GMP Training Systems, Inc.

Creators of the GMP Ready-to-Use Training System™

Think Before You Act

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I had just arrived at the airport for an early morning flight in Memphis, Tennessee. As I approached the security area, there was only one person in front of me in line – a man in his early 20's. As he was preparing to load his belongings into the bins to go through the x-ray machine, he started patting his pockets and said aloud, "Oh no! I left my cell phone in my buddy's car."

A Transportation Security Agency employee was standing nearby and heard him. She offered him the use of her personal cell phone and suggested he call his buddy and perhaps his buddy could return to the airport and deliver his phone. He looked at her, shook his head from side to side and said, "I can't. I don't know his number. It's in my phone."

She then suggested he call his cell phone and his buddy might hear it ringing in the car, alerting him that the phone was left behind. Again he shook his head from side to side and said,

"I can't. I don't know my number. It's in my phone."

His flight had been delayed that morning and he then exclaimed, "Now I can't call my girlfriend and tell her what time I'm now expected to arrive. She'll get to the airport way too early. I don't know her number either."

It was at that moment when I was struck with this thought – "Have we become some dependent on technology – gadgets and devices – that we've stopped thinking?"

I thought about this young fellow. In his lifetime, certainly since he became a teenager, he always had access to a telephone where he could store phone numbers. He never had to think about what number to dial. (Now there's a throwback – dialing a phone which refers to the phones where you actually had to dial the number.) Once the number was inputted into the device or gadget, he only had to hit a number or scroll to find a name and touch the

screen and the call automatically starts.

In our jobs and at work, how many devices and gadgets have we become dependent on? If the power goes out or your computer crashes, can you get any work done? How do you feel if you have a day without access to email? Or even an hour?

We are becoming more and more dependent on technology - devices and gadgets - to not only save labor, but save thinking as well. Is a rise in FDA-483 observations or Warning Letters due partly because people are thinking less?

If you use a computer or calculator to compute some number, do you just accept the result and use it in your work? Or do you pause and ask yourself, "Does this result seem reasonable?" Decimal point errors are common when inputting numbers into a device, and fairly easy to catch IF you THINK about the reasonableness of the result.

GMP Tips

Here are a few tips to strengthen the GMP compliance in your organization.

Themes

- Incorporate the notion of THINK BEFORE YOU ACT into your organization.
- Use THINK BEFORE YOU ACT as a concept to reinforce during your GMP training sessions.
- Make THINK BEFORE YOU ACT a theme for the next year.

Routine, Redundant, or Repetitive Jobs and Tasks

Many deviations from GMP and your company policies and procedures can be traced to mental errors and mental lapses. This is especially true in jobs where the work can be characterized as routine, redundant, or repetitive.

How many jobs or tasks in your organization can be characterized as routine, redundant, or repetitive? What can be done to reduce the probability of mental errors and mental lapses?

It depends upon the job or task, but here are a couple of ideas.
- Rotate people into different tasks throughout the shift.
- Take short and frequent breaks, if possible.

I'm sure you can think of others that are specific to the jobs or tasks at your facility.

Complacency

Complacency is another set of conditions where mental errors and lapses can set in. People are generally creatures of habit, and sloppy habits lead to problems. Reviewing policies and procedures periodically can keep people fresh and aware of the requirements. Ongoing GMP training, when done well, also guards against complacency.

Recognition and Rewards

Recognize and reward people for thinking. If someone takes action to prevent contamination, or to prevent a mix-up or error, make sure that they are recognized for their thinking. Create a new category in your recognition and reward system – the THINKING AWARD. Encourage people to think.

Job descriptions

How about adding THINKING to every job description in your company. Let people know when they are first hired that we expect them to think as part of their job.

Think INSIDE THE BOX

We've all heard the old cliché – "Think outside the box." to encourage innovation and creativity. Let's also encourage people to THINK INSIDE THE BOX to reduce the probability of contamination, mix-ups, and errors in everyday activities.

Conclusion

THINK about how you can apply THINK BEFORE YOU ACT to your organization and get started.

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