



TG

LATAMGUIDE

Methodology for Technical Assistance
in Management Technologies to SMEs
in Latin America



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TG LATAM Guide: Methodology for Technical Assistance in Management Technologies to SMEs in Latin America /

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- 1st ed. - San Martín:

Industrial Technology - INTI, 2023.

E-Book, PDF

Digital File: download and online

ISBN 978-950-532-489-7

1. Technical Assistance.

2. Management Systems.

3. Management Techniques.

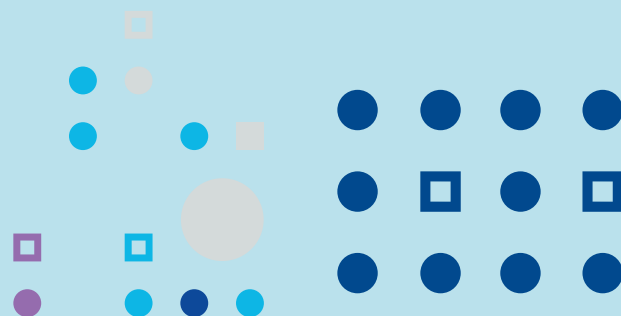
I. Korb, Mariel Lioren, colab.

II. Lagier, María Eugenia, coord.

III. Title.

CDD 338.64202





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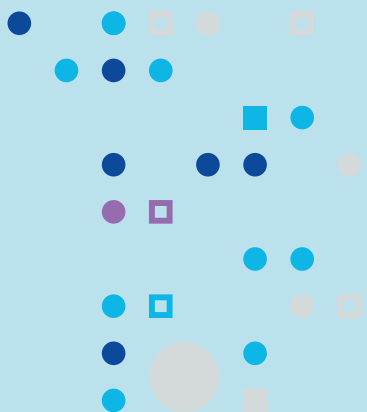
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



To the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japanese experts for their support in the development of the different projects undertaken in Latin America.

To the Centre of Science and Technology of Antioquia (CTA), to the Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU) and the Paraguayan Productivity and Quality Center (CEPROCAL), for their valuable contribution to the development of initiatives for the dissemination of continuous improvement in Latin America.

To María Eugenia Suárez and María Cecilia Cura, for the support provided by INTI's Institutional Relations Department.

To all the institutions that make up the Latin American Network for Productivity, for promoting continuous improvement in SMEs and contributing to their development.

To all the people who collaborated in the writing of this Guide, for their time, dedication and commitment.







PREFACE

Working on the construction of a common work methodology, unifying criteria, agreeing on ways of providing technical assistance are not easy tasks; each professional has his/her own methodology and in many cases we even copy models from other latitudes where our idiosyncrasy and language are different.

When the idea of having the first Methodological Guide arose, we thought it was going to be only for INTI's Productivity Improvement Network but, some years later, we realized that the problems of the SMEs are similar in our region and that we could build a joint guide with the contribution and experience of each one of the institutions, organizations and universities involved in productive improvement. Thus, we provide our first guide in order to strengthen it and build a new tool for management technology consultants in Latin America to look at ourselves in a common mirror, and to have our own manual for these regions.

Thanks to the contribution of the Latin American Network for Productivity organizations from Uruguay, Colombia, Paraguay and Ecuador, we were able to exchange ideas during the

pandemic, work on the content of this new Guide and test its implementation in Paraguay in 2022.

There are no magic, unique or infallible recipes, but there is commitment and valuable human resources in our region that contribute their knowledge and experience so that our SMEs can be more productive and generate jobs in better conditions.

We would like to thank our colleagues from INTI's Productivity Improvement Network, Laura Owczarczyn, Martín Romanelli and Guillermo Wyngaard, who undertook this work at different stages and who contributed to the compilation of this Guide that we now place in the hands of each one of you so that it may continue to grow from experience.

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INTRODUCTION

The Latin American Network for Productivity is a community composed of institutions in the region. Its objective is to analyze and evaluate in a comprehensive and homogeneous manner factors related to the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies aimed at companies, with the purpose of identifying current situations and making decisions that promote productive transformations in each country.

The institutions that are part of the public sector in the participating countries found in the Network a space for joint and articulated work that facilitates the generation of synergies based on their knowledge and experiences.

The Network began to take shape as a result of the participation of Latin American representatives in the Course for Third Countries *“Production Management Technologies in SMEs”*, jointly organized by INTI, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), with the aim of disseminating and strengthening capabilities in the region. In the 11 editions held, more than 150 professionals participated, sharing experiences and generating a training space.

In 2019, the institutions that had participated in the course and continued to provide training and disseminate Management Technologies were convened in Buenos Aires, agreeing to generate spaces for discussion and work on different axes

with the aim of making contributions based on the strengths of each one and sharing knowledge for the benefit of SMEs in the region.

One of these areas was technical assistance, in which the need to work to generate a common language and methodology so that facilitators in Management Technologies in Latin America can transfer the concepts to their small and medium-sized companies to make them more productive and generate quality employment was raised.

Thus, together with other institutions that make up the Network and have experience in providing technical assistance and training, the proposal was made to work on a document to level knowledge and move forward in a balanced way among all the countries.

In view of this challenge, INTI made available the *“TG Guide. Methodology for Technical Assistance in Management Technologies to SMEs in Latin America”* to serve as a basis for discussion to generate new intervention guidelines that represent the productive realities of all the countries of the Region.

This initiative was the starting point for a call to different entities of the Network to work collectively on the design of a Guide that will allow facilitators, regardless of their level of experience, to find recommendations

for each of the work stages involved in the process of technical assistance to companies in Management Technologies.

Within the framework of the Kaizen T.A.N.G.O. Project, during the years 2021 and 2022, two pilot projects of technical assistance in Management Technologies were carried out in companies in Colombia and Paraguay, which served to put into practice the proposed work methodology and to detect opportunities for improvement based on real experiences, which were taken into account for the preparation of this document.

This new TG Guide seeks to transfer knowledge, standardize procedures and formulate common concepts, based on the Latin American language and on the path followed in the technical assistance provided in each of the participating countries.

It is hoped that the reading of this Guide will contribute to the facilitators in Management Technologies during the technical assistance process, so that they can have a road map

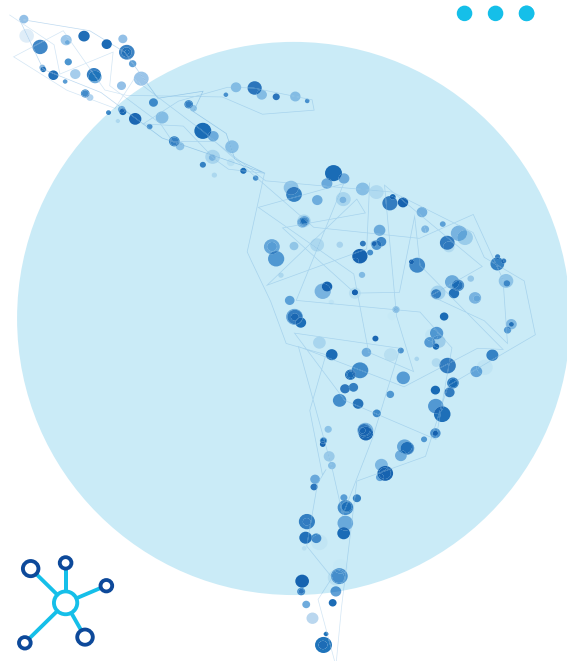
when visiting an organization anywhere in Latin America, with a common and unified language, typical of the idiosyncrasy and productive reality of the region.

This is a dynamic Guide, which is nourished by practice, and therefore comments and contributions will continue to be received from the institutions that make up the Network and from all those that decide to join it.



LOGIN!

If you are interested in learning more about the TG Guide. *Methodology for Technical Assistance in Management Technologies to SMEs developed by INTI.*





Preliminary Considerations

This Guide is aimed at all those persons or institutions that provide advice to companies or other organizations in improving their internal processes to increase their productivity and efficiency levels. Its purpose is to standardize and share a methodology for technical assistance in Management Technologies.

In this sense, before starting to read, it is important to define some terms so that they can be interpreted in the sense in which they are used:

■ **Management Technologies (MT):** set of concepts, methodologies and tools that, when applied in an organization, allow it to improve its productivity, quality and/or efficiency levels. MT have the particularity of not requiring large capital investments for their implementation; they are mainly aimed at improving the management of the resources available within the organization. They can be grouped into 5 thematic areas: Production, Marketing, Human Resources, Administration and Management, Costs and Finance. Some examples are: 5S methodology, work study, the 7 quality tools, Kaizen (continuous improvement), Canvas, Dashboard, among others.

■ **Facilitator:** person responsible for carrying out the technical assistance process. This is the person who will go to the organization to diagnose and/or implement improvements. Depending on the country, this person may have different names such as consultant, advisor, change agent, among others.

■ **Technical Assistance:** service performed by the facilitator in order to find solutions and/or improvements to one or more of the problems of an organization, acting on its processes.

■ **Organization:** company (productive or service), institution (public or private) or cooperative, which receives the technical assistance service.

■ **Business support organization:** public or private organization engaged in promoting business development through technical assistance programs, training, financing, among others.

■ **SME:** small and medium-sized company. The categorization as an SME is specific to each country; it is generally linked to the type of company, the volume of income, the value of assets and the number of workers.

The technical assistance methodology proposed in this Guide is applicable to any type of organization; however, reference will be made to companies since most of the application experience of the participating institutions is focused on SMEs.



Relevant Aspects of Facilitators' Performance

The technical assistance process seeks to identify weaknesses in production and/or management processes in order to transform them into opportunities for improvement and achieve positive results from the joint work between the facilitator and the company's personnel.


It is quite common that companies lack the capacity to identify and/or address their problems in an autonomous manner, mainly due to lack of specific knowledge, lack of time to implement improvements and/or lack of qualified personnel. This inability generates the need to resort to an external facilitator who can provide an objective view of the situation and who has the capacity to guide the resolution of the improvement opportunities detected.

Given the fact that each company has its own particularities, depending on the industry to which it belongs, the activity it carries out and the location where it is located, the facilitator must have an unbiased view when approaching it. This will make it possible, at the time of initiating the technical assistance process, to discover and evaluate opportunities for improvement, detect training needs and train people, and provide the relevant tools to implement the changes suggested.

All technical assistance is expected to have a positive impact not only on productivity and process quality, but also on the lives of workers. To ensure that the intervention has been successful, in addition to measuring and quantifying the results obtained, the facilitator must be able to achieve two central aspects:

***transfer a work methodology
and leave capabilities
installed in the company.***

In this sense, the facilitator must be able to transmit approach methodologies for the analysis and resolution of problems, to be incorporated as a way of daily work in the company, laying the foundations for the development of a culture of continuous improvement. At the end of the technical assistance process, the company should be able to replicate the experience gained in other areas or in other problem situations on its own. This way, a dependency link with the facilitator is avoided and the emergence of new demands is favored, which, ideally, should respond to more complex or overcoming situations than those that motivated the original contact.



The technical assistance process must take place within a limited period of time. If the work is carried out within the framework of a government program or an international project, it is possible that the intervention times may be predetermined, but, regardless of this, it is always necessary that the technical assistance has a defined beginning and end, and that the deadlines are clearly established. The objectives must be achievable within that time frame.

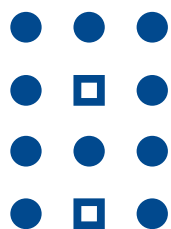
Achieving the above points is not easy; the degree of collaboration between the company and the facilitator is critical to the success of the technical assistance. For this reason, trust, respect and a spirit of collaboration are fundamental pillars.



● Facilitator's Ethics

The following are some basic ethical principles that the facilitator must comply with in his/her performance as a professional:

- 1** *Apply his/her professional skills with honesty, integrity, impartiality and responsibility.*
- 2** *Perform his/her professional duties with proper care for the environment, safety, health and well-being of people.*
- 3** *Use fair and equitable business practices in dealing with colleagues, customers and associates.*
- 4** *Be objective in any professional report or testimony, which should include all relevant and pertinent information, avoiding any omission that could lead to a false interpretation or confusion.*
- 5** *Assume responsibility only for those jobs for which he/she is competent by virtue of his/her training and experience and, when the situation so requires, hire or recommend the hiring of specialists to properly perform the assigned tasks.*
- 6** *Maintain strict confidentiality with the information acquired in the course of their professional work, unless the client's consent is obtained.*
- 7** *Maintain his/her professional competence by keeping up to date with advances in his/her field of expertise.*
- 8** *Refrain from making false or misleading statements or engaging in unethical acts.*



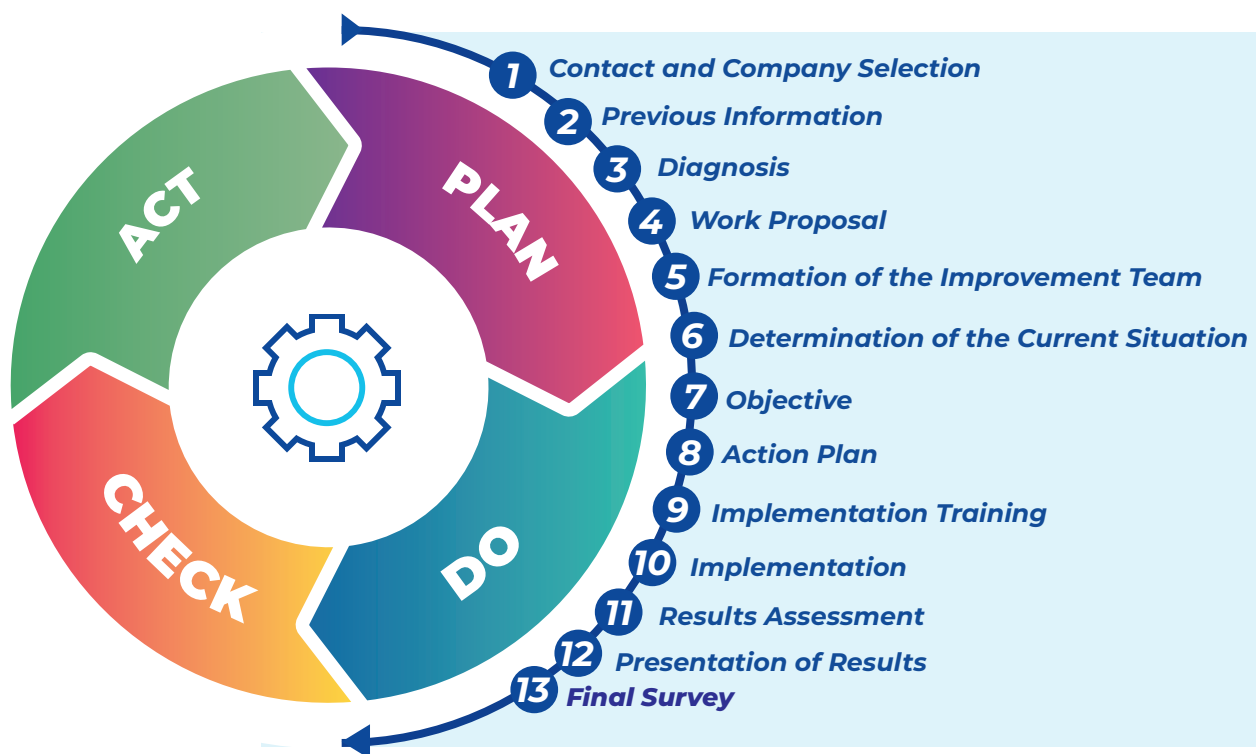
Intervention Methodology

The methodology described in this Guide was defined by the institutions that are part of the Latin American Network for Productivity, which carry out advisory activities in Management Technologies.

