Optimizing 5S with Durable Surface Safe® Labels

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The 5S process requires continuous improvement, so using signage or identification labels that easily adapt to change can streamline the process

For facility operations managers, starting a 5S lean manufacturing program can reduce waste and optimize productivity through better workplace organization. With each S (Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain) accounting for a separate 5S stage, the process can seem intimidating, but does not need to be.

"You don't have to get the 5S process perfect right away," says Tina Huff, Group Product Manager at Avery Products Corporation, a commercial and industrial label manufacturer. "Just get started and keep improving over time."

Because nothing is set in stone, using industrial labels for organization and identification that are designed to be applied and removed, as well as customized, can help to optimize each stage of the process.

Sort

The first 5S stage, Sort, removes clutter and unneeded items from the work area. This leaves just the parts, tools, machines, and supplies necessary for daily use on the manufacturing or warehouse floor. In this stage, temporary labels can be put on items as the facility's staff sorts through them.

According to Huff, designated areas for sorting could include: Leave, Relocate, Dispose/Recycle or TBD (to be determined). "Leave" is for items that can stay where they are with no changes needed. "Relocate" is for any item that needs a new home because it is more logical or efficient. "Dispose/Recycle" applies to unneeded items that can be discarded or recycled. "TBD" is for items that you are not sure of yet.

"One method is to mark items as TBD, and then wait a month or so," says Huff. "When you use an item, consider how it's used or who uses it to determine its permanent home. If you haven't used it in that time, consider discarding it."

For best results, be sure to use labels that won't fall off during the Sort stage, yet don't cause damage or leave behind residue when you need to remove them.

Set in order

The second stage, Set in order, locates parts, people, tools and equipment in the most efficient, ergonomic positions, so operators do not waste time or effort searching for needed items.

5S Fundamentals *Continued*

To improve workplace efficiency, identification labels can be integrated to identify and classify parts, tools and equipment, so items are easy to find and everything has a home. Racks, shelves and cabinets also make sense to label, as do smaller portable items like bins, totes and toolboxes, which help with organization.

Color coding labels can add another level of organization to items. With labels that are printed on a laser or inkjet printer, it's easy to include color, icons or even photos on labels. This makes it easier to quickly identify items and determine where they belong.

"For larger facilities, adding barcodes to labels can further improve efficiency because scanning a barcode is much faster and more accurate than manual entry," says Huff. "This is vital for activities like inventory counts or pulling orders for shipment."

According to Huff, this approach works with traditional one-dimensional (1D or linear) barcodes, and for two-dimensional (2D) barcodes, which hold far more data in less space. While 1D barcodes typically encode data such as location and department, 2D barcodes can contain not only website addresses but also images and voice.

Shine

The third stage, Shine, ensures the workplace stays free of clutter, grime and malfunction. This helps to prevent serious work breakdowns or slowdowns. In this process, cleaning and inspecting through cleaning is critical. However, labels that are not durable can become torn or otherwise unreadable, which is a particular problem with barcode labels.

"During inspection, it's good to replace any damaged or inaccurate labels," says Huff. Also, keep track of machine maintenance with inspection labels so routine maintenance isn't forgotten. This helps to prevent costly downtime and improve safety by reducing malfunction related accidents. Make sure there is a process in place so whoever is responsible knows which machines they need to inspect, and how often. A good inspection label will include areas for marking the date and person who conducted the inspection.

To reliably perform through the Shine stage, however, it is important to use ID labels that are designed to withstand daily wear and tear, dirt, grease, oil, chemicals and wash downs while providing good barcode readability.

Standardize

The fourth stage, Standardize, systematizes the most efficient work methods with clear standards. Utilizing schedules, checklists and standard operating procedures are a key part of this process.

Without standard operating procedures and clear processes, a facility will not run consistently and smoothly, even if everything is labeled accurately. Wherever possible, it is helpful to put procedures and checklists on labels posted near work areas.

5S Fundamentals *Continued*

"Placing labels on work area equipment provides employees with a recurrent reminder of standard operating procedures, so no one can say 'I didn't know,'" says Huff. This is especially critical for reminders or instructions, since labels are less likely than sheets of paper to get lost or damaged.

Sustain

The fifth stage, Sustain, trains and maintains company standards and procedures until they become a habit and are consistently followed. Because 5S is a continuous process, however, organizations will reorganize or improve processes throughout the year, as well as accommodate changes in data, format and regulation.

As such, easily removing old labels and printing custom, updated ones can be important. Otherwise, employees can waste time scraping old labels off, using heat guns or even razor blades. They may be reluctant to update labels if it is difficult to get the old ones off, so may make do with sub-standard situations.

The ideal solution would be to use industrial labels for organization and identification that are easy to adhere, durable enough to endure harsh conditions, yet come off cleanly when necessary, leaving no trace.

"Industrial labels used for signage and identification must be more durable than those used in an office, but should remove cleanly when they need to come down," says Huff. "The key to accomplishing this was developing an adhesive that holds well but can be removed when needed. Achieving that balance is harder than it sounds."

As the result of this effort, new Avery Surface Safe Sign Labels and Surface Safe ID Labels have an exclusive, proprietary construction specially engineered to stick securely yet remove cleanly without damage or residue from a wide variety of industrial surfaces. Surface Safe Sign labels can be used on walls, doors and glass, without worrying about damaging the surface. The Surface Safe ID labels are designed to be used on plastic and metal surfaces, so are readily usable on machinery, racks, shelves, cabinets, totes and bins, even if the surface is highly textured.

