

# DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, hosts continuous process improvement training

By Karen Abernathy, DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas

Recently, DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, and several other outlying distribution centers had the opportunity to improve the performance of core competencies while enabling Stewardship Excellence and Workforce Development through a weeklong intensive continuous process improvement training course at Corpus Christi, Texas, entitled “Level 1: Establishing a Problem Solving Culture.”

The class of 27 attendees was comprised of 17 personnel from DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, and members from nine other distribution centers, including DLA Distribution Albany, Ga., Warner Robins, Ga., Barstow, Calif., Oklahoma City, Okla., and Puget Sound, Wash.

The week-long training was centered around establishing a problem-solving culture by focusing on core values, lean principles, and the cultural patterns of high performing organizations. In particular, attendees received instruction on team building, utilizing visual techniques to help identify problems, recognizing the seven wastes, and the 7-step problem solving process, which consists of: Define the problem; Grasp the situation; Plan; Do; Check; Act; and Conclusions and lessons learned.

Additionally, the course taught that an organization should have the following cultural capabilities to help them be high performing organizations: Design and operate work to reveal problems; contain and solve problems close in person, place and time; accumulate and share knowledge; leaders coach and develop the above capabilities.

The basic premise of these capabilities is that it is much easier to fix small problems before they become larger, making it essential to design processes so that problems are easily recognized and then work to solve them.

Participants varied in levels of responsibility, from directors to interns, making the course unique and dynamic. In addition, nearly every area of distribution was represented, making the training environment conducive to the sharing of different perspectives among attendees. Consequently, team members were able to see how their individual areas impacted other areas of operations. Blessings Foster, DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, inventory supervisor explained, “The training provided the opportunity to pool together supervisors from different areas of operations, and enabled us to collectively see how the puzzle comes together, and see what we need to do to improve.”

In addition to the exchange of ideas, the training included group exercises and simulations

throughout the week that gave participants hands-on processes to aid them in grasping the Lean principles. The teams were required to execute several projects and simulations, such as building Lego cars and erecting towers out of plastic cups. Each exercise reinforced the DLA cultural capability of teamwork, distribution core competencies and brought to life the pragmatic and practical applications of Lean principles. “I loved it. I thought it was informative, useful training—applicable to daily life—personally and professionally,” said Ginger Greene, DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, inventory action team member. “The simulations were most valuable because they helped us work together as a team to figure out a process,” she added.

Green Belt certification is subsequent to the initial training. Participants receive certification upon completion of a continuous process improvement project of their own.

Upon conclusion of the training, DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, commander United States Army Lt. Col. Bernard Warrington, Jr., challenged the class to “Be the change you desire by being the voice and example of change beginning with a renewed mindset of breaking through the status quo and complacency. Most importantly, facilitate and lead change by ‘just doing it’ as a change agent.”