

B&D Doors & Openers Generating a New Plan for Despatch!

The Despatch Area at **B&D Doors & Openers at Clontarf, Queensland** is like many despatch / warehouse areas we see, large piles of finished goods awaiting despatch, equipment stored because that was the only space available, and a myriad of spare parts. In amongst this the operators are trying to find the correct finished goods and despatch them on the right truck at the right time.

At the Clontarf site an additional constraint was proposed with the introduction of the “3m rule”, this required all mobile equipment and operators to be separated by a physical barrier or at least 3 metres.

The “Hit and Miss” Cross-functional Improvement Team were assembled to tackle this exact issue with the mandate to develop a plan to introduce the 3m rule into the Despatch Area without adversely impacting the operation.

Figure 1: The “Hit and Miss” Team



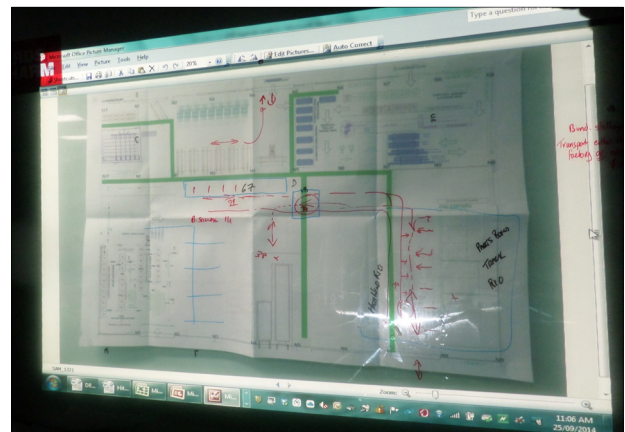
L to R: Grant Viney, Jeff Anderson, Mark Steponovsky, Rohan Tink (Dulux CI Manager), Kevin Glibert (Team Leader), Darlene Moore and Peter Thorpe

The team’s first meeting started with groan’s of disbelief in what they were asked to achieve as everyone’s initial thoughts were that it could not be done. After the expressions of disbelief cleared, the team got down to business and focused on establishing what the current situation was.

First they mapped out who worked in the area, where they worked and what their movements

were. Then they created a second map showing the areas forklifts worked in, a list of their tasks and the number of movements each forklift made. By combining these two maps it was possible to determine and pinpoint every position where there existed an opportunity for a forklift and operator to come together.

Figure 2: Combined map of forklift and operator movements



The next step was the interesting part, devising a plan to keep the forklifts and their targets apart!

At the start of the second meeting Mark Steponovsky walked in and announced he had solved the problem. He proceeded to unfold a clearly drawn A3 plan of the Despatch Warehouse Area showing forklift activity in two small areas of the warehouse and the remainder of the warehouse free for operators to move around in.

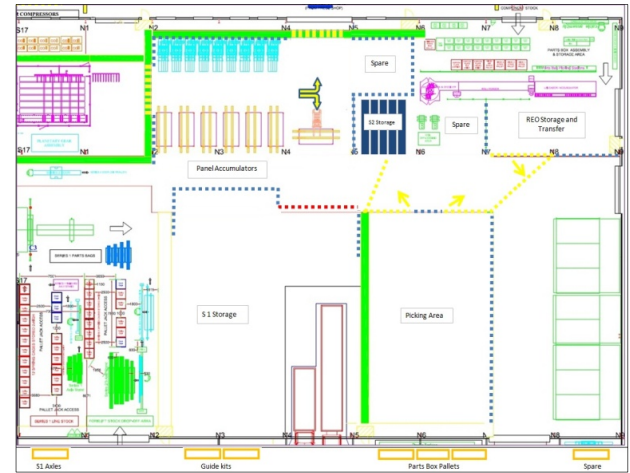
It was a great plan, but unfortunately, as it involved using the forklifts to move finished goods around the factory as opposed to through it, a quick calculation proved it be too time consuming and would not meet the production plan.

However, the seed of an idea had been sown and the original plan was developed and modified over the remaining improvement cycle until a plan was produced that met all the mandated requirements.

The final plan for the Despatch Area identified many benefits, they included:

- Reduction in distance moved by the operators in the area;
- Improved operator safety from overhead cranes by moving a couple of walkways;
- Decreased forklift movement by moving the despatch picking area closer to the truck loading facility;
- Improved the space efficiency of the warehouse and reduced damage to finished doors from miss handling by storing all finished doors in racks and not on the floor; and
- Removing all finished doors from storage outside.

Figure 3: Version 8 Plan – Nearly There!



We congratulate the team on developing a plan that met and exceeded the team's mandate. It certainly highlights the benefit of having a Cross-functional Team looking at a problem even if their initial thoughts were "It's impossible!"

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