After the exchange of experiences, it was considered the most common and effective form of technical assistance to companies or other organizations.

Although the complete sequence comprises 13 stages, both the order and the steps to be followed may vary depending on the type of organization and technical assistance to be provided.

The proposed methodology is directly related to the PDCA cycle (1) since all the stages correspond to one of its phases.



(1) PDCA is an acronym for Plan, Do, Check and Act/Adjust. The PDCA concept is linked to a continuous improvement process that should be applied through these four steps, which are executed in a cyclical manner with the objective of accelerating and improving the quality of products or processes.

1

Contact and Company Selection



A company may initiate contact with a facilitator or business support organization on its own initiative (independently) or through a government or international cooperation program. It can also be convened by the facilitator or the business support organization to participate in a technical assistance process. It is important to know what motivated or prompted the company to request technical assistance, as this can be a determining factor in the willingness to work.

For a company to decide to contact the facilitator or business support organization, it must know the work methodology and the benefits to be obtained from the technical assistance they offer. Often, when there is already a track record and accumulated experience, this happens through word of mouth. When this does not happen, it is important to have dissemination tools that briefly describe the work methodology and the benefits to be obtained by the company; the message must be clear and striking to awaken the interest of those who read it. Dissemination can be done through seminars, workshops, e-mails, web page, social networks, among others.

Participation in government or international cooperation programs is another way to initiate contact. These programs often have limited capacity and, when companies apply to participate, it is necessary to make a strategic selection in order to guarantee the success of the program based on the results achieved and the impact obtained. For this purpose, it is possible to identify certain selection criteria that will condition the success of the technical assistance and are key in the process of implementing improvements; some of these are:

- **commitment of the company's management;**
- **availability of information (records and process data);**
- **knowledge of improvement tools;**
- **the potential to achieve tangible results within the project's timeframe; and**
- **availability of time to participate, among others.**

These are factors that favor the implementation and maintenance of improvements.





In many cases, facilitators or business support organizations are the ones who identify and call a company to participate in a technical assistance process. This can happen when such a company occupies a strategic role in a productive matrix and any improvement obtained generates an impact on other companies (suppliers or customers), which benefit indirectly, for example, with an improvement in quality, delivery time or product cost. This ensures that the results of the technical assistance transcend the assisted company and have a positive impact on the entire matrix.

Regardless of what motivates the contact between the company and the facilitator or business support organization, it is important to arrange a meeting (face-to-face or virtual) with the managers to describe in greater detail the work methodology and the commitments to be undertaken by both parties. This will make it possible to assess the company's level of commitment and willingness to initiate the technical assistance process. The result of this previous meeting could be used as one of the requirements to be considered during the company selection process.

It is important to think about what type of company you choose to work for. It is necessary to have the criteria to interpret when the context demands the selection of companies with the greatest potential for success or when it is necessary to have the determination to select those that, although they do not meet all the conditions to implement improvement processes, show the willingness to change and are key to productive development.

2

Previous Information

One of the first challenges that the facilitator will have to face is to build trust with the company, which will only give it to those who consider that they add value to its activity. For this reason, the facilitator must work from the outset with his/her counterpart in mind and have an in-depth knowledge of the environment and circumstances in which he or she is working.

Before carrying out the diagnosis, it is important to have information about the company and its environment, as well as cultural and regulatory aspects that





may affect the development of the work. This information will make it possible to adapt the diagnosis and facilitate its implementation.

Below are different ways of obtaining information at different depth levels. Some of the instruments described above may be complementary and are intended to provide the facilitator with prior information on the general characteristics of the company and on his/her perception of his/her own management.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

- Web presence: content and frequency of publication.
- Presence and activity on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn): content and frequency of publication.
- Other company publications: articles in specialized magazines, brochures, media advertising.
- Publications about the company: newspaper articles, interviews.
- Previous work of the company with other facilitators or consultants.

COMPANY PROFILE SURVEY

It is a standardized document that is sent to the company prior to the diagnosis visits. Its purpose is to gather basic data and main characteristics of the organization, as well as the needs or difficulties already identified.

*A sample survey that the facilitator can ask the company to complete prior to the diagnosis is provided in **Annex 1**.*

The image displays four sample pages of the 'KAIZEN TANGO' Pre-diagnosis Survey form. The forms are organized into sections with checkboxes and input fields for data collection.

- Page 1 (Top Left):** Contains the 'Pre-diagnosis Survey' title and an introductory paragraph. It includes sections for 'Business performance (last 3 years)' with checkboxes for 'Increasing', 'Stable', and 'Decreasing'. It also has fields for 'Number of employees' (Management, Production, Sales, Others) and 'Main products'.
- Page 2 (Top Right):** Continues the survey with sections for 'Production characteristics' (General production, Special production, Mean production of a line/variety), 'Plant layout' (Linear, Semi-linear, By process), 'Automation system for the production sector' (Automated, Semi-automated, Manual), and 'Production schedule'.
- Page 3 (Bottom Left):** Focuses on 'Competitiveness' with a table for 'Main products / Sales' and a section for 'Currently, what is the most important competitiveness problem with your product?' (Quality, Delivery time, Cost, Product development, Flexibility). It also includes a section for 'How would you rate the competitive situation of the market in which the company operates?' (High, Medium, Low).
- Page 4 (Bottom Right):** Contains sections for 'Productivity' (Mark with an X if the answer is yes) and 'Other remarks' (Text area for additional information).



Visit Page 60 (**Annex 1**)



BUSINESS SELF-DIAGNOSIS

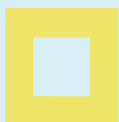
It is a questionnaire with several questions about different areas and aspects of the company, to be answered using a rating scale and/or predefined options. It can, and should, be answered by several members of the organization, so that they can contribute different approaches. The results obtained allow us to identify the main areas and issues that can be improved in the organization.

ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

It is important for the facilitator to have at least a general knowledge of the environment in which the company's activity takes place. This will allow him/her to understand the context and identify external aspects that may condition his/her performance.

Some of these aspects to be considered are:

- General characteristics of the sector and the market in which the company operates.
- Legislation and regulations in force that could be relevant.
- Aspects of economic policy that could have an impact on the future of the activities.
- Socio-cultural aspects to be taken into account in the region where the company is located.



Accordingly, the following are some questions that may be useful in guiding the analysis:

- a. What is the level of development of the sector to which the company belongs?**
- b. How important is it for the economy of the country or region?**
- c. Who are the main actors in the sector? Is the company one of them?**
- d. How is the company positioned with respect to these key players?**
- e. What are the expected production volumes for this type of industry?**
- f. Are there any restrictions on the product or service offered? Any benefits?**

3

Diagnosis

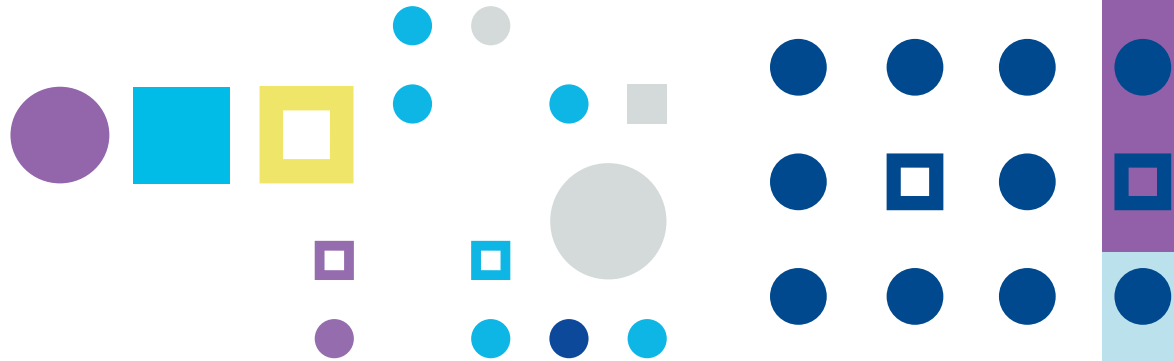
The main purpose of the diagnosis is to determine the general situation of the company in order to identify opportunities for improvement. For this, it is necessary to cross-check the information gathered previously with what was actually observed on site.

The facilitator must understand the functioning of the organization as a whole because, if the starting point is an erroneous analysis, all subsequent work will inexorably fail.

During this stage, the company usually inquires about issues such as: strategic management, production, quality, human resources, marketing, economics and finance, innovation, sourcing, sustainability and internal communication, among others. Aspects related to order and cleanliness, safety and hygiene are also observed on site.

The possible opportunities for improvement detected should be studied in depth with as much information as possible, in order to confirm or modify the previous hypotheses based on the information provided by the company prior to the diagnosis and, in turn, to establish realistic improvement objectives.





Although the improvement processes have a clearly defined sequence of activities, the facilitator must be able to guide the counterpart so that he/she is not overwhelmed by the anxiety to carry them out. It is also desirable to be able to channel their demands and guide them to correctly identify the causes of the problems and their possible solutions. It is common that the company, lacking methodological knowledge, confuses causes with solutions, and that the answers are based on the personal experience and preconceptions of its members, which may affect objectivity. In this instance, it is important that the facilitator keeps the focus on identifying opportunities for improvement and not causes or possible solutions.

Diagnosis is a process that must be correctly programmed. In general, it comprises two instances, one of interviews (which may be face-to-face or virtual) with different company representatives, and another of visits to the plant or to the corresponding sites.

Although the duration of the diagnosis depends on the characteristics and complexity of the company, it is usually carried out in two days of approximately 4 hours each. During the first day, it is advisable to gather as much information as possible and to visit the plant. Once the facilitator analyzes the information gathered in the first meeting, the second meeting is scheduled, which is usually held a few days later and is used to request missing data, evacuate any doubts that may have arisen and validate information.

Diagnosis Interviews

The facilitator should arrive at the diagnosis interviews knowing beforehand the basic aspects of the company and having duly analyzed the information gathered previously, so that he/she can validate it and define what additional information should be requested.

In interviews it is possible that the information provided may be subjective, depending on who the interlocutor is, so it is very important to ask for specific data so as not to run the risk of making an analysis based on personal perceptions. The facilitator must be impartial and base his/her diagnoses and recommendations on data and not on opinions. The ability to request information and guide its procurement without generating an extra workload for the company is highly valued. In order to generate trust from the counterparty, it should be made clear why the request is being made and what results are expected from the information provided. Collecting it may take time, but it is an action that should not be overlooked, as it will significantly affect the subsequent stages of the technical assistance process.

During the interview with senior management, it is useful to find out which projects the company is involved in because the development of technical assistance requires dedication of time that may not be met if the company is involved in multiple initiatives. In addition, the seasonality of the business (high or low sales seasons) may also influence the company's time availability, which reinforces the importance of highlighting this aspect.

On the other hand, it may happen that the company is developing a project whose interests are aligned with and/or converge with and/or complement the objectives defined by the facilitator. In this case, it is important to achieve a good articulation between them, in order to make the process more efficient for all parties. For example, if a company is undergoing an ISO 9001 certification process and the improvement project will focus on quality aspects, it would be logical to use the company's existing records instead of creating new ones; conversely, if the company does not have records and it is necessary to create them, it would be expected to do so within the framework of the quality management system that is being implemented.

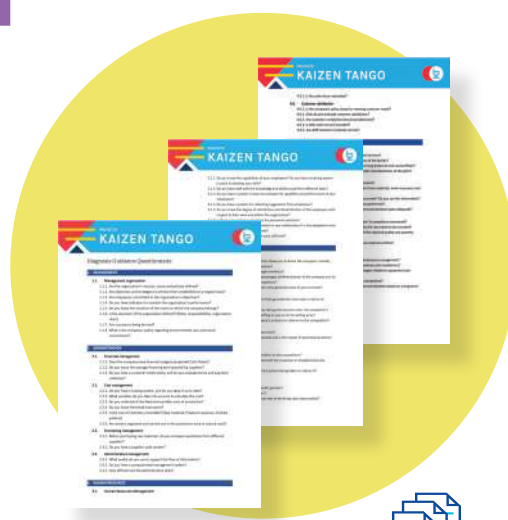
If different teams are working on each of the initiatives in which the company participates, it is essential to generate effective communication channels that allow the exchange and dissemination of information, as well as the formation of multidisciplinary groups.

Another important aspect to take into account during the interviews is the language used by the interlocutor, which will provide an insight into the people and their capabilities. It is important that the facilitator adapts the verbal language depending on who the interlocutor is.

