

Here are a few things that are keeping us busy at Linney Group:

Key Issue

Do we do Genba Kanri?

Genba Kanri and Kanban are probably the last two of the 80s Japanese words that came into our business that we still use. In this issue, we are looking at the odd sounding Genba Kanri. Where did it come from and what does it mean?

It came to us from Ed Handyside who was one of the early workers at the Nissan site in Sunderland. "I was there when it was mud and girders," Ed told me back in 1995.

We had been looking for people to help us on our world-class journey. Most of the people we saw did not actually understand what world-class was, they said they did, but under interview conditions they usually failed to impress. Ed went on to be a consultant and was one of the few consultants we used! A real thoroughbred Geordie, he was a no-nonsense person and he performed memorably at the interview!

He and his team did a small test reorganisation in platemaking at Linney Print and very successful it was too.



I decided to get to know Ed better and he taught me a lot about how the Japanese Nissan management listened to its workforce. "They listen to everyone and everything," he said: "Most of it is built around a belief that people know what's wrong, but the organisation somehow lacks the capability to put it right!" I had heard this before and knew it happened but then Ed hit me with the Genba Kanri stuff, I asked him what it was all about, his response was: "It's about getting the place to work properly, but instead of buying new this and that or bringing new people in, Genba Kanri is: 'With these buildings, with this equipment, with these people!' Genba Kanri makes you use what you have and almost precludes a major money spend until everything you already have is working flat out and effectively." ...We have been doing it ever since.

The number of things we have fixed, at minuscule cost, since Ed's early visits, is amazing. Ed explained: "Usually most of the things that don't work are small things but when they are added together it often means the business, as a whole, performs poorly. And that's the rub!"

We have proved in the past to be very good at buying equipment and very bad at getting it to work... even moving on to buying another big expensive piece of kit and NEVER getting the last bit to work properly!

These days it's great to see our investments installed properly, the people trained properly and the kit working properly. It's great to see us moving around the business all the time improving small bits of it and making the whole thing work better. Seldom do massive spends fix things (ask any Government), what fixes things is a mindset across everyone in the business that things MUST be fixed before we move on to the next trick... 'With these buildings, with this equipment, with these people'... that's Genba Kanri.

Nick Linney

Linney News

Christmas boxes

Forty odd shoeboxes filled with gift items recently went to East Europe and Africa. Linney Design's Louisa Oukil told 1851 how it happened: "I heard the Children's Shoebox Appeal had been delivering gift-filled shoeboxes to poor and deprived children in Eastern Europe, Africa and Central Asia, for over 19 years and wanted to get involved.

"I thought colleagues might be interested, but was overwhelmed by the fantastic response, as carefully wrapped shoeboxes started arriving in reception.

"Jackie Dilks, from handfinishing, asked if I had three shoeboxes going spare. When I dropped them off, I was amazed to see a whole row of boxes brimming with gifts – Jackie and her colleagues filled 10 boxes.

"Goods-in's Jim Crawford's nine-year-old son Jack (pictured with Louisa) missed the appeal at school, so was thrilled to help and insisted on bringing two boxes in by hand.

Others across the Group either sent filled shoeboxes or bags of goodies to fill any extra ones. Wendy James spent ages wrapping and filling the many extra boxes!

To put a smile on the face of just one child this Christmas would have been worthwhile, but in total we made 43 children's days extra special!"



Customer survey

This year we had a great response to our customer survey and the results are very encouraging. We ask our customers to comment on their experience of working with us across the many types of service that we provide.

The comments provided are analysed, compared with previous years, and the findings are shared with everybody in the business. This analysis provides the extremely important measure of our customers' assessment of how we are doing and is a key component in how we shape our business for the future, with the intention of matching it to our customers' requirements.

Miles Linney told 1851: "I am particularly proud of the results we have achieved this year, and really appreciate the time taken by our clients to give their feedback. I believe this is the most important KPI in the business."

