

Craig Andrews,
Con Agra Foods
Continuous Improvement Driving
Culture & Results

By Greg Taivalkoski, BSME 2013

The point I found most interesting from the conference was from Craig Andrews with ConAgra Foods. The ConAgra Performance System is a pillar system they have implemented into supply chain which intends to eliminate waste and losses across the company's operations. The structure at ConAgra creates a culture in which an employee will take ownership of a pillar and be responsible for keeping track of performance criteria over time. Obviously this employee will work to improve their pillar. When each pillar owner does this, ConAgra will have a more effective and efficient organization. Some examples of pillars are Quality, Environment, Safety, Efficiency, etc. The pillars are representing the base in which holds up the successfulness of the company.



I attended the second session of this spring's GSCMI conference and one of the featured speakers was Craig Andrews from ConAgra Foods Inc. One of the subjects he talked about in his presentation and that really sparked my interest was the concept of Gemba. He explained Gemba from the perspective of the manager's role stating that you realize that a lot of the problems on the plant floor can't be fixed just discussing them in the conference room in a meeting and that you have to go to the actual source to figure out the problem. I like the idea behind it simply because I am a hands on guy and that going into a situation and rolling up my sleeves is a way for me to become more involved with my work. Researching more into Gemba it explains how management is to go and collect data and look for waste and opportunities for improvement to be able to practice continuous improvement of practical plant floor improvement items. Working at an internship this past Summer I can see how managers get caught up in meetings and don't get to see the problem first-hand so the idea behind Gemba I

can see making a real improvement in a variety of companies. My brother-in-law who is an operations manager for a customized apparel company has also stated using this system. He stated that it is much easier to visualize and confront a problem when you can see it firsthand rather than sitting at your desk and that really getting to see the problem from the workers perspective is a key asset to solving any problem either now or in the future at the company's plant. Seeing myself as a visual learner I believe that using the Gemba technique discussed at the GSCMI conference will help me in any managerial role throughout my career.

Kevin Seapan, BSIM 2013



"I learned many valuable points from this conference, and it was especially refreshing to hear concepts from class stressed by such powerful companies."

—Jose Espinosa

