schools, nurseries, care homes, corporate organisations and such to bring people closer to nature, stimulating an interest in science whilst helping to deliver their key messages and/or learning goals.



Business Improvement Academy Project

Eleanor McMahon and Grant Scobbie are key members of the sales team. Zoolab is going through major changes at the moment as it re-defines its business strategy. This is creating new and exciting opportunities and Eleanor & Grant decided to focus on the Ranger sales process for their BIA project.

Project Activity

The company moved premises during involvement on the BIA and this gave the team a great opportunity to install new 5S procedures in to the new offices. With a new open plan environment and a new jungle room set up for incorporating events into the business, staff were enthused and motivated to get involved in procedural and physical changes.

In looking at the current "Ranger Sales" process a value stream map was developed leading to a process map with timings and data added. The office sales processing time for each ranger sale was timed at 9 minutes – this was an average **over 2,500 transactions** on an annualised basis. Having created the process map, group activity took place to highlight non value add activities within the office using a "7 Wastes" structure (MUDA) as below:

Defects – incorrect email addresses, incorrect date, mis-communication of sales

Over Production – verification call to customer; send email

Waiting – waiting on customer contact coming back to us

Inventory – work building up in our diaries of "stuff to do"

Transportation – for our customers - receptionist and teachers time wasted – documents and emails clogging up the system – toing and froing

Inappropriate or Unnecessary Processing - verification call to customer; send email

Excess Motion – Organisation of the sales office – ergonomics

This became the catalyst for change and improvement as everybody in the office could see the opportunity. In applying the "waste analysis" to the "Ranger Sales" process it was agreed to develop enhanced automation and work with each Ranger to develop a more streamlined process as to how they closed with customers and liaised with the office. The process was to become more visible and measured. As implementation took place the team measured improvement which showed **75% of all new sales** being administered through the more efficient format.

Business Benefits achieved through Change

The new sales process was proving to be 83% less time consuming for office staff and when annualised the benefit amounted to a reduction in NVA of 160 hours. This was freeing up a month's value of resource for a full time Sales member to work on the new opportunities that the business is attaining. The analysis also highlighted how the new process was also improving quality and securing sales that were being lost to the company. The data below shows the impact that this is having:

- 2014 - 15% of sales cancelled at a cost of £24k
- 2015 - 10% of sales cancelled at a cost of £28k
- Since introducing the new system 3% of sales cancelled at a cost of £10.1k (annualised)
- **If we had not improved the loss would be £33.6k – The benefit = £23.5k**

As the detailed wastes and disconnects were collated, the team developed Ishikawa Diagrams for staff discussions and problem solving activity. Within a short space of the time the business began to address issues within the Sales Office, Data Measurement Systems, Booking Systems, Control Systems, Planning Systems and Operational Ranger Activity.

Cultural Change Benefits

- We have a workplace that is now exciting and fosters change and improvement
- We have a new confidence in the ability of our workforce
- We now feel that we don't need to improve – we WANT to improve.

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“Through the course, we have understood and identified necessary changes to be made in our workplace. We have used lean tools and techniques on specific processes which have improved our time management and which means that we can concentrate our efforts on other areas of the business. This is just the beginning as we are looking to introduce our learning into other areas of our work and will be involving more staff members on future academies”.

Eleanor McMahon and Grant Scobbie, Sales Team