

MILLCROFT—SITE VISIT



The Lean Leadership team was recently invited to visit the Greenwich depot of our subcontractor Millcroft Services. We'd heard Millcroft is a Lean operation and were keen to find out more.

Millcroft Services Plc is a family run business, established by Roy Jones in 1971. They have grown from providing scaffolding to smaller projects, to now having a comprehensive range of construction skills, from maintenance, refurbishment and civil works to complete turnkey projects, with a substantial in-house scaffold division.

It's immediately apparent that Roy has worked hard to grow his business and takes great pride in his achievements. The office walls are adorned with 'thank-you' letters from clients and awards such as RoSPA gold.

The first thing to notice is the cleanliness and tidiness of the office and depot. There is clearly a place for everything, and everything is in its place.

This can be seen right from the main office which, while busy, is well organised and tidy. We didn't see any piles of paperwork or overflowing in-trays. This immediately gave an 'efficient' feel to the place. A large 'works-board' sets out jobs in progress and forthcoming commitments, and is the key to arranging logistics and staff. This board is clearly displayed in the office so all personnel are aware of impending commitments.

Moving outside into the depot, the same theme is obvious. All walkways are clearly demarked, free of any debris, and the whole depot is immaculately clean. This includes the fleet of vehicles used for delivery, all cleaned and lined up ready to go, giving a feeling of 'preparedness'. Roy has his own on-site mechanic, who used to work in the aviation industry, and it's clear to see the same high standards have been carried over.

A locked quarantine shed houses all items unfit for use. This clearly separates defective items and, by being locked, prevents any unplanned use.

Continuing around the yard, all the materials are well stacked and clearly labelled. Again, this attention to detail makes identification and movement of materials easy. The boards and tubes are neatly stored, so lifting and loading is an efficient operation.

After use all boards and tubes are inspected. Any damaged items are separated and, where possible, reused. This involves cutting off the damaged section of board or tube to minimise waste and maintain stock.

Couplers and fittings are stored in stillages and are also clearly labelled. When returned from site each fitting is visually inspected, any faults / defects identified and quarantined, and the bolts and threads are re-greased.

When a job is being prepared, all the equipment to be sent is prepared, stacked and checked well in advance of loading. Loading is then a safe and smooth operation, allowing work to start promptly on site.

It's clear that Millcroft has a very strong set of core values - collaboration, openness, mutual dependency, excellence, professional delivery, innovation - that underpins the way in which they conduct business.

Their effectiveness is based on using the appropriate specialist skills required, driven by a professional and innovative management team, to ensure that clients' expectations are met and exceeded time after time.

<http://www.millcroft.co.uk>