

DDSI continues culture of continuous improvement

By Navy Capt. Mark E. Semmler, DDSI Commander

The terms “Lean” and “Six Sigma” are becoming increasingly common in the business world today. Under the Lean concept, the focus is on maximizing process velocity. Lean provides the tools for analyzing the work flow and delay times for any process. The processes are documented, and then put through a rigorous value stream mapping analysis to identify and then eliminate inefficient actions.

“With so much focus on analysis, some programs can get too focused on

statistics and lose sight of their priorities,” said Robert Pattillo, who helped to establish Defense Distribution Depot Sigonella, Italy’s Lean program. “At DDSI, we’ve tried to take a practical approach to Lean concepts and are focused on building a culture of continuous improvement that puts our customer first.”

Earlier this year, at an all hands gathering of employees, two of the organization’s foremen signed the first of DDSI’s Standard Operating Procedures – many more



Navy Capt. Mark Semmler, left, commander, Defense Distribution Depot Sigonella, Italy and Nunzio Longhitano, right, watch as Paolo Pappalardo, center, signs DDSI’s Lean Standard Operating Procedures. Longhitano and Pappalardo are DDSI’s foremen for material handling and warehousing respectively.

are expected to follow. The SOPs are a culmination of effort by teams to document warehousing procedures in detail at DDSI. Those teams are made up of experts from every functional area, ensuring a comprehensive analysis.

“Our workforce is really beginning to buy in to our approach to continuous improvement,” said

Dave Bukauskas, leader of DDSI’s Lean team. “There was a learning curve with implementing Lean at DDSI, however, we are beginning to build momentum and expect our customers to see the benefits of our work in the future.”

DDSI is a full service warehousing and distribution organization, serving the entire Mediterranean region, as well as points east and south, with an accelerated emphasis on the African continent.

As DDSI wraps up its fourth year of operations at Naval Air Station Sigonella, management’s attention has been on completing a substantial renovation effort. Once renovations are complete, momentum will shift more heavily toward maximizing efficiencies and generating new business. It is DDSI’s goal to provide the most efficient and effective distribution and warehousing services possible to the region’s war fighters.

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