The nonverbal language of the interviewee also usually provides qualitative information to be taken into account. Knowing how to read gestures, postures and facial expressions is a practice that the facilitator must acquire in order to be able to interpret, for example, situations of discomfort on the part of the interlocutor and, in turn, guide the interview to be effective.

It is advisable to conduct interviews with managers at different hierarchical levels and from different areas, which will improve the quality of the information gathered and allow different perspectives on the same situation to be obtained, thus enriching the diagnosis.





*A questionnaire that can serve as a guide for conducting diagnostic interviews is provided in **Annex 2**. It is advisable that the interviews be conducted in an unstructured manner to ensure a pleasant atmosphere and to achieve greater openness on the part of the interviewee.*



Visit Page 64 (**Annex 2**)

Economic and Financial Aspects



-  *The economic-financial analysis of the company is important to determine its status based on objective measurements of key indicators and the congruence in the evolution of the financial statements.*
-  *A financial diagnosis will allow the detection of possible weaknesses in the company, as well as the analysis of its activity and its capacity to generate profits (profitability), its financial equilibrium, payment satisfaction, liquidity and solvency.*
-  *Some of the documents that may be requested for this purpose are: balance sheets, income statements, accounting audits. It is essential that they are based on reliable data to ensure that they represent the real situation of the company, otherwise, it will be convenient to ask the employer for real information to carry out the analysis.*
-  *Knowledge of the company's cost structure will make it possible to identify losses and direct improvement actions to achieve a significant impact on the company's profitability.*

Diagnosis Visit



The plant visit is of great importance since it allows direct observation of the process, the materials and their mode of transport, the existence of inventory between workstations, aspects related to personal safety, order and cleanliness conditions and the environment in general, among other factors.

During the tour of the plant, it is important to understand the different stages that make up the process being analyzed, for which it is necessary to collect and document as much information as possible. It is convenient to make the route from the beginning, in the direction of the production flow.

It is advisable to make a flowchart based on what was surveyed in situ, even if there is a floor plan previously provided by the company, since there are often discrepancies between what is documented and what is observed in practice. In addition, drawing a route diagram will allow to understand the flow of materials, products, information and people along the production process and to make a preliminary evaluation of the plant layout.

Records and information on the process are often scarce in most SMEs. For this reason, visits are essential to try to fill these information gaps.

Although it is difficult to have the time and information necessary to carry it out

during the diagnosis visit, it is also possible to start drawing a value stream map (VSM) to understand, in addition to the flow of materials in the company's value chain (from the supplier to delivery to the customer), the flow of information and the points that can be improved.

In the case of service companies, there are other tools such as Makigami² that allow the analysis of flows in parts of the process and/or specific areas. In conjunction with the organization's improvement team, the flow of information, execution times, who is responsible and what evidence remains of each of these stages can be reviewed in greater detail.

Regardless of the tool to be used, the identification of processes, inputs, outputs and internal flows is essential to objectively visualize the organization and business dynamics, detecting those errors and inefficiencies that prevent the achievement of the expected results.

During the visit, it is also important that the facilitator begins to get involved in the organizational culture of the company, that is, those norms and values by which it is governed. This will allow you to understand how the company relates to its workers, the forms of communication and the work environment, among other aspects. In addition, it will help you to know how the company behaves with respect to the external environment (corporate image, corporate social responsibility, social commitment, etc.).



(2) Like VSM, Makigami is a process mapping and improvement tool. The advantage of Makigami over VSM is that it allows you to visualize the value stream of any process, separated by department or function.



The diagnosis visit is also a good opportunity to generate informal dialogues with people of different ranks in the organization. Their input is often of great value in identifying opportunities for improvement.

The previous survey of current legislation is useful at this stage to identify irregular situations during the diagnosis visit. It is suggested to previously review the legislation that regulates the specific sector to which the company to be intervened belongs and the labor regulations in its region. For example, to corroborate compliance with health and safety legislation, the use of personal protective equipment by personnel, the delimitation of traffic routes, the presence of

fire extinguishers, among other aspects, can be verified during the diagnosis. For example, in the case of food companies, it is important to verify compliance with good manufacturing practices and cleaning and sanitation procedures, and to identify those factors that jeopardize the safety of the product.

The diagnosis visit is also a good opportunity to generate informal dialogues with people of different levels of the organization. Their input is often of great value in identifying opportunities for improvement.

Frequently, at the end of the diagnosis visit, senior management expects a preliminary return of the improvement opportunities detected. In this instance, the facilitator must be careful not to make hasty recommendations based on what has been observed, without conducting an objective analysis of the information; on the other hand, it is desirable to highlight the company's strengths and their importance for the implementation of improvements.





Diagnosis Report

Once the interviews and visits have been completed, a diagnostic report must be prepared, in which the analysis of all the information gathered and the opportunities for improvement detected are presented. At this stage it is important not to anticipate possible solutions.

Annex 3 presents a model that can be used to prepare a diagnosis report.



Visit Page 67 (**Annex 3**)



In addition, a presentation summarizing the most important aspects of the report can be made in order to present the results of the diagnosis to the company and, in this way, encourage dialogue and share information with its members.



During the diagnostic stage, the facilitator must identify the company's current stage in the implementation of improvement processes, as this will condition the selection of future work topics.

In order to undertake improvement projects, it is essential that the company counts on trained personnel, basic conditions of order and cleanliness, records and indicators, and standardized processes. If any of these conditions are not met, the improvement project is likely to fail or take longer than expected; for example, if the company does not have information on its processes, the facilitator will have to invest technical assistance time to collect it. Likewise, it would be impossible to begin to propose an improvement in a process that is not standardized, or which involves personnel who do not have the necessary basic training.



As a reference, companies can be categorized according to 4 levels:

Level 1:

A company that does not have the basic conditions to undertake continuous improvement projects. Technical assistance should focus on training personnel in basic topics (5S and visual control, standardization, production losses) and on the generation of records and indicators, standardization of processes, and improvement of order and cleanliness conditions.

Level 2:

A company that has never undertaken improvement projects, but is in a position to do so. Technical assistance should focus on training personnel in continuous improvement (kaizen, 8 steps to problem solving, basic quality tools) and on the implementation of a pilot project to solve a problem through the continuous improvement cycle.

Level 3:

A company that already has experience in specific improvement projects and can extend them to other areas. Technical assistance should focus on training personnel in advanced topics of continuous improvement (advanced quality tools, statistical process control, A3 methodology, value stream mapping) and on the deployment of the acquired experience to other sectors of the company.

Level 4:

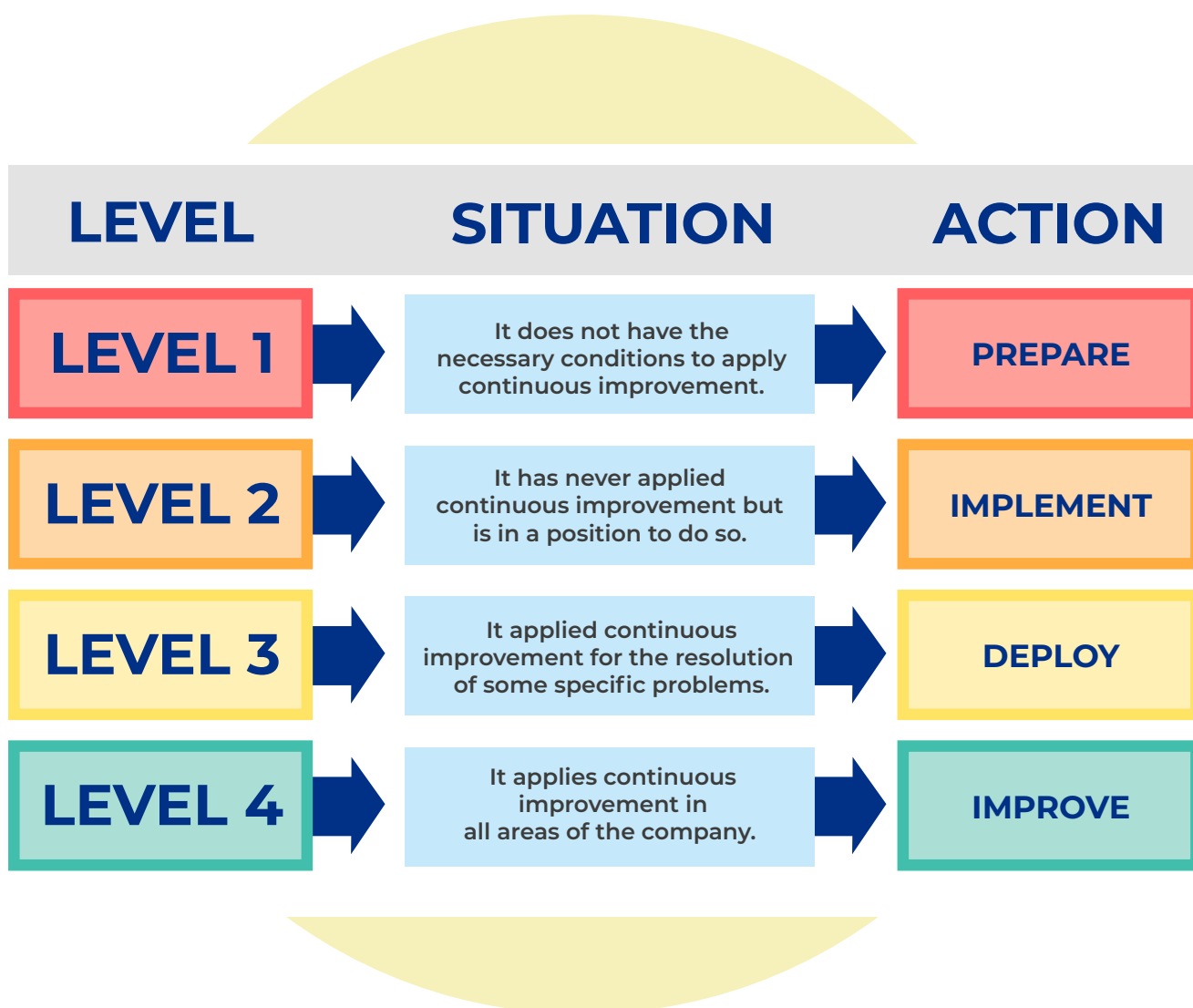
A company with a continuous improvement program in place. Assistance should focus on improving the existing system and on addressing more complex and impactful issues that represent a greater challenge for both the facilitator and the company.



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This categorization is not exhaustive, and it is possible that a company may find itself in an intermediate situation or that it does not exactly fit the descriptions given. Therefore, the facilitator's criteria is fundamental to establish a work proposal that can effectively respond to the organization's needs.



4

Work Proposal



When presenting the results of the diagnosis, the facilitator should accompany them with a proposal involving the recommended work topics and the proposed plan for addressing them.

The work proposal should provide the company with information on how the technical assistance will be developed. It should include the total duration of the project, the stages into which the work will be organized, the time to be allocated to each stage, the resources required, and the results or milestones expected to be achieved in each of the planned stages.

A work proposal must have, at a minimum, the following information:

- ✓ Addressee.
- ✓ Proposed work topics.
- ✓ Responsibilities of each of the parties (company and facilitator).
- ✓ Total duration of technical assistance.
- ✓ Number of visits and workload.
- ✓ Frequency of visits.
- ✓ Expected results.
- ✓ Budget (if applicable).



Work topics

There are two points to keep in mind when presenting the proposed work topics.

The first point refers to the fact that they should be expressed in a clear and simple manner, seeking to promote people's motivation and understanding of the work goals, clearly defining which sectors and processes are affected, and quantifying the initial situation as determined in the previous stage (baseline). It is recommended that they be expressed in a way that allows easy understanding of the situation to be solved, for example: reduction of defects, delivery times, costs, improvement of plant distribution. Avoid describing a work item as an action to be implemented, such as implementing the 5S tool, performing a method and time analysis.

The second point is how to prioritize them in order to subsequently guide their execution. **The most common tool for this is the weighting matrix or table (see example in Annex 4)**, where the topics are evaluated based on established criteria and, subsequently, a ranking is made according to the score obtained. Scores can be defined together with company representatives prior to the submission of the work proposal, so that they can understand the opportunities for improvement detected, begin to generate consensus and ensure greater commitment. This exercise enables an orderly reflection on which of the proposed topics are considered a priority, either because it solves an urgent issue or because it solves an important chronic problem.



PROYECTOS KAIZEN TANGO

Weighting Matrix of Work Topics

		LOWER VALUE (e.g. 0)	HIGHER VALUE (e.g. 5)	
Relevance (Importance)	Expected impact	Low impact	High impact	How relevant to the organization (as a whole) is the issue?
Authority	Complexity	Little authority	High authority	How much impact is estimated to reach if the solution were to be obtained?
		Very complex	Low complexity	How much authority does the management team have in the development and follow-up of the actions that the project requires?
				How complex is your approach anticipated to be?

USE:

1. Define the criteria (score is defined).
2. Complete the possible topics in the worksheet.
3. Complete the matrix with the expected values.
4. For the total results for each topic.
5. If the criteria were correctly defined and the selection was done in a non-contradictory manner, the higher priority topic should have a higher score. If a criterion is calculated more important than another, a weighting coefficient is assigned.

ALTERNATIVE TOPICS <small>Propose three to five topics to be evaluated</small>		CRITERIOS				TOTAL
		Relevance	Expected impact	Authority	Complexity	
1	Topic 1					0
2	Topic 2					0
3	Topic 3					0
4	Topic 4					0
5	Topic 5					0
6	Topic 6					0
7	Topic 7					0
8	Topic 8					0

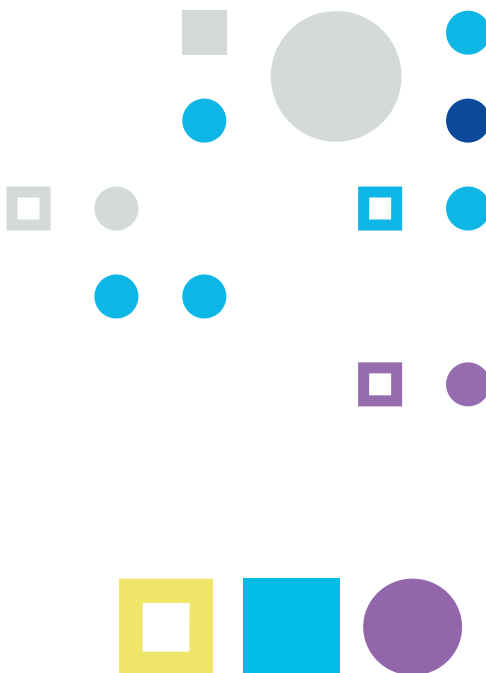


Visit Page 71 (Annex 4)

Although the strategies for defining work topics are varied, it is advisable to define a relatively simple resolution topic to begin the assistance. This will make it possible to show concrete results in the short term and validate the effectiveness of the methodology, so that the company's personnel will gain confidence in the improvement processes and be increasingly prepared and motivated to tackle more complex issues.