These "labels used as signs or identification" are made of durable, industrial-grade material that resists water, chemicals and even abrasion. Unlike office labels with a paper substrate, the topcoat of the industrial labels is waterproof and chemical resistant, while its polyester substrate is a durable, scuff and tear-resistant film.

Available in a variety of sizes, they print easily on standard laser or inkjet printers, enabling custom, do-it-yourself labels for signs and identification. The company's free online

CHANGING LABELS SHOULDN'T REQUIRE TOOLS

AVERY® SURFACE SAFE® ID | PERMANENT LABELS
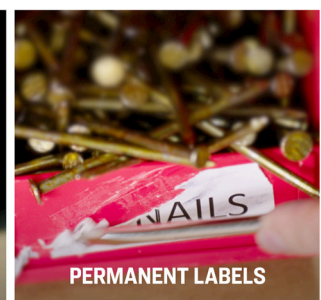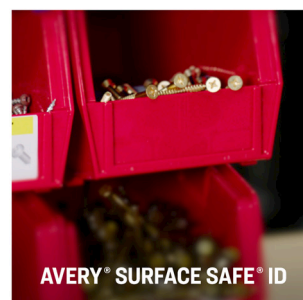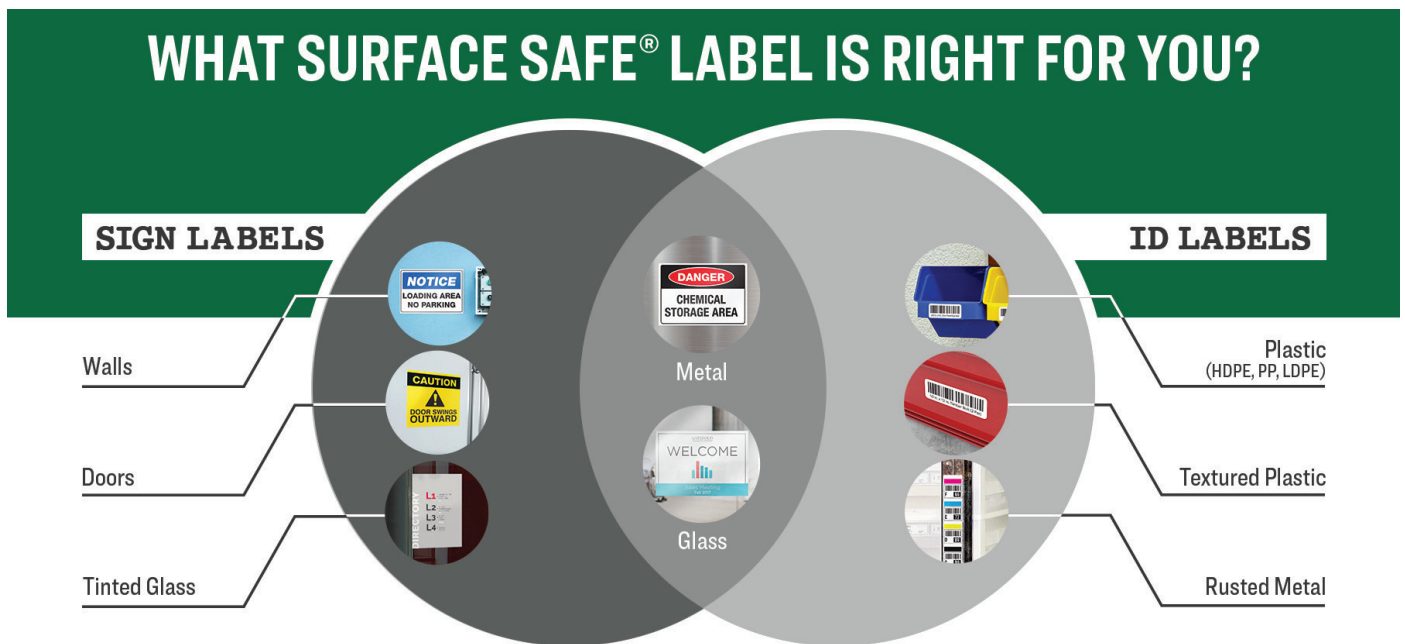
Safety – The Sixth S *Continued*

Design and Print Software allows customizable printing utilizing OSHA/ANSI compliant and 5S templates.

Employees can create and print their own informal, official, or compliant labels from pre-designed templates or create them step-by-step at their desk. Employees find the process intuitive, since it resembles creating an office document from pre-designed templates.

To accommodate warehouse settings, the software's barcode generator makes it easy to add text, graphics, serialized numbers or barcodes in a few steps. The combination of a bright white label material with superior ink/toner anchorage further enables accurate barcode scanning, even at extended distances.

With all the equipment, supplies, racks etc. used in industrial settings, the ability to conveniently print new 5S sign and identification labels in minutes, while being able to cleanly remove the old, will go a long way toward keeping facilities efficiently up to date without the hassle, mess or cost.

WHAT SURFACE SAFE® LABEL IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

SIGN LABELS — Walls, Doors, Tinted Glass
Metal, Glass
ID LABELS — Plastic (HDPE, PP, LDPE), Textured Plastic, Rusted Metal

Learn more at: **www.avery.com/industrial**