MOVING FORWARD IN 2021

How is your company re-focusing in 2021? How are you validating your new processes? What did you learn in 2020?

One month in to 2021, we are seeing clients coming back and re-initiating their process improvement projects. Their new processes put into place last year are now being validated and measured. New ways of working safely and distributing goods effectively are being tested and re-formatted and tested again.

LOOKING BACK AND LEARNING FROM 2020

2020 started off looking like a record year for most industries, with a thriving economy. However, as we all are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything. As online retail boomed and many things shifted in the world of distribution, every organization had to go through major adjustments to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and all of its effects.

The impact of 2020

In order for organizations to move on from 2020 in constructive ways, it is important to look back at the shifts that occurred over the year. Here are some of the biggest changes in 2020 to industries such as retail logistics and warehouse distribution centers.

• Remote working — Across industries, organizations had to shift as many positions and functions as possible to distanced, virtual versions of the same job.

• Distribution changes — With high and shifting demand for various products, and huge spikes in online consumer shopping, supply chains and distribution partnerships between different distributors and companies were forged out of sheer necessity.

• E-commerce — In a market that was already shifting toward e-commerce, the pandemic resulted in triple growth in the e-commerce space and the use of digital dollars and virtual shopping, as an alternative to cash and brick-and-mortar stores.

• Training — With growth and changes in retail and distribution across the world, organizations had to hire more staff to deal with growth in sales, and train many new staff members, as well as re-train current staff members to deal with all of the changes.

Looking forward in 2021

After a year of so many changes, it is crucial for organizations to evaluate all that has changed, look forward to how these changes might impact the future of their industry, and make moves to adapt and plan for this future.

Here are some things that organizations will need to think about moving into 2021 and beyond:

• Pay close attention to trends as things shift again — As vaccines become more widely available, it is reasonable to expect various shifts in the economy and across various industries again. However, it would be unwise to simply expect things to go "back to normal," as they were before the pandemic. Something in the middle is more likely: shopping may shift back towards traditional brick-and-mortal retail, but many consumers may continue with more virtual shopping than they did before the pandemic. Be adaptable and flexible, and have plans in place for a variety of shifts in what is bound to be another year of changes.

• Watch out for and correct training gaps — As many new employees have been hired and perhaps new locations or distribution sites have opened in your organization, take time to evaluate where training may have been rushed or there may be "training vacuums," as often occurs in times of rapid growth. Take time to evaluate the efficiency of your employees and various locations, and to correct these by training your teams on process improvement where needed.

• Determine where virtual work may remain beneficial — Many organizations adapted to some virtual work out of necessity. However, moving forward, it will be beneficial to evaluate whether keeping some of these positions or functions virtual may remain a good and cost-saving option.

• Measure and re-measure new process times to determine what is working, and what isn't.

2020 was a year of many unprecedented changes; however, change is a constant in business. As always, it will be important for organizations to move on in 2021 by evaluating what was beneficial and what was not beneficial, and continue to pivot and move on from there.

Laubrass software helps industry leaders to validate new processes and implement new safety audit protocols. Our solutions can be customized for your new focus. We're here when you need us.

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