It is very important that the work topics be agreed with the company and, in general, should be aimed at:

- Achieving positive results.
- Representing value for the company; justifying the time and effort invested.
- Solving important problems for the company, in a sustainable manner.
- Improving the environment and working conditions of people.
- Simplifying tasks.
- Improving efficiency and productivity.



Total duration of technical assistance

As mentioned above, it is essential to define the duration of the intervention in the company. In the case of individual technical assistance, where the times are defined between the facilitator and the company, the choice of topics is more flexible since the work period is established according to the topics. However, if the technical assistance is carried out within the framework of a project with a pre-established duration, it will be necessary to consider time as a determining variable in the choice of topics, in order to achieve the completion of the proposed improvement and to leave the problem-solving capacity installed in the company.

The intervention time in a company depends on many factors, among which we can mention:

- The number and complexity of the issues to be addressed.
- The frequency of visits by the facilitator.
- The availability of time on the part of the organization's interlocutors.
- The physical distance between the facilitator and the organization.

Based on these factors, each technical assistance will present particularities that will condition the number and duration of visits and the total time of the project. As a reference, an average technical assistance project involves biweekly visits of 4 hours each and a total execution period of 8 months to address a maximum of three work topics.

*A model for the preparation of a work proposal is presented in **Annex 5**.*



Visit Page 72 (**Annex 5**)



Financing of technical assistance

Since not all companies are in a position to afford the cost of a technical assistance project when it is charged for, it is possible to accompany the work proposal with alternatives for its financing.

This is advisable when the facilitator identifies companies that are motivated to implement improvement plans, but financially unable to afford the costs. In the case of companies that also play a strategic role within a value chain, the economic obstacle would have a negative impact not only on the company

itself, but also on the entire chain, possibly affecting suppliers and customers.

For this reason, it is important that the facilitator knows the Science, Technology and Innovation organizations in the region and the different support programs that are in place both nationally and internationally to finance or subsidize all or part of the technical assistance projects for companies.



5 Formation of the Improvement Team

Once the company accepts the work proposal, the next step is to form the improvement team.

According to Héctor Formento³ *“For a continuous improvement team to be defined as such it is necessary that, in addition to a common objective, people feel that their participation makes sense, that human and material resources are available, that the expected result is desirable and convenient for the organization and for themselves, that they have support from their bosses and all the necessary information, that their participation will be valued; in short, they must be motivated to be able to carry out this joint task that will demand nothing more and nothing less than bringing their experience and creativity into play to achieve a given result.”*

To build a team with these characteristics, it is essential to achieve synergy between people in order to enhance their individual capabilities and obtain better results.

When introducing changes in the company, it is advisable to include in the discussion all the people who will be affected by them, in order to reduce the resistance that may be generated. In addition, team members are more likely to accept and implement an idea that has come from themselves and has been agreed upon by all.


It is advisable to convene people from different sectors to achieve a multidisciplinary team, which will provide a diversity of views on the improvement to be made and, therefore, increase the likelihood of success.

It is suggested that the team have a limited number of participants, ideally between 4 and 6 people.

Communication and interpersonal relationships are determining factors in fostering the exchange of opinions and ideas within the team. The personality of the members and their attitude towards the improvement process are essential aspects to consider and, although the facilitator



(3) 3 Formento, Héctor R., (2015). *El proceso de mejora continua: claves para el desarrollo exitoso de las organizaciones*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones UNGS.



can exercise very little maneuverability in this regard, it is advisable to seek a balance within the team.

By creating a space in which the mission and goals of each team member are clear and in which the ideas and contributions of everyone are valued, a participative and motivating climate will be achieved. Otherwise, the group will gradually dissolve, there will be increasing absenteeism at meetings, and the sense of belonging and commitment will gradually disappear.

To improve the team's performance, it is suggested to define roles among its members, which will guarantee that the proposed activities are carried out in a timely manner. At least three roles can be established: leader, coordinator and team member.



Leader

The leader's function is to support the process of improvement or change in the company. This is the person responsible for complying with the methodology and achieving results, following up on the progress of the improvement plan and ensuring compliance with each activity described therein. Their intervention does not imply a direct commitment to the particular problem, but a responsibility for the correct functioning of the improvement process. In addition, he/she is the main channel of communication between the improvement team and the company's management and is responsible for reporting progress to them.

He/she must ensure that team meetings are held, ensuring that they are pleasant and time-limited, that participation among all team members is balanced and that the appropriate improvement tools are used for each problem. In addition, he/she must ensure compliance with the established roles and that each member has the knowledge and competencies necessary in a change process; if not, he/she must plan and recommend training that is aligned with the achievement of the proposed objectives. He/she must have experience in improvement processes, which takes time and dedication.

His/her involvement goes beyond the team meetings, as he/she should interact with all team members, outside that environment, to ensure compliance with the commitments made and to understand what skills and/or knowledge may be lacking within the team. He/she can deliver periodic training (focused, short duration), provide support material and improvement tools, and support in their use.

During some technical assistance processes, it is common for the facilitator to initially assume this role. However, it is advisable to identify people within the company who can perform it and collaborate in its training, gradually delegating tasks and responsibilities. The fact of training our own leaders in the company will help the methodological transfer and will allow to leave an installed capacity within the company.

Coordinator

The coordinator's role is to organize the improvement team meetings and generate its agenda. His/her job involves ensuring that all team members are able to attend meetings, defining the agenda, drafting meeting minutes, filing and organizing information, among other tasks. He/she can also assist the leader to manage the participation of the company's management in team meetings

when necessary, to request permission and place to hold the meetings and/or to send the minutes to the supervising person and middle management. It is recommended that the person filling this role be chosen by the improvement team.

Team Members

The role of the improvement team members is to carry out the actions on a day-to-day basis. It is important for the leader to ensure that he/she is interested in the results to be obtained from the resolution of the improvement opportunities and

that the benefits resulting from the team's actions are relevant to his/her work. This is part of the motivation needed to ensure their participation.





The company's management and middle management must follow up on the projects that the teams promote, whatever their nature. They are responsible for the results and for including improvement activities within the company's plans. The facilitator must therefore ensure that this happens.

It is important to take into account the fact that in improvement teams people tend to give more importance and space for participation to those in leadership positions. This could override the opinion of others, or turn meetings into dialogues among a few. The facilitator must be able to provide each team member with theoretical and practical support to do so.

The facilitator does not replace any of the above-mentioned roles, but helps to develop them.

Many SMEs have a small organizational structure that makes it difficult to form teams and define roles according to the above-mentioned criteria. When this happens, a smaller improvement team can be formed (where, in some cases, the company's management can participate) and roles and responsibilities can be assigned to each member in order to guarantee the correct development of the improvement process. In these cases, time availability is often a critical issue given that multiple activities fall under the responsibility of a few people, so this factor must be taken into account when planning time and evaluating the company's commitment.

By way of summary, some guidelines for the formation of improvement teams are:

- 1) Common objective.**
- 2) Participation of people from different sectors.**
- 3) Human capital and available materials.**
- 4) Fluid communication and respectful interpersonal relations.**
- 5) Awareness of the expected result.**
- 6) Support from the people who lead the organization.**
- 7) Collaboration of the facilitator for the correct operation.**

6 **Determination of the Current Situation**

Understanding the current or initial situation with regard to the work topics agreed with the company is a fundamental process for defining the objectives of the intervention.

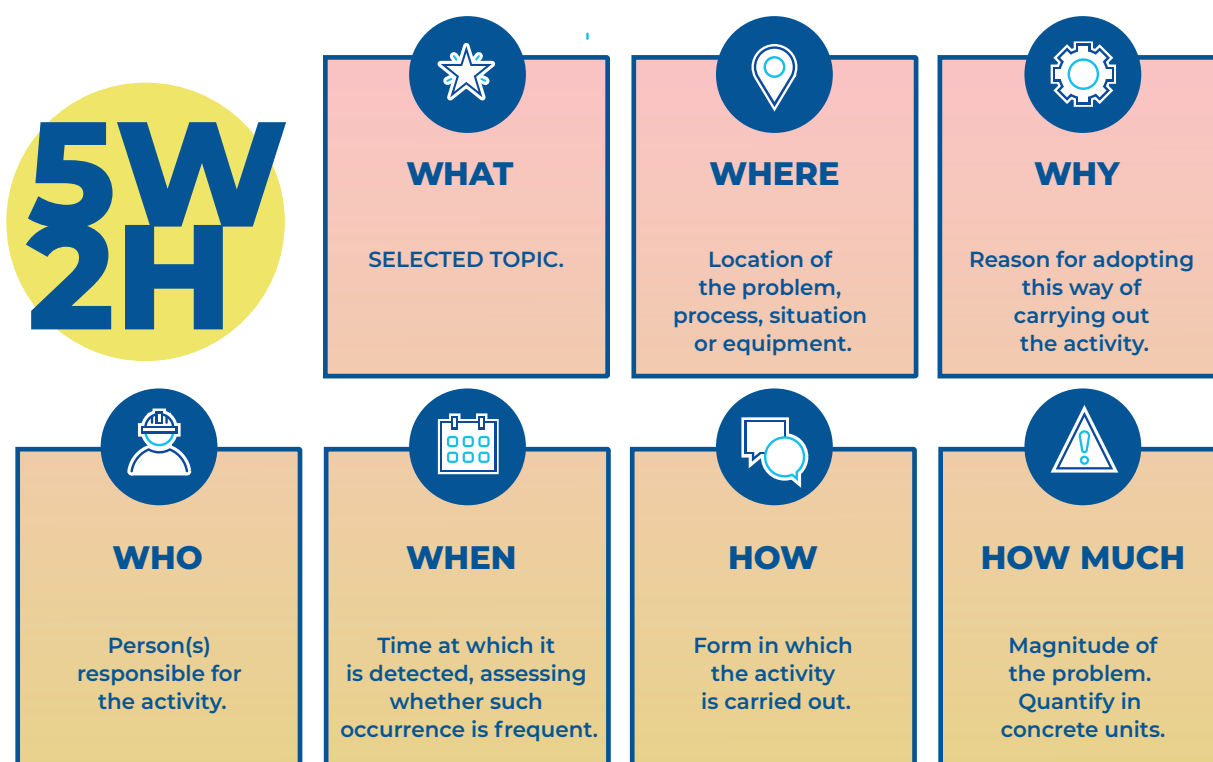
At this stage, technical assistance to the company has already begun, and the diagnosis is being further developed.



□ To determine the current situation correctly, the following should be taken into consideration:

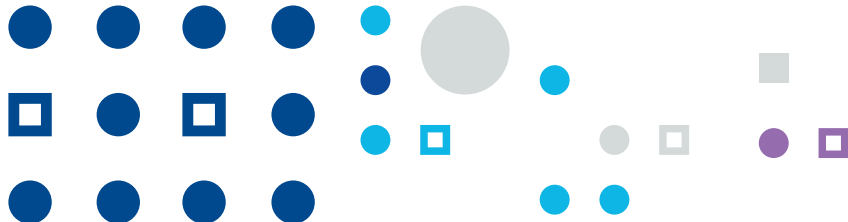
- ✓ The description of the current or initial situation must be based on measurable, observable and verifiable facts, transcending any opinions, ideas or preconceptions that may exist in the company.
- ✓ Data collection, measurement monitoring and characterization of the current situation are essential. To do this, it is necessary to walk the plant floor in person to understand the reality of the process (in Japanese Genchi Gembutsu).
- ✓ Throughout the process, it is essential to involve the people responsible for the information and the company's improvement team, as well as to obtain the necessary information before each visit, ensuring its validation and that of its sources.

For data collection, it is advisable to express the information related to the current situation in the **5W and 2H** format.



Using this technique is effective in ensuring that all team members have the same information, and that they understand it correctly.

In the event that the company does not have sufficient measurements or data to characterize the initial situation, data generation should be incorporated as part of the technical assistance process. It should convey the importance and necessity of measurements and, together with the improvement team, determine the method and minimum period of data collection that will allow representative values to be obtained.



At this stage, measurement methods and formats should be transferred to the company to facilitate the recording task, ensuring that the procedures and support materials are as clear and simple as possible. It is also advisable to incorporate photographic and/or video recordings, together with testimonies, as a descriptive complement to the information collected and quantified.

Even if the company has the data and historical information, it is always advisable to verify and validate the measurement and collection methods used.

When characterizing the initial situation and identifying problems to be solved, it is recommended to be descriptive and not to include causes or solutions that may bias the subsequent analysis. It is fundamental to define an indicator that allows knowing the real situation and the desired situation in quantitative terms to be able to evaluate the improvement based on an objective criteria. A well-known phrase attributed to William Thomson Kelvin (Lord Kelvin), British physicist and mathematician (1824 – 1907) reads: *“What is not defined, cannot be measured. What is not measured cannot be improved. What is not improved is always degraded”*.

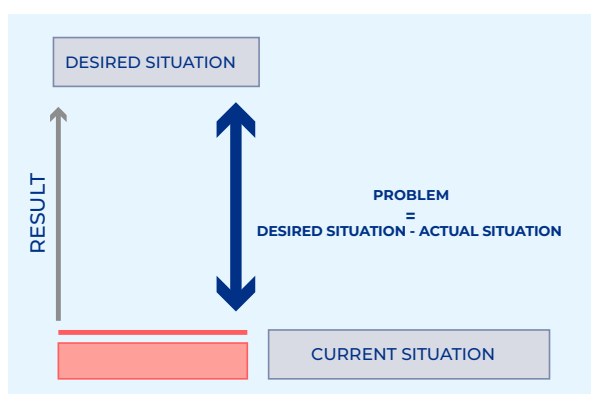
Both improvement and problem solving are directly linked to the concept of standardization, so that **it is not possible to improve if there is no defined standard**. The process must be stabilized before improvements are made to it since, if it continually fluctuates, any changes implemented will be just another variation of the method.

