

Case Study: Operation Clean Sweep – Brand-rex

– interview with Danny McCallion and Paul Richardson

Brand-Rex | a LEVITON® company

1 When did you sign up to OCS?

8th March 2016 – This was about 18 months after first finding out about it.

2 Did you conduct an internal audit? If so, when did you do so? How long did it take?

The first audit was carried out before signing up officially. Initial 'audit' involved a tour of the plant following the check-lists from the OCS resources. This encouraged us to examine parts of the factory that maybe wouldn't have been examined thoroughly before e.g. external areas of factory, warehousing, waste removal. The full process of checking took ~1 hour. We would suggest to take a day when the sun is out!

3 Did the audit highlight any areas of concern? What improvements have you been able to make?

Yes. The storm-water drains in the external yards were a weakness. Filters were in place, but they were ineffective. Within days we were able to fit new filters – bought as standard and cut to the correct size (Ultra-DrainGuard - see www.Stormwater-products.com).



Planned maintenance inspection for drainage has now been updated with added OCS procedure in mind. This means that it is not a completely new inspection, but the perspective of pellet loss has been added to routine inspections.

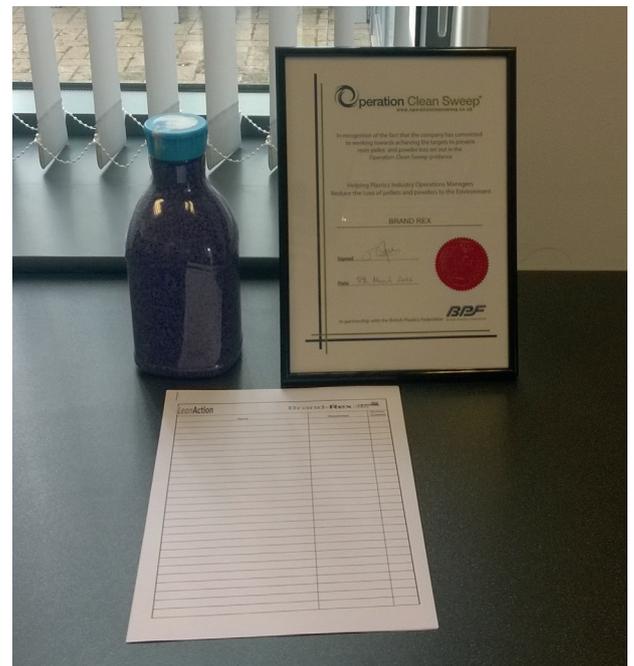
The audit showed that the main opportunity to get into water system is in the yard. Pellets were found lying in the back yard, where compound is delivered from silo tanker. Although the spills weren't observed, they must have been from a past delivery – a delivery was observed in full, and the drivers were asked if there was any way to make

transfer easier. We found that making improvements to the connector hose from our facility would reduce chance of spillage. This shows how important communication is to ensuring pellets aren't spilled during on-off loading.

4 Have you done anything to raise staff awareness of the issue?

Brand-rex have a quarterly business update and themed briefing for staff. The Spring briefing was held on the theme of pellet loss and OCS, with presentations given on the theme and effects of pellets on the environment.

A competition was held to "Guess the number of pellets in the bottle!" – (There are a whopping 50100 in the pictured juice bottle) – the jar was placed in the canteen to raise awareness among all staff. Several newsletter articles were also sent out since sign-up.



"Your ideas matter" is a scheme to allow staff to write in suggestions for facility improvements, with a monthly award for best ideas. This is part of the LEAN improvement scheme that Brand-rex have been working on for the last 2 years. Since the staff briefing, 30% have been pellet loss/microplastic themed suggestions, showing a clear increase in staff awareness. Examples have included

funnels for filling pellets, more hoppers to reduce spillage and hooks for scoops so that no remnants spill when they're put down. The suggestions can be added to the process confirmation boards (also part of LEAN) to ensure that the best practice is maintained without finger pointing. Warehousing staff have also been involved, suggesting catch-trays are installed to catch any spillages.

Microplastics are clearly a hot topic at the facility. The 'suggestion of the month' from June was to change the hand cleanser available across the facility to one without microbeads!

5 Any other initiatives that you have implemented during uptake of OCS?

Contact with our supplier Borealis (also OCS signees) made us look up and down supply chain leading to examining the haulage companies who work for the producer. This led to better communication with hauliers, also OCS signees, and new suggestions for improvement. We are able to give feedback if there are any issues with the boxed material. Contact has allowed a general exchange of knowledge and best practice.

6 Did you find the resources provided in the manual / checklists useful?

We found the OCS resources useful for the initial audit – it made us look at areas we wouldn't have necessarily thought about and identified issues. As a more permanent solution we are looking at incorporating into our existing Manufacturing Workplace Organisation Assessment. This is a standardised checklist that allows us to score the facility on a variety of elements including health and safety, housekeeping, resource efficiency and environmental awareness. We plan to include pellet loss procedure in that check-list to ensure continuous improvement – this is conducted once a month for each area of factory. In addition, we have created a new assessment for some parts of the factory that weren't part of the assessment initially, for example stores and the outdoor yard.

7 Did you encounter any hurdles/ costs while implementing OCS so far?

Costs were very low, on the scale of hundreds of pounds – some small purchases included the new drain filters. There was no problem persuading staff. They were immediately interested after the consequences of pellet loss were understood, and many have suggested improvements. The prior LEAN improvement work has made staff open to making changes.

8 Have there been any noticeable benefits? / expecting any in the future?

A number of benefits have been observed on the people side – cultural benefits. People take notice, and care enough to suggest their own ideas, and want to be part of implementation. Improvements to resource use, safety, general good housekeeping are seen because of implementing the scheme. The improvements are visible when customers visit sites, which has the potential to benefit top-line sales. The main change observed was that it created a general awareness among staff, leading to an internal change in attitude.

9 Have you put in place any procedure to monitor the success of the scheme?

Nothing as yet, but as a simple monitoring technique, we plan to photograph filters at intervals to see what ends up in them. This helps to know how many pellets are being lost on the rest of the site.

10 Would you recommend the scheme to other companies? Do you have any suggestions for their uptake?

Yes, but if you do sign up, you need to be committed to understanding what impact they're contributing and what you want to do about it. We were lucky because we had a lot of information on the impacts available to us. Understanding the impacts and communicating those is a really important aspect. We were also lucky because it was introduced into an existing improvement scheme. The knowledge on its own doesn't bring improvement – it has to go hand in hand with a process to implement and maintain it. We integrated it into an existing system. It could be a challenge to introduce these from scratch.

Our ISO 14001/ISO9001 audits are more of a double checking process. OCS hasn't been incorporated into the ISO process, but instead into the way that we operate as a business.