

Workflow: Strategy, Organisational Capacity, Measuring and Leading

Toolkit 1.4 Leader Standard Work

target audience

Packhouse managers, and supervisors.

what it is

The citrus environment demands a high level of compliance to quality assurance and standards to produce export quality fruit; and thus discipline, consistency and precision are critical to the success of the operation. In particular, packhouse teams need to be able to execute the proper work processes and procedures over and over again in order to achieve the desired result (i.e., properly packed, undamaged fruit). Refer to [Toolkit 3.6 – Standard Work](#) for more information. However, maintaining disciplined and precise work habits is much easier said than done, as the conditions within and around the teams are constantly changing. Examples include:

- Onboarding / training new team members.
- Adapting to changing pack plans.
- Changing client requirements.

Variability is the enemy of good process and good performance. The focus of this execution step is on an often-overlooked cause of variability; namely, the variability caused by inconsistent and reactive leadership behaviours.

Leader Standard Work (LSW) refers to the core set of activities performed by packhouse leaders across all levels (e.g., team leader/supervisors, process/department managers, packhouse managers) on a repeatable schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) to ensure discipline and precision within the operation, and to make the teams successful.

LSW is a layered, bottom-up process, in which the standard tasks and routines at any level of leadership are determined by the core work requirements for employees working one level below. Often leaders focus on end results, and as such LSW includes focusing on the process that determines the result. Below is a representative example of how LSW might work in a packhouse organization:

Role	Concept	Examples
Manager	Primary Focus: Long-term performance. Objective: LSW oriented toward setting a standard of	• Lead weekly farm performance review meetings.

	disciplined work for the entire business.	- Spot check tracking charts and other visual controls in the operation. - Verify leaders' standard work. - Conduct Gemba walks. Refer to Toolkit 3.8 – Gemba Walks.
Operations Manager	Primary Focus: Weekly & monthly performance. Objective: LSW oriented toward supporting/coaching supervisors and planning & monitoring longer-term improvement projects.	- Lead the daily performance review for the designated operational area. Refer to Toolkit 3.4 – Daily Performance Review. - Lead structured problem solving for critical performance issues. - Conduct Gemba walks with Team Leaders.
Team Leader/First Line Supervisor	Primary Focus: Daily performance. Objective: LSW oriented toward helping the teams to achieve the daily schedule and observing/coaching them to execute their standard work.	- Conduct shift/day starter. - Escalate issues to the daily performance review. - Observe tasks against SOPs. - Review team's progress during the day and intervene where necessary to achieve plan. - Update visual boards. Refer to Toolkit 3.3 – Visual Management. - Conduct behavioural safety observations.

The temptation for many upon reviewing the LSW examples above is to proclaim, "We're doing most of this already." However, there are two key questions to ask in response:

- Are all LSW tasks at every level performed proactively, consistently, and at the appropriate frequency? In other words, are all LSW tasks formalized into the normal routine of the packhouse so that these tasks have become part of the "heartbeat" of the operation and would continue irrespective of personnel?
- Where the same task is performed by multiple leaders, do they execute that task in the same way according to a prescribed standard of excellence? Put another way, if two team leaders led the same shift/day starter, would they cover the same topics, and deliver the same

message to the shift; or, if two operations managers performed a Gemba walk, would they walk the same area, identify the same opportunities, and take the same actions?

If the answer to one or both of the above questions is “no,” then there is opportunity to further embed LSW into the culture of the packhouse.

why it is important

As mentioned previously, variability is the enemy of a good process, and LSW help to eliminate the variability associated with inconsistent or highly reactive leadership behaviour. Simply put, it is unfair to ask the work teams to be disciplined in how they work and proactive in identifying and resolving potential performance issues if leaders are not equally disciplined and proactive. Alternatively, when workers get consistent exposure to their leaders along with consistent feedback, guidance, and support from their leaders, they are much more likely to perform to, and even above, expectations. Leader Standard Work is one mechanism to create that consistency.

success factors

Optimize the standard to discretionary work ratio – While LSW should be practiced at all levels of leadership, the extent to which it becomes part of a leader’s routine varies by level. Simply put, more senior leaders will need more time for discretionary work (i.e., work tasks that happen infrequently or not according to a routine schedule) than more junior leaders. A “rule of thumb” for standard work as a percentage of total work is as follows:

- **Packhouse manager** – 25% to 50% standard work.
- **Operations manager** – 50% to 75% standard work.
- **Team leader / First line supervisor** – 75%+ standard work.

Transparency drives accountability – Making the transition to a more routine-oriented leadership approach through LSW can be difficult for some leaders. One tactic that may help with the transition is to communicate new task commitments to the workforce (e.g., “I plan to perform a line walk of one area of the packhouse each week” or “I will meet one-on-one with each worker for a direct report at least once per month for 60 minutes to review their performance and provide feedback and coaching”). Some leaders create and visually display (inside or outside of their offices) personal LSW key performance indicators, such as number of line walks completed or number of behavioural safety observations conducted, as a way of creating personal accountability for the change.

execution steps

1. Identify the routine tasks at each level of leadership that need to take place (whether they currently are taking place or not) so that the leadership at each level meet their obligations to the shift-based work teams. Consider both the “hard” tasks (i.e., those that link directly to operational performance or compliance) and the “soft” tasks (i.e., those that create the right work culture and build employee skills & capability, such as coaching, feedback, & relationship building).

2. Create a Leader Standard Work checklist for each leadership role. Refer to [Leader Standard Work Examples](#).
3. Determine the best approach to create accountability across all leaders for executing their agreed LSW. Options to consider:
 - Creating KPIs and targets for LSW adherence.
 - Review LSW adherence during routine leadership team meetings.
 - Incorporate LSW execution into individual leader performance reviews.

assessment questions

Please Note: There is no minimum / maximum number of questions you can add.

1.	Have the roles and responsibilities of all employees been clearly defined and communicated?
2.	Do leaders at all levels and across all functions of the packhouse have well-defined leader standard work tasks and routines?
3.	Do all leaders incorporate so-called "soft" tasks (i.e., those that create the right work culture and build employee skills & capability, such as coaching, feedback, & relationship building) into their leader standard work?
4.	Do you have ways of checking that effective execution of leader standard work is taking place?

resources

1. [Leader Standard Work Examples](#)