The standard represents the best-known practice for carrying out a process at a given point in time, i.e., it represents the baseline for future improvements.

In the event that the company does not have defined standards, the facilitator should start by generating them before proposing any improvement. This is the case of the Level 1 companies described in point 3. For this reason, during the diagnostic stage, it is important for the facilitator to find out whether or not the company has defined standards in order to establish a course of action in accordance with the situation in which it finds itself.

Problem Identification

Understanding the current situation is a process whose result can make it possible to show the difference between the current situation and a desired situation. This is what Formento (2015) defines as a problem⁴.



(4) 4 As stated by Héctor Formento in his book *“El proceso de Mejora Continua: claves para el desarrollo exitoso de las organizaciones”* (The Continuous Improvement Process: keys for the successful development of organizations) (2015), a problem is “A difference between two situations that can be concretely identified: one of them is the current situation and the other is the desired situation. In other words, the problem is not necessarily something that does not work or that works wrong”.

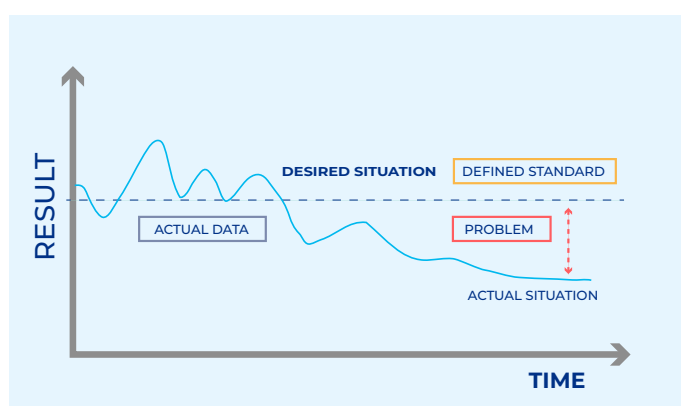




If the company has a defined standard, the facilitator may encounter two scenarios when comparing it with the current situation:

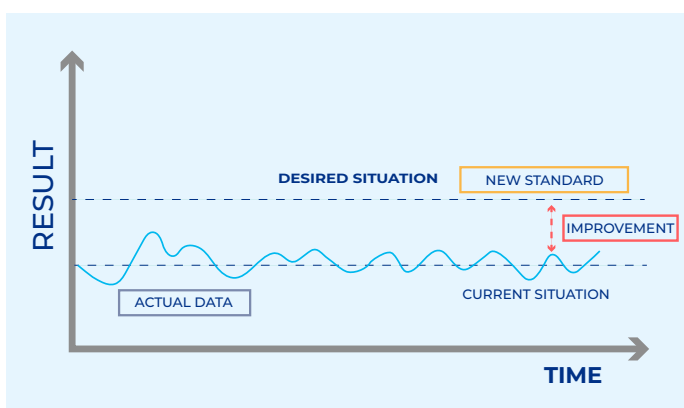
1. The defined standard is not met

In this case, there are conditions that cause the performance to be below standard and, therefore, the objective of technical assistance should focus on eliminating this difference based on problem-solving methodologies.



2. The defined standard is met

Only when the current performance is in line with the defined standard, it is possible to consider improving it. Improvement implies advancing from one standard to a better standard without going backwards, so in this case, the resolution of the problem (i.e., the difference between the current standard and the desired standard) implies an improvement.

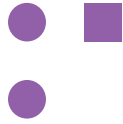


Adequate description of the starting point is essential to successfully address the implementation of improvements. Once the data survey on the current situation has been completed, it is suggested to present it in a complete and clear way through graphs and tables. The conclusions should be socialized with the entire team involved in the implementation of improvements for the selected topic.

To sum up, some guidelines to be taken into account for the definition of the current situation are as follows:

- **Involve all participants.**
- **Collect data and convert it into information.**
- **Show objective evidence based on real facts and/or data.**
- **Being objective with a critical and systemic vision.**
- **Define the problem in quantitative terms.**



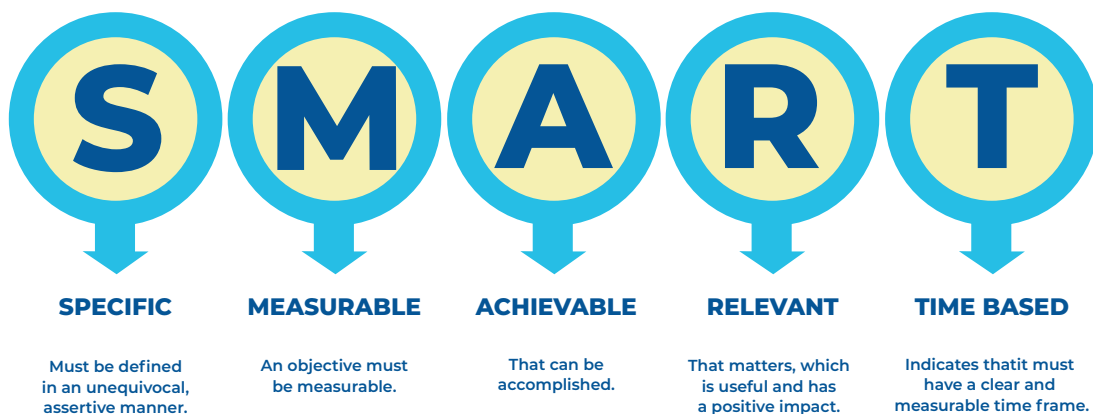


7 Objectives

Based on the previously defined problem, an objective must be defined for each work topic. This objective implies an end to be achieved and must be aligned with the company's policies and strategies.

It is important not to confuse the objective with the improvement tool to be applied (e.g., "the objective of the technical assistance is to implement the 5S tool in the plant") and to avoid setting ambiguous objectives (e.g., "to improve the company's productivity").

An objective must be: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART rule).



Example of a SMART objective:

"Increase partition wall painting from 2 units per day to 4 units per day by 11/30/2019."

- **Specific:** painting of partition walls.
- **Measurable:** 2 units per day to 4 units per day.
- **Achievable and relevant:** the facilitator and the improvement team have previous problem-solving experience. Quality improvement is a strategic issue for the company and the painting of partition walls is currently the biggest problem.
- **Deadline:** before 11/30/2019.

Examples of correctly and incorrectly defined objectives:

- *Reduce the delivery deadline of 15 days before 09/01.*
- *Lower loom 11 stops by 25% by 8/30.*
- *Reduce by 75% the search times of the tools commonly used in the polished post in 3 months.*



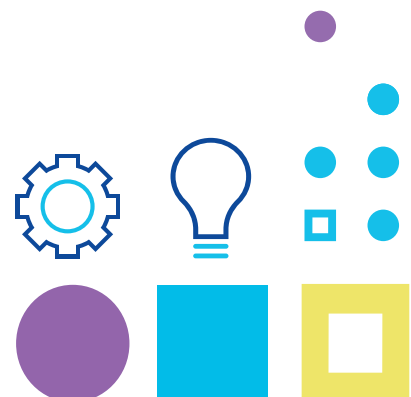
- *Improve plant layout.*
- *Reduce the percentage of defective products.*
- *Implement a maintenance plan.*



Although the objective is expected to be met within an established period of time, it is recommended that the facilitator, together with the improvement team, monitor the value of the indicator defined in intermediate periods in order to be able to track its evolution. If it is detected that the objective was poorly set, either because it exceeds the limits of the process or because it is not ambitious enough, it can be reconsidered or adjusted as long as there is a logical basis for doing so. The improvement team can also redefine the objective when it identifies that more can be done, so it can rethink it, looking for a more ambitious one.

It is also advisable to consider the following criteria when defining an objective:

- ✓ **Benchmarking against local or global best practices of the process that will be impacted by the improvement work.**
- ✓ **Reference to the lowest value of the loss identified historically, i.e., return to a previous more beneficial condition.**
- ✓ **Reference to the company's global objectives.**



Action Plan

The action plan sets forth, in a disaggregated manner, the activities necessary to achieve the objective set forth in each topic defined in the work proposal.

Before formulating the action plan, the facilitator should guide the improvement team in the characterization of each problem to be solved and in the analysis of the causes that generate them.

Characterization aims at analyzing and understanding the problem in as much detail as possible based on real data. Questions allowing the identification of the characteristics of the problem must be answered. It is advisable to stratify the information in order to better focus the analysis; for example, if you want to reduce the number of defects occurring during the process, it would be useful to ask, for example: What is the type of defect that occurs the most?; In which workstation or machine does it occur? In which shift does it occur?

For the characterization of the problem, different tools can be used, such as: Histograms, Pareto Analysis, Scatter charts, among others.

Next, the team must detect the root cause of each problem, for which different tools can be used, such as brainstorming, the Cause-and-Effect Diagram (also known as Fishbone or Ishikawa Diagram), the 5 Whys technique, the Affinity Diagram, among others.

At this point we seek to identify causes and not actions.

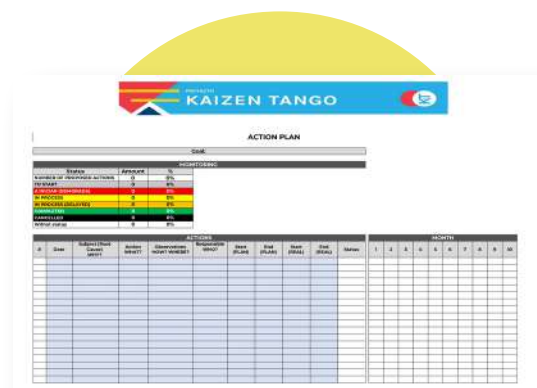
Once the problem has been characterized and the root cause identified, the team is in a position to plan the necessary actions to solve each problem within the previously stipulated timeframe. In a well-defined action plan, tasks have a duration that is commensurate with the total time available.

Some important points to keep in mind when developing an action plan are:

- The activities should be expressed in a synthetic and clear manner, so that they are easily identifiable.
- Activities must have a specific beginning and end with stipulated dates.
- All team members must be assigned at least one activity. There can be no team members without assigned tasks, nor tasks that do not have a responsible person. This way, ownership and commitment are generated, since all the people are responsible for the fulfillment of the plan in due time and form, and this is only possible if each one of them does his or her part.
- All activities detailed in the action plan must be aimed at achieving the proposed objective.
- It is important to consider the resources needed to carry out the plan.
- It is advisable to use a Gantt chart to visually observe the activities and their sequence of implementation.

A model for the development of action plans is presented in Annex 6.

It is recommended that the facilitator performs a periodic review of what was planned, identifying deviations and proposing actions to remedy them, in order to prevent the entire project from being delayed. All activities aimed at correcting delays should be recorded. It is also recommended that possible contingencies be evaluated and possible actions be defined in advance. Team meetings are a good time for action plan reviews.



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Example of an action plan: Gantt Chart

STEP	MAIN PERSON	MONTHS				
		JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
Staff training	Pablo	■■■■■				
3S implementation	Lucía		■■■■■			
Maintenance plan formulation	Rodrigo		■■■■■			
Elaboration of instructions	Mario			■■■■■		
Implementation of the maintenance plan	Miguel			■■■■■		
Progress control	Andrea				■■■■■	
Standardization	Luis					■■■■■

PLAN

ACTION PLAN



An action plan that complies with the aforementioned points will make it possible to efficiently manage the project, monitor its evolution through periodic follow-up and make decisions that will ensure compliance with the objective.

9

Training takes time and effort, and will only pay off if the company makes the investment of resources it demands. The commitment of managers in planning, monitoring and control, as well as the recognition of its importance for the company's growth, will be evidence of the seriousness with which the improvement project is approached.



Preparation

The success of a training depends to a large extent on its preparation. It is recommended that a simple objective be determined for each meeting, incorporating few concepts and knowledge and linking each training to the proposed plan for the technical assistance project, so that it represents a part of the entire project.

The facilitator must take into account who the target audience of the training is, considering the characteristics of the people, their level of education, their relationship with the company, the role they occupy, among other factors. This will allow you to adapt the content and modality in order to deliver the knowledge in a more effective way.

The space where the training activities take place should be separate from the work areas, well-lit, clean, spacious, comfortable, quiet and equipped with the necessary tools (projector, blackboard, tables, specific materials). This will make it easier to avoid interruptions, allowing the team to concentrate and achieve the objectives set for the meeting. If the company or organization does not have this type of space, the facilitator should generate strategies to adapt to each particular situation.





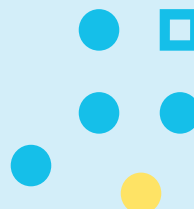
Didactic and practical activities

According to Edgar Dale (5), direct experience (i.e., doing for oneself what one intends to learn) represents the best way to achieve depth in learning. **Therefore, including didactic activities in the training process allows people to take an active role in the training process, inviting them to share their ideas and experiences. It also encourages observation, stimulates creativity, imagination and initiative.**



What is recommended to be included in a teaching activity in the field of business management?

- ✓ Simulation of the real process.
- ✓ Decision making.
- ✓ Implementation of improvements and evaluation of results.
- ✓ Analysis of systems and interrelationships.
- ✓ Sharing results and conclusions.



What are the benefits of using didactic activities?

- ✓ Incorporation of new tools and knowledge.
- ✓ Acquisition of practical experience from simulation in the use of tools.
- ✓ Understanding of the complexity of production and/or management systems.
- ✓ Understanding the benefits of change processes.
- ✓ Approaching the problem from another perspective (creating an environment in which there are no responsibilities, excuses or barriers: development of lateral thinking).

As part of the training, case studies or practical exercises can also be presented with assignments for participants to solve individually or in groups. It is advisable to use cases that are close to the reality of the company where the technical assistance is being provided, and then discuss the different points of view.

