

# Tipping the scales: critical success factors and barriers for 5S

**Companies are constantly striving to improve and increase competitiveness. To facilitate change initiatives, organizations need to be open for change and align the objectives throughout the organization, from shop floor to top floor.**

In this thesis critical success factors (CSF) and barriers for implementation of 5S have been investigated. The most prominent factors identified through literature and interviews were the following for CSFs:

- Management commitment and support
- Employee engagement
- Organizational culture
- Communication
- Training and education

While the identified barriers were the following:

- Lack of management commitment
- Lack of employee engagement
- Resistance to change
- Poor communication
- Lack of evaluation and follow up

We found that barriers and CSFs are closely related and most of the prominent CSFs have a corresponding barrier related to the same aspect. It is also interesting to note that the most important factors often are interrelated and thus affecting each other. One such example is that poor management commitment and communication within the organization inevitably leads to employees that are less engaged and motivated in the workplace.

An interesting trend identified is a difference between the opinions of participants in the data collection versus literature. As the interviewees

were local managers, they tended to have a high focus on site and staff specific aspects while literature generally had a more comprehensive view of different aspects.

In an increasingly competitive market, cost reductions and efficiency are key for companies to remain relevant. This calls for continuous improvements throughout all stages of the operation, ranging from small changes to large scale projects for organizational change.

Astonishingly high numbers of failure rates for organizational change have been reported for years, in some cases as high as 90 %. Despite the poor odds, initiatives are still continuously being initiated and new innovative methods keep popping up. Different methods may be used to increase the probability of success.

One method for mitigating the risks and increase the success rate is by identifying CSFs and barriers. Through knowing common pitfalls and mistakes as well as where to focus efforts during the project failure rates can be reduced drastically.

The result of this study is believed to be applicable to other industries with only slight adaptations. This is especially true for small to middle sized enterprises as this was the nature of the sites where the study was performed. The results are also applicable for other change methods without any major changes.

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Implementation and Evaluation of 5S  
A Case Study at Lantmännen Maskin**