QC Circle members visit SRF-JRMC, study Lean program

Story and photo by Keiichi Adachi, CFAY Public Affairs

U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) hosted more than 50 people from various member organizations from the Kanagawa Branch of the Kanto Plain Chapter Quality Control (QC) Circle during an annual visit June 3.

There are a total of nine chapters in Japan, with several branches under each. The member organizations vary; however, most specialize in product production and engineering in the electrical and electronics industries. The visit provided members with a brief introduction to Yokosuka Naval Base and to SRF-JRMC, followed by opportunities to share some of the command improvement activities and achievements.

SRF-JRMC started its "QC Circle activities" in 1992, and in 2000 "QC" evolved to what are now called "Improvement Activities." SRF-JRMC has been continuing its relationship with the Kanagawa Branch by attending their sessions and sponsoring joint events. The organization's visit and tour consisted of a brief presentation by C100CI staff, a group exercise to experience Lean at SRF-JRMC, and a bus tour of the base and SRF-JRMC shops.

Branch Chief Secretary Yasutaka Fukuhara from Press Kogyo Co. Ltd., who participated in the visit for the first time said, "I have always heard from other members that the SRF-JRMC event is always very interesting. This is one of our "special sites," and every time we plan an event at SRF-JRMC, the limited number of openings are quickly filled. SRF-JRMC is very popular, and a good place for providing participants with an opportunity to see a different type of improvement activity from other QC activities."

QC Circle is known in Japan as a management tool for improving total performance. QC promotes organized improvement activities involving a company's managers and workers in a totally systemic and integrated effort to improve performance at every level. Its use leads to increased customer satisfaction through attainment of such corporate cross-functional goals as quality, cost, scheduling, manpower efficiencies and new product development.

The motto of the Kanagawa Branch, consists of three parts; "Learn something; Use what is learned; and Recognize the successes of other organizations." The branch believes that by living up to their motto, it provides their members the opportunity to exchange ideas and benefit from the presentation that they received at SRF-JRMC.

Visitors from the Kanagawa Branch Quality Control (QC) Circle listen to SRF-JRMC Commanding Officer Capt. Steven Stancy's welcoming remarks.
SRF-JRMC司令官スティーブン・スタンシー大佐の歓迎の言葉に聞き入るQCサークル神奈川地区からの訪問者。

Yoshimi Kubota, a quality and environmental safety health management representative of Nankai Kogyo Co. Ltd., has attended presentations and gatherings sponsored by other enterprises.

Kubota has been very interested in QC activities on Yokosuka Base, and decided to participate in the SRF-JRMC event.

"I have a little experience with the 'Six-Sigma' business management strategy," said Kubota. "After I participated in the presentation of the Lean activities by SRF-JRMC, I was once again reminded of the importance of goal setting. Also, the use of the template system and organizing the meetings with Post-it notes led to visualizing and effective sharing of information. I think that these are very good examples of practical methods in seeking solutions."

During the base tour, Kubota said that as for ships' maintenance, he was amazed by the scale of the facilities and cranes. "Quality and accuracy for the ships' maintenance is very important."

Management Analyst Masataka Kaibara from SRF-JRMC Continuous Improvement Division acted as the master of ceremonies throughout the event. According to Kaibara, he has had an opportunity to speak in front of large audiences before, and by accepting this role, it gave him an opportunity to speak directly to the participants and share information.

"I felt that those who participate in these events from other enterprises probably have various expectations," said Kaibara. "I felt that all the participants were very eager to seek new and useful information to take back with them to contribute to their companies."

Masako Imaoka, a product inspector at the Kosei Co. Ltd. Sayama Factory said, "The reason I attended this seminar was that I wanted to take a look at QC circle activities by other enterprises and see the difference between our QC activities and theirs. Educational systems for Lean activities by SRF-JRMC are very thorough. After the completion of an activity, SRF-JRMC conducts periodic follow-ups to verify that the activity is being continued by its employees. That was a good point and impressive!"