The more usable the knowledge that the person acquires during the training is in daily work practice, the more positive its effect will be.

(5) American pedagogue, expert in people's learning, known for the design of the so-called "Cone of Experience".

One model often used in this type of instance is **On the Job Training (OJT)**, which provides practical training and follow-up learning.

SKILL LEVEL

Level 1: Knows it

Level 2: Capable of doing it

Level 3: Capable of doing it with confidence

Level 4: Can teach it

Can teach it

Knows it

Able to do it with confidence

Able to do it

NAME	Skills assessment items				
	Operational skills		Improvement skills		
	Operation	Set Up	5S	7Q	5 Whys?
Andrés Rodríguez					
María Segura					
Martín López					



Support material

In order for the training process to be nourished by diverse and varied materials, the facilitator can provide manuals in electronic or paper format, reading guides or case studies, material to carry out the didactic activities and whatever he/she considers as a complementary support. In addition, it can provide bibliographic references that give people the independence to go deeper and investigate certain topics of their interest. It is often recommended to the management team of companies to set up simple libraries and make them available to all staff.



Training evaluation

Once the training has been delivered, it is necessary to evaluate whether the participants have acquired the theoretical content and skills planned. To do this, it is necessary to compare the initial situation (previously recorded) with the situation after the meetings have been completed.

There are methodologies such as Objectives and Key Results (OKR) that facilitate the monitoring of the objectives set for the development of people.



Teaching is a learned skill. The facilitator must be continuously trained to put into practice the pedagogical resources that each training requires and, although it requires time and effort, it represents a differentiating factor. Some important skills you should develop when conducting trainings are:

- **Technical mastery of the subject.**
- **Classroom and workshop experience.**
- **Fluent communication skills (spoken, gestural, audiovisual).**
- **Planning skills.**
- **Competencies to determine and develop content.**

10 Implementation

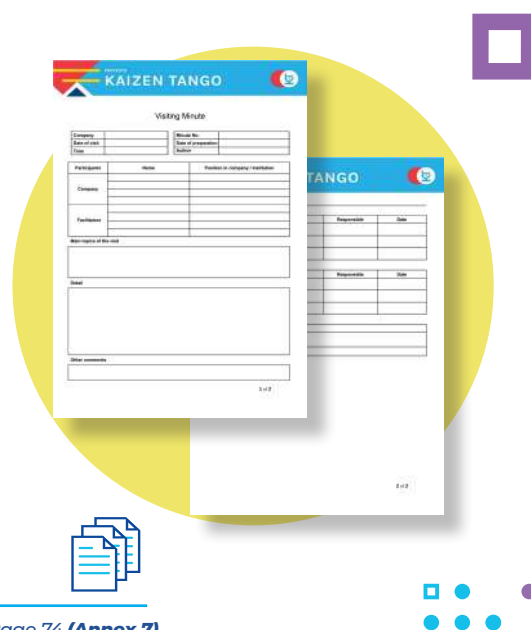
At this point, the actions set forth in the action plan are executed and monitored. This instance highlights the facilitator's leadership and project management skills.

Implementation and follow-up

Before starting the actions, it is recommended that the facilitator, together with the company's management, hold a meeting with the personnel to explain the work to be done, the objectives, the expected benefits and results, the people involved, and all those aspects considered relevant. This will avoid potential misunderstandings and ensure that all personnel are aware of the project.

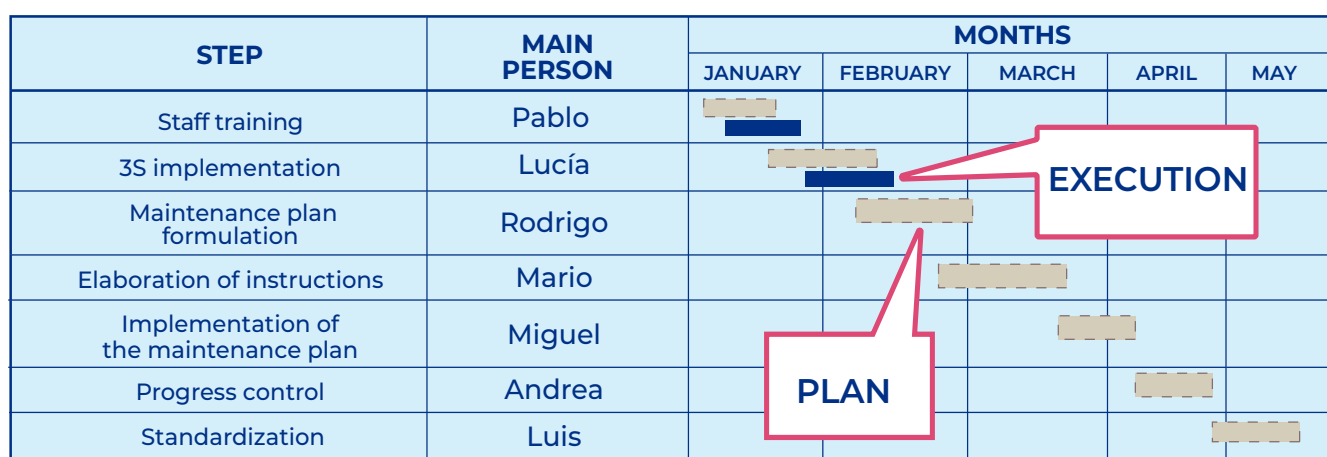
As mentioned in point 4, it is necessary to establish the frequency of visits to the company and the estimated duration of each meeting. It is convenient to establish a routine, defining, for example, which day of the week the visits will be made and at what times, so as to create a habit. It is also recommended that the facilitator send the agenda before each meeting in order to make it as effective as possible.

In order to follow up on the implementation of the actions, at the end of each visit, the commitments and responsibilities of each team member must be clearly defined and stated in order to follow up on the implementation of the actions. These definitions, together with the progress made during the meeting, must be recorded in a minute that is sent to the company no later than the day after the visit. *A sample of the Visiting Minutes is presented in Annex 7.*



Visit Page 74 (Annex 7)

As the actions are executed, it is advisable to record the actual beginning and end dates of each one of them, in order to compare them with those programmed in the action plan and analyze the causes of possible deviations. Therefore, it is important to define a follow-up method that may consist, for example, of adding the actions carried out to the Gantt Chart already mentioned.



As the implementation of the action plan proceeds, the facilitator can propose the use of a bulletin board to share updated progress with all company personnel.

For monitoring purposes, it is also useful to use indicators such as, for example:

- % of actions completed
- % of delayed actions
- % of cancelled actions
- % of actions in progress
- Actual execution time / Planned execution time

This way, it is possible to verify the extent to which the projection made is being met and, based on this, make the necessary adjustments so as not to compromise the achievement of the objective.

When the gap between the projected and the actual situation is large, it is necessary to pause and reflect on the situation. Some possible causes may be:

- Lack of commitment from management
- Lack of time available to perform tasks
- Lack of knowledge on the part of personnel
- Lack of financial resources
- Failures on the part of the facilitator
- Lack of conviction of the improvement team

Tools such as the cause-and-effect diagram or the 5 Whys can also be used to analyze the causes of the mismatch and propose a course of action to reverse it.



Change management

All companies have a structure that directly influences the dynamics of technical assistance. This makes it very important not only to know it but also to take it into account when scheduling the work in order to define with whom to work (which people will need to be involved in the process) and to whom to report the results.

The involvement of the company's management is key to the success of the implementation stage. In this sense, the active participation of management in this process should be encouraged, since failure to attend meetings, read meeting minutes, or allocate the necessary resources would be a symptom of a lack of real commitment on their part. It is necessary for the company's management to monitor progress and difficulties during implementation.

The facilitator will be responsible for getting to know the individual view of the people, understanding their motivations and working to provide support so that the process is beneficial, both personally and as a group. This is why, depending on who the interlocutor is, the strategy to be used to convince, encourage or involve the members of a company may be different. It is very likely that the management team will better understand the benefits of implementing an improvement if they are expressed in economic terms (profit increase, cost reduction), while a middle management will most likely value the improvement in the indicators of their area (for example, in terms of productivity, quality or delivery time) and the operational staff will mainly look for benefits in their daily tasks and in their work environment (doing tasks with less effort, improving safety, working in a more pleasant environment).

If the process of change is good, the results will surely be as well, therefore, it is important to make sure that it is enriching for people. Leading, guiding, accompanying and transmitting knowledge are essential competencies in this instance.

When carrying out actions, the empowerment of workers and their participation in problem solving have a positive influence on motivation and the generation of a sense of belonging.

When improvement processes are proposed, people are expected to adopt different attitudes and behaviors from those they have been applying. Any such change may provoke resistance, especially if it is implied that previous behavior and attitudes were inappropriate or wrong to achieve certain objectives. **Any change can be perceived as a threat or risk to people and resistance is a natural human reaction.**

If, in addition to this, people will encounter adverse situations within the company (bureaucratic procedures, inflexible work practices, bad organizational climate), everything that is proposed will be seen as an obstacle instead of being thought of as a better way of doing things.



In addition to the *7 traditional Mudras* or losses in the Toyota Production System, in the 1960s an eighth loss related to human talent was added, which refers to the waste of the skills and abilities of each person to contribute to the detection and resolution of problems.

During the improvement team meetings, the facilitator should pay special attention to their development (if there is fluid communication, if ideas are expressed openly, if all participants participate and contribute) and keep the focus on the issue to be addressed and/or resolved. He/she must be able to guide the team to achieve the objective and encourage the participation of all team members. In this sense, it is important to create a work environment that favors the exchange of opinions and to strive to improve communication within the team and the company as a whole.

Often, when carrying out a technical assistance project, communication deficiencies within the company arise and become apparent. It may happen that the flow of information is interrupted or does not follow the established path, or that there is no formal channel to transmit the information. The use of bulletin boards, meeting minutes, standardized spreadsheets, charts, reports and even team meetings are some of the elements that the facilitator can use to establish formal channels and generate habits that improve communication within the company.



Recommendations for implementation

Communication

Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and when it needs to be done.

Training and coaching

Train all those who must perform actions that are new or unfamiliar to them.

Commitment

Ensure the commitment of all the people involved, bearing in mind the prior consensus of the actions.

Resource management

Request the necessary resources to advance in the planned actions.

Control

Routinely monitor and verify all planned actions.

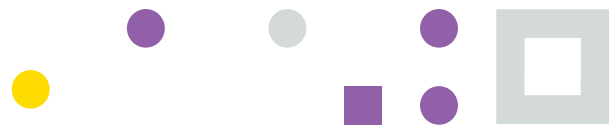
Pilot tests

Perform tests before making process modifications.

Corrective action

Define corrective actions when inconveniences or deviations arise, so as not to stop the process.





11

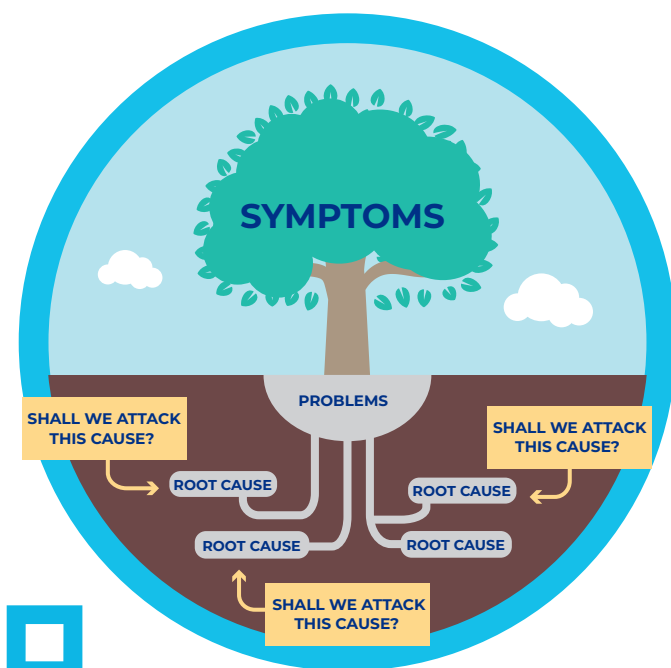
Results Assessment

At the end of the implementation stage, it is necessary to check whether the results were as expected, i.e., whether the objective was achieved. If the objective was met, the improvement must be standardized to ensure that it is sustainable over time. In addition, the new standard must be communicated, and all personnel must be aware of it and trained on it. If, on the other hand, the objective was not achieved, corrective actions must be taken to achieve it, for which it is necessary to restart the improvement cycle.

If new actions or countermeasures were identified and applied during the follow-up and monitoring⁶ of the actions carried out during implementation, they should also be evaluated to determine whether or not they contributed to the achievement of the objective.

A very valuable exercise in this instance is to analyze whether the root causes identified for the different problems had a definitive solution, which will ensure that the problem does not recur.

Do the symptoms disappear?



The work of evaluating the results is simplified if the appropriate indicators were used during the definition of the objectives. In addition, if the monitoring was carried out correctly, the indicators have already been updated with an established periodicity, so that it is possible to show their evolution. Weekly updating of the indicators is recommended, although, if this is not possible, a biweekly or monthly update may be enough.

Indicators inform and motivate those directly and indirectly involved in the improvement, show the evolution over time and become a form of evaluation of results that facilitates decision making, confirming or refuting the effectiveness of the actions implemented.

Measuring results using indicators is not always easy, since improvements are often qualitative or are associated with improvements perceived by company members (work environment, staff motivation, participation and involvement in the improvement process). The facilitator, together with the company's improvement team, should look for tools to evaluate the qualitative results of the technical assistance; some examples are: visual records (before and after photos); testimonials from the improvement team; surveys of the company's perception of the improvements.



(6) "Monitoring is associated more with the activity that serves to check whether the objectives, timetable and resources previously established are being met in the execution of the program. Monitoring would be linked more to repeated observation of a set of variables and/or indicators." Pacheco Troisi, Mariangel, 2016. "Evaluar para aprender: experiencias de evaluación de impacto de intervenciones institucionales."





