

TO RECORD OR NOT TO RECORD



by Ir. Shum Keng Yan

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That is the question on observation cards and checklists...

We have looked at the functions of checklists and cards. We have also explored the SDCA/PDCA cycle to understand how we are doing in sustenance.

We also need to ask ourselves the purpose of keeping records in the first place. Are we recording to evidence performance? Are we recording to ensure governance of the process? Are we recording because that is the only way we know?

What are our options? Can we remove (some) recordings? Let's look at 3 options.

- 1. Evidencing Performance:** If we record to evidence performance, perhaps we can consider measuring the final output. For example, records of the substandard and unsafe often require an action tracker which is logged somewhere. Rather than creating an intermediate record, is the action tracker sufficient?
- 2. Governing Processes:** If the records are just to keep track that something has been "done", it can be an easy tick-the-box exercise once we know the ropes. I remember a case where the supervisor explained that they needed the checklist because this way, they will know who did the job if it's ticked and signed. I told him I was happy to tick and sign there and then but the job might still not be done. It is just a piece of paper that shows someone has claimed to have done the job. Perhaps we can govern by having actual face-to-face coaching or a walk at the site. Allocating quality time to "be there" is so much better than receiving a document with all the right ticks.
- 3. Other ways to measure:** Pulse Surveys or Focus Groups outputs are often more proactive measures compared to behavioural observation. Perhaps getting direct feedback early on can tell us more than collecting cards and records to be analysed reactively. Toolbox gathering is another great way to get the information and to agree on action without the need to fill any intermediate record.

If we make the process simpler, we should be able to get better buy-in and deliver better implementation. Try to challenge the need for intermediate recording. Look for other existing avenues for evidence in the system. Challenge the need for a checklist to ensure the other checklist is checked to check that the system is checked.

If you need me to tick your box, just email me at: pub@iem.org.my. ■

"It is ticked, therefore, it is done!" an old hand