

CONSISTENCY AND EFFICIENCY ON THE RISE AT BAKERY



A place for everything and everything in its place ... down to a single key wrench.



In a competitive market, Sons Bakery needs to ensure every loaf of bread, bun, or bagel coming out of its ovens is high quality and delicious. With two facilities several provinces away from one another — one's in Calgary, the other Brampton — improving and maintaining the required consistency was a key focus, but the lean program is helping through a lean tool called 5S.



Used to organize the workplace, 5S is a series of steps that results in a tidier, cleaner and more efficient and effective operation. It can also help reduce waste, which is defined as anything that does not add value for the customer. The steps are sort, set in order, shine, standardize and sustain. Sons has been focusing on getting 5S right in the first couple of years of its lean journey.

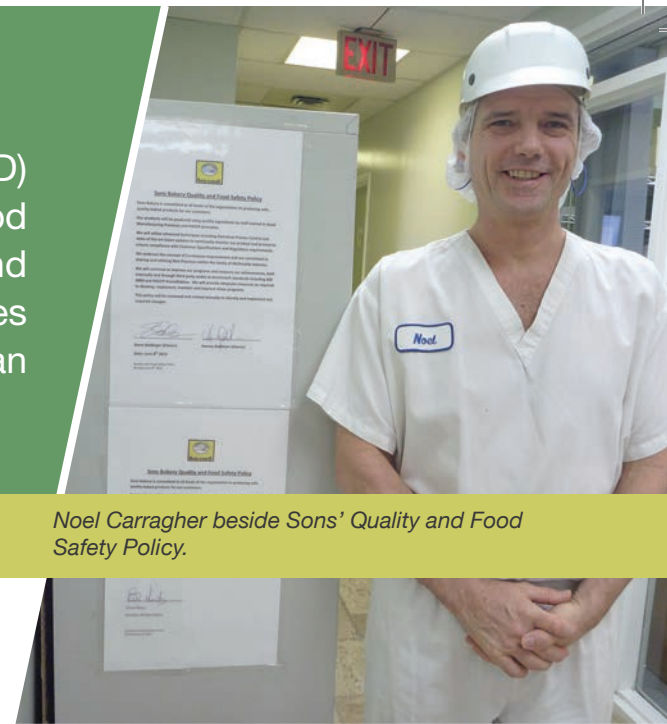
The bakery has used 5S to organize the production floor in its Calgary facility. That has involved sorting everything, removing items that shouldn't be there and finding the best place for things that should be there. For instance, tools are now housed on shadow boards that visually show employees where each tool belongs. Stations are also set up with pictures to help everyone understand what should be at each station.

Since embracing lean thinking, Sons has seen improvements in productivity and throughput in its Calgary facility. Rick Bossy, managing director, can't say for certain how much of that is due to lean, but he will say that production has become more steady in Calgary, and that's making a difference.

“Product quality is affected by the number of times you go down or have production issues. Because we're getting fewer production issues, our quality has gone up. It's been more consistent,” he says, adding that the bakery is beginning to apply lean thinking at its Brampton facility as well.

“We use a shift handover sheet, a checklist, and the incoming operator will audit the outgoing operator,” explains Noel Carragher, production manager in the

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) has a number of initiatives in place to help agri-food processing companies interested in lean or in lean and green. Through its programs, ARD supports companies like Sons Bakery to learn, plan and progress their lean implementation to generate results more quickly.



Noel Carragher beside Sons' Quality and Food Safety Policy.

Calgary facility. “Now we’re implementing a more formal supervisory audit to take us to the next level and to ensure that the staff see that management is committed, so that they know it’s important.”

For agri-food processors, one of the biggest advantages of 5S is the impact on what’s becoming known as the sixth S—safety. The 5S tool can help organizations of all kinds improve and ensure

employee safety. It can also help agri-food companies ensure food safety.

It’s not something we can measure, but we view 5S as an extension of our Food Safety Initiative,” says Carragher. “5S allows us to standardize and sustain work station cleanliness and orderliness of the entire plant with all employees, and that both complements and expands our food safety program.”

Sons Bakery will continue on its lean journey and has taken part in a lean and green program to learn how to use lean tools and concepts to reduce environmental waste. They’ve already improved the efficiency of lighting and are looking forward to getting ideas from staff, as well as exploring long-term initiatives, like recovering heat from ovens to reduce energy use.

For more information visit: agriculture.alberta.ca/productivity

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