If staff training activities were conducted during implementation, it is also advisable to quantify their effectiveness. To this end, it is useful to develop an evaluation questionnaire on the key aspects that the personnel are interested in acquiring, and to request that it be answered both before the training begins and at the end of the training. The comparison between the final and initial results of these questionnaires or tests applied, allow quantifying the knowledge acquired during the training (Pacheco, 2016 pp. 138-140).

During the results evaluation stage, it is also important to reflect on the unexpected results and the positive and negative aspects that

occurred during the technical assistance, so as to maintain what was good and try a different approach to what could not be achieved. Lessons learned throughout the process should be taken into account when addressing future improvement projects.

Finally, the facilitator may choose to make a post-technical assistance visit, months later, to evaluate whether the results obtained were sustained over time and whether the work methodology was successfully transferred.

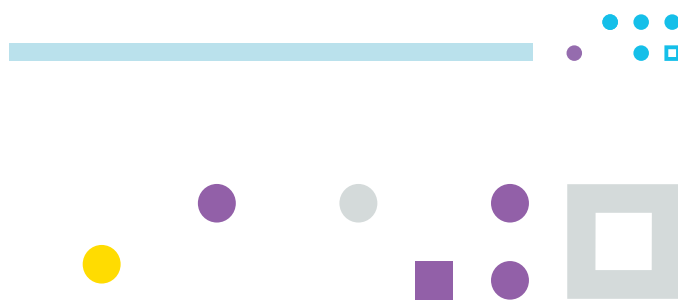
12 Presentation of Results

Once the results evaluation stage is completed, quantitative and qualitative data on the dimension and impact of the actions implemented will be available. Next, the facilitator, together with the improvement team, should define the best way to show the results obtained to the rest of the company and, if appropriate, train personnel on the newly defined standards.

It is important to use a broad approach, to show both quantitative results (generally derived from the central objective set) and qualitative results (the skills learned to work in a team, the practice and training that remain in the company when the work is completed, the experience acquired in improvement projects, among others).

Although in most cases a presentation of results is made to the company's management, this is also an opportunity for the facilitator, together with the improvement team, to communicate to all personnel the activities carried out and the results obtained. This way, greater ownership by the improvement team is achieved and other people are motivated to take the initiative to initiate new projects. The testimony of those who participated in the project is important in order to disseminate and deploy the improvement within the company.

It is important to consider the target audience for the presentation. It is not the same (from the point of view of practical interest) to share the results with the management as it is to share them with the company's personnel, since the motivations and interests are different.



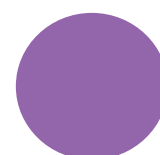
There are different formats, which can be complementary, for the presentation of results. The most commonly used are:

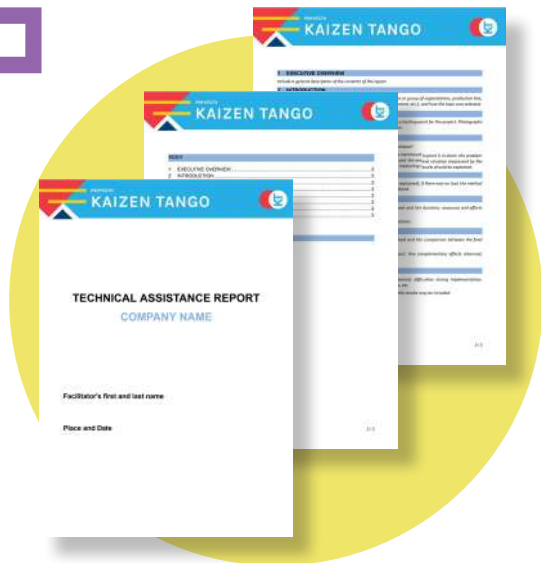
■ **Final Report:** this is a document in which all the activities carried out in each of the stages of the technical assistance are described and the results obtained are detailed. It should explain, as completely as possible, how the improvement process was developed. Generally, the delivery of the final report is included in the work proposal and is addressed to the company's management, so it is important to include technical details and numerical data that demonstrate the improvements obtained. *A format for the preparation of the Final Report is presented in Annex 8.*

■ **Presentation:** this format is used to synthesize the information detailed in the final report and communicate it to an audience. It is recommended that the information be concrete, supported with graphics and photos, and that it be visually attractive. Presentations can be a good resource both in cases where it is necessary to show the results to the company's management, as well as when it is necessary to communicate to the personnel about what was done during the technical assistance.

■ **A3 Report:** is a format that summarizes, in an A3 size sheet, each of the stages involved in the improvement process, based on the PDCA cycle. It summarizes the problem addressed, its analysis, the objective set, the measures implemented and the results obtained. It summarizes in one page and in a concrete way all the work done. Given the limited space on the sheet, the information must be synthetic and legible, focusing on the most important aspects and including graphs and numerical results above text. The A3 Report is very useful for conducting results evaluation meetings and, since it is easy and quick to read, it can also be used as a communication tool for staff and can be published in the workplace where the improvement was implemented. *A format for the A3 Report is presented in Annex 9.*

It is important to be able to identify the most appropriate format to use depending on the circumstances and the interlocutor, in order to achieve effective communication with the counterparty.





Visit Page 76 (Annex 8)



WORK TITLE	
Improvement team members:	
Facilitator:	
Date:	
Opportunities for Improvement	Action and Implementation Plan
Initial situation	
Objectives	Results Assessment
Cause Analysis	Standardization



Visit Page 79 (Annex 9)



13

Final Survey

It is a document that is sent once the technical assistance is completed and consists of a series of questions that aim at knowing the company's perception of the entire improvement process. That is to say, this survey does not aim to survey concrete results but to obtain information on the value that the company perceives in the assistance received.

This is important because, beyond the results presented, it is essential to know the opinion of the improvement team and the company's management on the performance of the facilitator, the quality of the technical assistance received, the administrative management of the process and some relevant data for future processes.

This survey will be the main input to carry out an adequate reflection, both on the points identified as susceptible to improvement, which will allow the optimization of future processes, and on the points of greatest strength, which can be taken as a reference to be replicated.

Some key points addressed by the survey (facilitator performance, quality of technical assistance, perception of the costs/benefits of technical assistance) are often susceptible. Therefore, the following measures should be taken to ensure that the company that received the technical assistance is able to express its opinions freely and objectively:



Inform the company that the survey is conducted anonymously, and that the confidentiality of the results obtained and/or opinions expressed is guaranteed.

If the technical assistance was carried out within the framework of a program or project, the survey should be conducted by a unit not linked to the provision of the service (generally by the unit concerned with the quality and evaluation of the services) to ensure objectivity and neutrality, avoiding possible conflicts of interest with the personnel directly involved in the assistance.

In order to exchange opinions on the results of the survey with the company, and jointly discuss aspects for continuous improvement, it is advisable to organize a feedback meeting after the survey. If deemed appropriate, two separate meetings could be held, one with the company's management and the other with the improvement team. This way, insights could be gained from different points of view.

In cases where technical assistance is conducted directly by an independent facilitator (or group of facilitators), a survey may not be the most appropriate modality for objectively gathering company perceptions. The alternative would be to hold a review meeting in which suggestions can be obtained for both the facilitator and the company.

*The suggested format for measuring the level of satisfaction of the company's management and the improvement team is shown in **Annex 10**.*



Visit Page 80 (**Annex 10**)



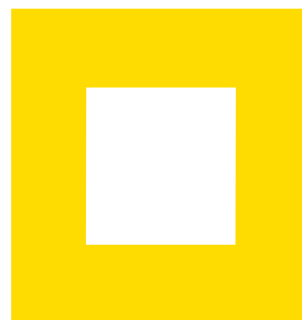
Conclusions

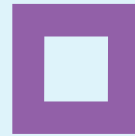
A common factor in Latin American countries is that SMEs, the main generators of private employment, are at a great disadvantage with respect to large companies in terms of productivity and efficiency. The main weaknesses that contribute to this situation are the deficient management of processes and the poor use of resources; therefore, the transfer of management technologies to SMEs is essential to reduce the existing gap. For this transfer to be successful, the company must take ownership of the different methodologies and tools in order to be able to apply and replicate them autonomously and continuously; this is where the role of facilitators plays a fundamental part, and the more they have standardized and validated working methods, the greater the chances of success.

Systematizing and sharing a methodology makes it possible to speak a common language beyond the heterogeneity of the realities of the different Latin American countries. The use of a harmonized Guide among SME support institutions in different countries makes it possible to unify work criteria and make the results obtained from business counseling comparable.

Standardization is the basis for improvement, so this Guide is not exempt from future changes that will make it possible to propose an improved methodology, more effective and in line with the changes in the environment and in the organizations. In this sense, it is essential to guarantee spaces for discussion and exchange where both institutions and facilitators that provide support to SMEs on issues related to process improvement can establish best practices in order to guarantee successful interventions and achieve a positive impact on the companies.

This Guide represents only the beginning of a path towards the development of a common work methodology that can be used by any facilitator seeking to undertake improvement processes in a company or organization in Latin America.





Annexes



Pre-diagnosis Survey

The following survey has the sole purpose of gathering information to adapt the diagnosis to the particular needs and characteristics of your company, in order to provide a better service. INTI undertakes to maintain the confidentiality of the information declared herein.

I. Company information

Company name	
Business / Activity	
CUIT / CUIL	
Address	
Phone / Fax	
e-mail	
SME Category	
Website	
Name and title of respondent	

- Business performance (trend over the last 3 years)

Increasing ☐ Equal ☐ Decreasing ☐

- Number of employees

Management ☐ Sales ☐
Production ☐ Others ☐

- Main products

Product	Percentage (turnover)

- Destination of products

Local market ☐ % (in terms of monetary value)
Exports ☐ % (in terms of monetary value)

- Production system

On request ☐ Counter stock ☐ Mixed ☐



- Seasonality

Month of maximum production	
Month of minimum production	
Percentage of production in minimum month compared to maximum month	

- Main customers

Customer	Percentage (invoicing)

- Main raw materials

Raw material	Annual consumption	Country of origin

- Outsourced processes

YES ☐ Which ones?

NO ☐

- Production characteristics

Several products in small batches ☐ Mass production of a few varieties ☐

- Plant layout

Linear ☐ Semi-linear ☐ By process ☐

- Remuneration system for the production sector

Fixed ☐ Fixed + attendance bonus ☐ Fixed + production bonus ☐

- Production schedule

Number of working days per week	
Number of shifts	
Number of hours per week	



- **Main equipment / installations**

Equipment	Capacity	Requires Overhaul (Y/N)

- **Staff training**

YES ☐
NO ☐

Topics

II. Competitiveness

- **Currently, what is the most important competitiveness problem with your products?**

Quality ☐ Cost ☐ Product development ☐
Delivery time ☐ Customer service ☐ Productivity ☐
Others

- **How would you rate the competitive situation of the market in which the company operates?**

High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

III. Company problems

- **From the options below, mark with an X the two that you consider most urgent to address currently in your company.**

- ☐ Approach to funders
- ☐ Modernization of equipment and facilities
- ☐ Connection and liaison with customers (inside and outside the country)
- ☐ Improvement of Business Management technology
- ☐ Production Management technology improvement
- ☐ Human resources training
- ☐ Cost reduction
- ☐ Improvement of administrative processes



IV. Productivity

Mark with an X if the answer is yes.

- ☐ Do you have an actual cost control system, and do you keep it up to date?
- ☐ Do you have a Production Planning and Control system?
- ☐ Do they consider that the plant is in good order and cleanliness conditions?
- ☐ Do you consider that the plant has the best Health and Safety conditions?
- ☐ Are employees actively involved in process improvement decisions?

V. Observations

Next, please add any information that you consider useful for the business diagnosis.



Diagnosis Guidance Questionnaire

1. MANAGEMENT

1.1. Management organization

- 1.1.1. Are the organization's mission, vision and policies defined?
- 1.1.2. Are objectives and strategies to achieve them established on a regular basis?
- 1.1.3. Are employees committed to the organization's objectives?
- 1.1.4. Do you have indicators to monitor the organization's performance?
- 1.1.5. Do you know the situation of the sector to which the company belongs?
- 1.1.6. Is the structure of the organization defined? (Roles, responsibilities, organization chart)
- 1.1.7. Are successors being formed?
- 1.1.8. What is the company's policy regarding environmental care and social commitment?

2. ADMINISTRATION

2.1. Financial management

- 2.1.1. Does the company have financial budgets (projected Cash Flows)?
- 2.1.2. Do you know the average financing term granted by suppliers?
- 2.1.3. Do you have a customer credit policy, and do you evaluate terms and payment collection?

2.2. Cost management

- 2.2.1. Do you have a costing system, and do you keep it up to date?
- 2.2.2. What variables do you take into account to calculate the cost?
- 2.2.3. Do you understand the fixed and variable costs of production?
- 2.2.4. Do you know the break-even point?
- 2.2.5. Is the cost of inventory controlled? (Raw material, Product in process, finished product)
- 2.2.6. Are actions organized and carried out in the production area to reduce costs?

2.3. Purchasing management

- 2.3.1. Before purchasing raw materials, do you compare quotations from different suppliers?
- 2.3.2. Do you have a supplier audit system?

2.4. Administrative management

- 2.4.1. What media do you use to support the flow of information?
- 2.4.2. Do you have a computerized management system?
- 2.4.3. How efficient are the administrative tasks?

3. HUMAN RESOURCES

3.1. Human Resources Management



- 3.1.1. Do you know the capabilities of your employees? Do you have a training system in place to develop your skills?
- 3.1.2. Do you have staff with the knowledge and ability to perform different tasks?
- 3.1.3. Do you have a system in place to evaluate the capability and performance of your employees?
- 3.1.4. Do you have a system for collecting suggestions from employees?
- 3.1.5. Do you know the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the employees with respect to their work and within the organization?
- 3.1.6. Is there a procedure and criteria for personnel selection?
- 3.1.7. Is training with supervision provided to new collaborators? Is the adaptation time required for each position defined?
- 3.1.8. Is the safety control in the work area sufficient?