QCメンバー、SRF-JRMCのリーンプログラム研修を受講する

文・写真：安達慶一、CFAY広報課

6月3日、艦船修理廠及び日本地区造修統括本部(SRF-JRMC)はQCサークル関東支部神奈川地区に所属する50名以上のメンバーを迎え、事業所見学交流会を主催した。QCサークルは日本全国で9つの支部とその下に地区を構え活動を行っている。所属する組織の事業内容の殆どが製造、電気及び電子系事業だ。今回の訪問では米海軍横須賀基地とSRF-JRMFの簡単な説明とSRF-JRMCに於ける改善活動とその成果が紹介された。

SRF-JRMCは1992年に活動を開始したQCサークルの名称を2000年に改善活動へと変更、神奈川地区の主催する事業所見学交流会への参加や共同発表会の支援などにより交流を深めてきた。訪問とツアーは改善室によるプレゼンテーション、SRF-JRMCにおけるリーン活動を経験するグループ活動、バスによる基地見学、部署見学が含まれる。

SRF-JRMC Sheetmetal Shop Head, Kazuhiro Usui, provides information regarding the shop's improvement activities.
板金工場長の臼井和廣さんが工場に於ける改善活動の説明を行う。

始めて参加した神奈川地区の幹事長を務めるプレス工業株式会社の福原靖隆さんはこう話してくれた。「SFR-JRMCで行なわれる発表会は常に興味深いと他のメンバーからいつも聞いております。ここは特別会場の１つであり、毎回SRF-JRMCでのイベントを計画すると定員数がすぐに一杯になってしまいます。SRF-JRMCはとても人気があり、他のQC活動と異なったタイプの改善活動を目にする機会を参加者に提供するには良い場所です。」

日本でQCサークルは総合的に業績を改善するための管理手法として知られている。また、QCサークルは監督者や従業員が体系的且つ総合的にあらゆる面々で改善に取り組む組織化された改善活動である。その手法を用いて品質、経費、計画性、人員効率、新製品開発など企業全体の共通の目標を掲げることで顧客満足度向上の達成にも繋がる。

神奈川地区は3つのモットーがあり、それは「学ぼう、活かそう、他社の良さ」である。そのモットー通り、参加者はSRF-JRMCの発表会でアイデアや利点の交換をおこなった。

南開工業品質環境安全衛生管理責任者の久保田吉実さんは他の企業主催による交発表会や交流会にも参加経験がある。彼は横須賀基地でのQC活動にとても感心があり、SRF-JRMCの発表会に参加することを決めた。「ビジネス管理戦略ツールの『シックスシグマ』を多少経験してきました。SRF-JRMCのリーン活動の発表会に参加して、今一度、ゴール設定の重要さをかみしめました。テンプレートシステムとポストイットを用い組織化するミーティングの使用は情報の可視化と効果的な共有化を引き出します。これらの事項は解決策の模索する実践方法のとてもよい見本だと感じました」と久保田さんは語気を強めた。

基地見学ツアーで久保田さんは艦船整備に関して、施設やクレーンの大きさに驚いたと話し、こう続けた。「艦船整備には質と精度がとても重要ですね。」

SRF-JRMC改善室管理分析職の貝原壮香（まさたか）さんが発表会の進行役を務めた。彼は今まで大勢の人たちの前で話す機会はあったが今回は参加者と直接に話し情報を分かち合う機会を得た。「他の企業から参加した方々は、様々な期待を持っているだろうと感じていました。皆さんが企業に持ち帰り貢献できる新しく有益な情報探しにとても積極的だと痛感しました」と貝原さん。

株式会社コーセー狭山工場の製品検査業務の今岡雅子さん感想をこう話してくれた。「このセミナーに参加した理由は、他の企業のQC活動を見て自分たちと彼らの相違点を見い出したかったからです。SRF-JRMCによるリーン活動の教育的なシステムはとても徹底していました。活動後も継続して活動の確認をする定期的フォローアップは大変良い点であり印象的でした。」