As in previous years we have drawn a lucky winner from our respondents and the winner chose to donate the £150 to the Optometry Giving Sight charity, which is a global fund-raising campaign that aims to eliminate a major cause of avoidable blindness, uncorrected refractive error.

Mike Fynney Birdman of Adamsway

One snowy morning in January, Mike Fynney discovered a Kestrel in Linney Design's car park. The bird couldn't fly and Mike worried that it would walk into the road, so a rescue mission was mounted!

The Ashfield Wildlife Sanctuary advised putting 'Kes' in a box in a cool dark room, so the photo studio was perfect. After a quick whip-round we raised £48 to donate to the Sanctuary for looking after our bird.

Jo Maddison said: "The Sanctuary told us Kes is a fully grown female who was probably stunned after diving for food and hitting an inanimate object, and would be fine after some TLC."



"We phoned a couple of days later and were told Kes had eaten nine chicks (already long gone, frozen and defrosted) and had been released into the wild!"

Moves at Linney Direct

In 1851 we often read about winning new accounts, but what we don't read about is how we prepare ourselves for the implementation of these accounts.

This always requires a lot of careful planning, and lots of moving things around to create additional space to fulfil orders and hold stock. Here is a recent story...

The challenge

After winning a new account it was not surprising when Miles gave the Linney Direct CIG team the challenge: "Can you create a thousand new pallet spaces with space nearby to fulfil orders and bring all stock held off site back in-house." Furthermore, he added one caveat: "Can you have this in place by the end of January 2010!"

With this challenge ringing in their ears, Linney Direct's CIG team began weighing up the options.

A new building would be unfeasible; we wouldn't even get planning permission in time. A member of CIG gazed up at the ceiling and offered: "There's the answer to the challenge!" He went on. "In this building we are only using half the building, the bottom half. Hand Finishing are using the floor and there is a load of fresh air above whereas in Adamsway 2 we have a warehouse in a building with a low roof!"

The penny dropped and it became clear what we needed to do. Move Hand Finishing to the low roof building (Adamsway 2) and use all the space in the high roof building (Adamsway 1).

We drew a possible new layout on Visio, a computer program that enables us to visualise the space without actually having to move anything and soon realised we were in good shape to meet the challenge.

Fortunately, when Adamsway was constructed in 1997, the Customer Response Centre (CRC) had been built with a load-bearing ceiling, so this quickly became our new fulfilment space!

The team

In September 2009, we re-formed the team who successfully moved the Windsor Court Operation last year, with a few additions.

The first task was to formulate a plan. By mid-September, the costs for the project were approved and everything was in place to start the moves.

The implementation

We focused our efforts on reducing archived materials. We also managed to reduce our own stocks by asking suppliers to hold more materials off site and only deliver what we require when we require it.

This exercise alone created 150 pallet spaces and allowed us to move to the next stage of the project. The racking was removed from the low roof building (Adamsway 2) to create space for Hand Finishing. Support Services installed the electrics, heating, safety barriers, and an additional despatch door.

By the end of October 2009, the Hand Finishing department had been successfully transferred to its new home. With the high roof building (Adamsway 1) now empty, we started the necessary alterations. Within a few weeks lighting, heating, and racking were installed. The floor was levelled, painted and guide wires installed, in preparation for the 'Very Narrow Aisle Trucks'. These forklifts, similar to the ones in our B1 warehouse, allow us to operate in 1.6 metre aisles. The new warehouse has created 2,300 pallet spaces.

At the same time, the area above the CRC was converted into a new fulfilment area. Pallet gates and stairs allow easy access for both stock and people who will use it for large ad hoc despatches. January 2010 saw the warehouse and the fulfilment areas become operational.



This space has enabled us to consolidate similar accounts, and several have been moved from other areas. Charles Linney told 1851: "We have seen a gain in our run-rates because by amalgamating similar work into one area the whole process is working better."

"The 'Key Issue' on page two of this issue of 1851 is about a concept called Genba Kanri. Although this is not exactly what we have done in these moves, it's not far off. We need to use all our existing assets as well as we can. In this case, in the short term, we have probably saved ourselves needing another building!"