4. MARKETING

4.1. Market

- 4.1.1. Do you have a system in place that allows you to know the company's market, products and competitor information?
- 4.1.2. Do you know the company's target market(s)?
- 4.1.3. Do you know the competitive advantages (differentiation) of the company and its products with respect to its competitors?
- 4.1.4. Have you identified the customers who generate most of your turnover?

4.2. Price and product

- 4.2.1. Have you identified the products that generate the most sales in terms of quantities and amounts?
- 4.2.2. Is the selling price determined by taking into account costs, the competitor's price and the price demand is willing to pay to set the selling price?
- 4.2.3. How are the prices of the company's products in relation to the competition?

4.3. Promotion

- 4.3.1. Do you carry out promotional activities?
- 4.3.2. Is the cost-benefit analysis conducted and is the impact of promotional actions measured?

4.4. Distribution

- 4.4.1. How are the delivery times in relation to the competition?
- 4.4.2. Are the delivery deadlines agreed with the customer or established by the company met?
- 4.4.3. Is the cost of distribution high? Are actions being taken to reduce it?

4.5. Sales policy

- 4.5.1. Do you have a sales plan?
- 4.5.2. Is the planning reviewed for specific periods?
- 4.5.3. Do you perform sales estimation?
- 4.5.4. Do you apply strategies during periods of declining sales (seasonality)?



4.5.5. Is the sales force motivated?

4.6. Customer satisfaction

4.6.1. Is the company's policy based on meeting customer needs?

4.6.2. How do you evaluate customer satisfaction?

4.6.3. Are customer complaints heard and addressed?

4.6.4. Is after-sales service provided?

4.6.5. Are staff trained in customer service?

5. PRODUCTION

5.1. Infrastructure

5.1.1. Does it have all the necessary facilities and services?

5.1.2. How are the hygiene and safety conditions of the facility?

5.1.3. Is there an adequate plant layout, without long distances and counterflows?

5.1.4. How do you consider the conditions of order and cleanliness of the plant?

5.2. Price and product

5.2.1. Do you have an inventory management system?

5.2.2. How do you consider the inventory levels of raw materials, work-in-process and finished product?

5.2.3. Do you know your company's inventory turnover? Do you use this information?

5.2.4. Is the actual and physical inventory review performed?

5.2.5. Is the signage of inventory storage locations and product space adequate?

5.3. Materials and suppliers

5.3.1. Are delivery times established by suppliers? Is compliance monitored?

5.3.2. Are the quality specifications to be met by the raw material documented?

5.3.3. Is it possible to obtain raw materials with the required quality and quantity specifications?

5.3.4. Is the quantity and quality of incoming raw material verified?

5.4. Machinery and facilities

5.4.1. Is there a maintenance policy?

5.4.2. Are production operators involved in maintenance management?

5.4.3. Do you have maintenance records for machines and installations?

5.4.4. Do you have information on new technologies related to equipment and processes?

5.4.5. Is the company's production technology competitive?

5.4.6. Do you consider investments in equipment and facilities based on a long-term strategy?



DIAGNOSIS REPORT

COMPANY NAME

Facilitator's first and last name

Place and Date





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4.1	Most relevant aspects.....	4
4.1.1	Strengths	4
4.1.2	Weaknesses	4
4.2	Expected impact	4





1 COMPANY PROFILE

Describe the location of the company, the industrial sector to which it belongs, the number of people employed, the product or service it markets, etc.

2 DIAGNOSIS

2.1 ADDRESS

2.1.1 Current situation

Write down the situation of the company at the time of the diagnosis.

2.1.2 Improvement opportunities

List and describe the problematic situations detected in the company.

2.2 MANAGEMENT

2.2.1 Current situation

Write down the situation of the company at the time of the diagnosis.

2.2.2 Improvement opportunities

List and describe the problematic situations detected in the company.

2.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

2.3.1 Current situation

Write down the situation of the company at the time of the diagnosis.

2.3.2 Improvement opportunities

List and describe the problematic situations detected in the company.

2.4 MARKETING

2.4.1 Current situation

Write down the situation of the company at the time of the diagnosis.

2.4.2 Improvement opportunities

List and describe the problematic situations detected in the company.

2.5 PRODUCTION

2.5.1 Current situation

Write down the situation of the company at the time of the diagnosis.

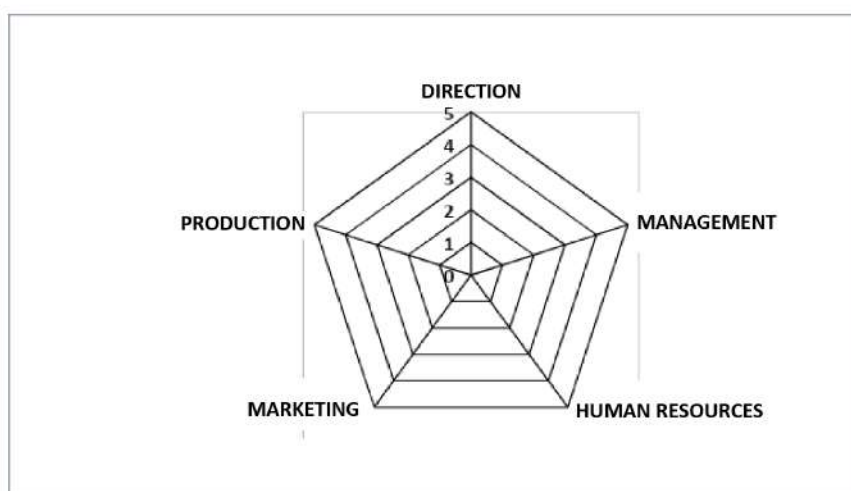
2.5.2 Improvement opportunities

List and describe the problematic situations detected in the company.



3 RADAR CHART

Scores per area



4 CONCLUSIONS

General conclusions

4.1 Most relevant aspects

- 4.1.1 Strengths
- 4.1.2 Weaknesses

4.2 Expected impact

Annex 4



Weighting Matrix of Work Topics

Relevance prioritization: (some possible)	LOWER VALUE (e.g. 0)		HIGHER VALUE (e.g.5)		How relevant to the organization (as a whole) is the topic? How much impact is estimated to result if the solution were to be obtained? How much authority/incidence will the improvement team have in the development and follow-up of the actions that the im How complex is your approach estimated to be?
	Relevance Expected Impact Authority Execution	Slightly Relevant Low impact Little authority Very complex	Highly relevant High impact High authority Low complexity		
ALTERNATIVE TOPICS (they arise from the diagnosis performed)	1	Topic 1			0
	2	Topic 2			0
	3	Topic 3			0
	4	Topic 4			0
	5	Topic 5			0
	6	...			0
	7	...			0
	8	Topic n			0

USE:

1 - Define the criteria (states or others).

2 - Complete the possible topics to be addressed.

3 - Complete the matrix with the numerical valuations.

4 - See the total results for each topic.

If the criteria were correctly defined and the valuations were done in a conscientious manner, the higher priority topic should have a higher score. If a criterion is considered more important than another, a weighting could be established.

CRITERIOS					TOTAL
Relevance	Expected Impact	Authority	Execution		
Not very relevant = 0 Highly relevant = 5	Low impact = 0 High impact = 5	Little authority = 0 High authority = 5	Very complex = 0 Low complexity = 5		



Work Proposal

Applicant Company name of the applicant company
Facilitator Facilitator's first and last name

Work topics

- List and describe the main topics and activities to be addressed during the technical assistance.

Schedule

- Gantt Chart
- Number, frequency and duration of visits
- Total duration of technical assistance

Expected results

- Results to be achieved from technical assistance

Budget

- Amount of technical assistance

Observations and working conditions

- Modality and scope of work
- Guidelines and responsibilities to be met by both parties
- Start date of activities
- Billing and payment methods
- Confidentiality conditions

Facilitator's signature

Annex 6



ACTION PLAN

Goal:

Status		Amount	%
NUMBER OF PROPOSED ACTIONS		0	0%
TO START		0	0%
A INICIAR (DEMORADA)		0	0%
IN PROCESS		0	0%
IN PROCESS (DELAYED)		0	0%
COMPLETED		0	0%
CANCELLED		0	0%
Without status		0	0%

[illegible]



Visiting Minute

Company		Minute No.	
Date of visit		Date of preparation	
Time		Author	

Participants	Name	Position in company / Institution
Company		
Facilitators		

Main topics of the visit

--

Detail

--

Other comments

--



Tasks for the company		
Action	Responsible	Date

Tasks for the counterpart		
Action	Responsible	Date

Next visit	
Subject	
Comments	
Tentative visit date	





TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

COMPANY NAME

Facilitator's first and last name

Place and Date



INDEX		
1	EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW	3
2	INTRODUCTION	3
3	INITIAL SITUATION	3
4	OBJECTIVES	3
5	METHODOLOGY	3
6	IMPLEMENTED IMPROVEMENTS	3
7	RESULTS OBTAINED	3
8	CONCLUSIONS	3





1 EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Include a general description of the contents of the report.

2 INTRODUCTION

Briefly introduce the scenario in which you worked (organization or group of organizations, production line, administrative or service area, specific process, product or equipment, etc.), and how the topic was selected.

3 INITIAL SITUATION

Describe the issues addressed and show the data that served as a starting point for the project. Photographs or indicators may be included to help describe the initial condition.

4 OBJECTIVES

It must answer the question: what was this project intended to achieve?

The objectives should be comparable with some of the indicators mentioned in point 3. In short, the problem will be defined as the difference between the initial situation and the desired situation (expressed by the objectives). If this information does not exist, the mechanism for measuring results should be explained.

5 METHODOLOGY

The tools used to solve the problems should be mentioned (not explained); if there was no tool, the method and dynamics chosen to approach the problems should be mentioned.

6 IMPLEMENTED IMPROVEMENTS

The main actions proposed to meet the objectives are developed and the duration, resources and efforts involved in the project are described.

Emphasis should be placed on the process of implementing the actions.

7 RESULTS OBTAINED

It shows (if possible numerically) how the initial situation evolved and the comparison between the final result and the planned objective.

It is advisable to evaluate the benefits and costs of the project. Any complementary effects observed, whether positive or negative, can also be discussed.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Beyond the results, reference should be made to lessons learned, difficulties during implementation, mistakes made, perceptions of the work team, recommendations, etc.

Future actions or recommendations arising from the analysis of the results may be included.

Annex 9


COMPANY
LOGO

WORK TITLE

Improvement team members:

Facilitator:

Date:

KAIZEN TANGO

Opportunities for improvement	Action and Implementation Plan
Initial situation	Results Assessment
Objectives	
Cause Analysis	
	Standardization



Satisfaction Survey

General Company Data	
Company name	
Unique Tax Registration Number ¹	

Contact information	
Name and position of the person responding to this survey (optional)	
Telephone and e-mail	

Background (prior to the start of technical assistance)	
How did you learn about the technical assistance program/project/services?	
What was your reason for requesting/receiving technical assistance?	
What was the problem you wanted to solve with the technical assistance?	

Quality of services/technical assistance	
What are the topics you worked on during the technical assistance?	
What were the methods used to solve the identified problems?	
Are you satisfied with the selection of topics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not so satisfied - Not satisfied at all <p>If you are not satisfied with the selected topic, tell us why:</p>

¹ In the Latin American Region, it is known under different names: i.e., "Clave Única de Identificación Tributaria" in Argentina, "registro Único de Contribuyente (RUC)" in Uruguay and "Número de Identificación Tributaria (NIT)" in Colombia.



Do you consider that the operators (the improvement team) are satisfied with the technical assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not so satisfied - Not satisfied at all <p>If your operators were not satisfied with the technical assistance, tell us why:</p>
Did the results of the technical assistance meet your expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very much - Yes, somewhat - Neutral - Not that much - Not at all
What are the positive results you highlight from the technical assistance?	
What are the objectives you were not able to achieve?	
Was the technical assistance conducted in an orderly manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairly orderly - Without major inconvenience - Neutral - Was there any inconvenience - Very disorderly <p>In case you encounter any inconvenience in the performance of the technical assistance, please tell us about it.</p>

Performance of the consultant (and/or group of consultants) ²	
In general terms, are you satisfied with the consultant's performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not so satisfied - Not satisfied at all
Did the Consultant clearly explain the objective, methods, and time required for the technical assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, clearly - Yes, but partially - No, they were not very clear
Communication	<p>Was the communication between your company and the consultant good?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very good - Yes, somewhat good - Neutral - Not so good - Not good at all

² If the technical assistance was provided by a group of consultants, questions on the performance of each of the consultant team members can be included.



Technical Aspects	<p>Are you satisfied with the following work of the consultant?</p> <p>1 Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not that much - Not so good - Not applicable <p>2 Diagnosis report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not that much - Not so good - Not applicable <p>3 Facilitation of technical assistance activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not that much - Not so good - Not applicable <p>4 Reporting and presentation facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, very satisfied - Yes, somewhat satisfied - Neutral - Not that much - Not so good - Not applicable
Additional comments on the consultant's performance	

Time and frequency of the technical assistance	
In total, how long did the technical assistance last (from start to finish)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less than 1 month - Between 1 month and 3 months - Between 4 months to 6 months - More than 6 months
How often did you receive technical assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 times a week - Every week - Every 2 weeks - Each month - Every 2 months
Was the frequency of technical assistance adequate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No, it was too much - No, not enough



How many hours were dedicated to each technical assistance session?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 hour - 2 hours - 3 hours - More than 3 hours
Was the time spent on technical assistance sufficient to achieve the objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No, it was too much - No, not enough
Additional comments on duration and frequency of technical assistance	

Costs, investment and value for money	
What kind of financial expenses did you have to incur to carry out the technical assistance?	
Do you plan to invest to carry out the improvement actions recommended by the technical assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No
If you have an investment plan, please tell us the value and estimated time of your investment.	
Next time, would you be willing to bear the cost of technical assistance? ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No
If yes, how much would you pay per hour?	

Plan for the future	
If you have any topics you would like to discuss with the consultant in the future, please let us know.	
Please let us know any other information/comments/feedback that you think may be useful to us.	

³ If the company paid for the services, you can ask if the amount was adequate.



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Methodology for Technical Assistance in
Management Technologies to SMEs in
Latin America.

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