PathStone Group

- An effective Non-conformance system mitigates customer dissatisfaction, rework and adheres to regulatory requirements. It furthers continuous improvement and best-practices in quality management.

BACKGOUND

An effective corrective action and preventive action (CAPA) and its corresponding tools enable a self-correcting system. The CAPA provides assurance that quality issues are resolved from its root cause and meet business quality requirements.

THE SITUATION

LolT Products* is a cannabis edibles company that is present in the major cannabis stores across the country. Customer complaints are not frequent, but similar disputes were recurrent; this is, the issues were resolved, but a few months later they were showing up again. Also, the teams were confused in how to address issues, who would take the lead of the solutions, and how to follow an organized method. As a result, many of the non-conformance issues were left unaddressed for several weeks.


Customer complaints used to take over 6 weeks to get resolved.

THE SOLUTION

We started by defining the problem and scope. Mapping required a swimlane format to define the "hand-off" of activities for other teams, as well as a RACI matrix that was consulted and agreed upon by all team members.

The QA team built precise formats for deviations, planned deviation and CAPA. A tracker and KPIs were developed to measure status of those three categories and help teams to make better decisions.
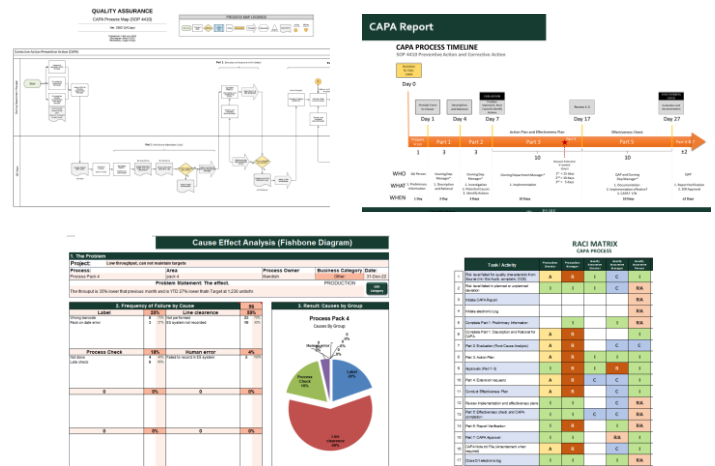
Implementing Solutions: Swimlane process map, streamline activities, training in problem-solving methods and the RACI matrix to define responsibilities.

We trained all the stakeholders and built a "buddy-system" to fast-track the learning curve. The fillable formats were standardized with a SOP, and we added a risk assessment component to gauge the impact, severity, and likelihood of the deviations. We trained the teams in problem-solving methods: Problem statement, Cause-effect diagram, 5 Why's and Action Planning.

THE SUCCESS

During the following months, the repeated non-conformances almost disappeared to zero repeated events. Teams learned to solve root cause and the importance of stating the problem well.

The lead time to resolve complaints went down to 3 weeks, a 55% turnaround improvement.

* The company's identity has been disguised for the sake of privacy; however, the case study is genuine.