

continuous improvement



Brian Simons

Improving the Service Parts Process: New Service Parts VP shares vision for building an agile global supply chain

Brian Simons recently spoke with *Quarterly Connections* on the six-month anniversary of being named the new VP of NCR Service Parts Operations. He oversees an organization of 160 parts professionals and 600 stocking locations, and is responsible for about \$415 million in inventory and \$700 million in expenditures.

A Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and CI champion, Brian came to NCR from Honeywell, where he oversaw logistics, transportation and supply chain planning.

"Parts have a direct impact on customer delight," he says, noting that parts availability is a critical element with our Service Quality Index (SQI) metric. His vision is to build an optimized and agile supply chain for delivering parts where and when they're needed. To achieve his vision, Simons is guided by three pillars:

- **Continuous Improvement (CI)** – creating a workforce of problem solvers who can use CI tools to identify failure modes and implement countermeasures
- **Design and Optimization** – optimizing a global system of parts management that will improve SLAs, minimize inventory and lower costs
- **Data and Transparency** – basing decisions on accurate data so there is less conflict generated by agendas or emotion.

"We have a very talented team – using these three pillars will focus the team on the critical path for the business," says Brian.

The Service Parts Operations team will be measured on three metrics – improved SLAs that support customer delight; cost reductions that contribute to Services' P&L target; and supplier pay terms and inventory improvements that improve cash flow.

Brian considers CI "central" to NCR's future success. That's why he is requiring ALL 160 members of the parts team to be Lean Six Sigma certified by December 2012, with senior leaders earning black belts, leaders of people achieving green belt certification, and individual contributors completing yellow belts.

The certification effort has been underway for several months. "We are currently on track to complete all required certifications by the end of Q2," says Brian. "Any new employees coming in will be certified within 12 months of their hire date."

To Brian, joining NCR presented a great opportunity: "We're a company in growth mode with an exciting future. Also, the leadership team is progressive and brilliant – it's a team I firmly believe is going in the right direction. Chris Askew is probably the best CI champion that I have worked for."

Since joining NCR, Brian has toured the regions to understand the supply chain challenges unique to each region. "We have an incredibly diverse demand profile around the world," he says.

As a region, APAC is incredibly diverse both geographically and culturally, observes Brian, who recently held an employee Town Hall meeting in Mumbai. "We have a different infrastructure in Asia Pacific, which makes it more complex to move parts around. At the same time, it's very close to some of our critical suppliers because we have a density of supply coming out of Japan. This is a region where we need to drive more standardization of our processes and improve our linkage with our customers."



Repair Technician Sachin Khaira (l) reviews an order with Supervisor David Holland at the Depot Repair Centre in Australia

