

QUALITY: THE WINNING RUN

By Mick Orr
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I've always believed that quality was something that could be touched, picked up and admired. I also believed that if it cost a lot it was probably high quality. If I could afford it, it wasn't good enough for me.

However, quality isn't something that can be touched, it's a symptom of something being done right. Quality is built into a product. Have you ever stopped and looked at something and tried to figure out how it was made? Why some products just perform better than other similar products?

Now look at your screen room as being a product. Is it a high quality product or a not so high quality product? Would you buy it? If you had to sell it, what would you do to improve it to make it sellable?

I recently attended a seminar on quality control. In a nutshell, the speaker stated that by making many small important improvements, quality would improve. He said that hitting quality "home runs" was fine but don't count on hitting one every time, because you won't. He said to pay attention to detail, focus on the improvement "singles" and the big things will take care of themselves. Every time you improve your job process, the quality will also improve.

An example he gave was about two best friends who worked at the same business but in different departments. They had known each other for years, and whenever they saw each other in the hallway they'd stop and chit-chat. One of the friends was responsible for gathering all the sale receipts from the salesmen at the end of the month. She would then put them in order by date, staple them all onto his trip report and then transfer them to her friend in the credit department. They had been doing it this way for years.

One day, the manager of the credit department asked the second woman why the trip reports took so long to process. She said "I could go faster if I didn't have to remove those @!/?#! staples." The manager, being pretty sharp at detecting hostility in the woman's voice, asked if she had ever asked her friend why the receipts were stapled to the trip report. She said she hadn't.

Well, the two friends finally got together to discuss the situation. Know why the receipts were stapled together? Because one friend thought that stapling the receipts together would make the other's job easier. So they shot each other. Just kidding. Now the receipts are no longer stapled, just clipped together. Both are still best friends; both jobs are improved.

The changes were very easy to do without any major or painful procedures to change. Was this a home run? No, but it was an important small change that saved time and improved the quality of the process.

What could be done to improve the quality of your screen room without making any kind of drastic change? Maybe changing the color of your blackout or where you put your work orders. Who knows? By improving the quality of work in your area in small steps, you may help improve the quality in other areas. It may not be a home run but it may be the run that wins the game.



Looking for insight on the wonderful world of screen making? Consult the writings of Chromaline's Technical Guru, Mick Orr, Applications Training Specialist.

Mick has been in the screen printing industry since 1970 with printing experience in a wide range of applications from membrane switches, to textiles, specialty graphics to faceplates and more. His hands-on seminars have been appreciated by screen makers around the world.



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