At Bosch, questioning the status quo, ensuring the transparency of one’s own actions, listening attentively, and accepting and learning from feedback are integral parts of the “Continuous Improvement Process” (CIP). The process is based on the idea of continuous improvement and is decisive for forward-looking activities. At the “CIP Global Improvement Conference” that was held on the occasion of CIP’s 25th anniversary last September, it became clear that a willingness to change has become indispensable in a society that is moving more quickly and unpredictably than ever.

The flow of ideas

The Bosch production site in Charleston, South Carolina, has demonstrated how CIP works in practice. In order to develop as many ideas as possible, associates are invited to pin suggestions on how products, processes, or working conditions can be improved to the central team board. Following the Japanese “Kaizen” method, the proposal then passes through a process that ends with a suggestion for implementation within a maximum of 30 days. In Charleston, the transparency and the corresponding bonus system for new ideas have raised awareness among all associates for the need for continuous improvement.

Thanks to associates’ ideas for improvement, Bosch saved some 150 MILLION EUROS in 2016.

Learning networks

The CIP network in Latin America also aims to improve results in a lasting manner. Twenty-two CIP coordinators from seven Bosch countries have joined forces to drive forward a culture of constant change and agility in the organization. The network informs about best practices and thus ensures systematic knowledge sharing between individual divisions and locations. In addition, the network has examined various work methods such as the scrum method that is common in software development, and offers associates training workshops. CIP will thus gradually evolve into a knowledge platform of sorts, whose members can network with one another and share knowledge independently.

A similar platform was established on the company intranet to mark CIP’s 25th anniversary. For 25 weeks, the international CIP community shared in Skype interviews with managers best practices from various divisions and regions. Associates actively exchanged ideas on the ways in which CIP is being practiced at the company, and provided an outlook about how to shape CIP practices in the future.

This is how Bosch promotes improvements and ideas:

**Cleverle Award:** The internal Bosch prize honors the locations where the greatest number of ideas have been submitted. Locations are evaluated based on the share of associates who submit ideas, the number of ideas, and the financial benefit that these ideas have achieved. In 2016, the Bosch plants in Ansbach, Arnstadt, and Salzgitter won prizes, as did the Bethlehem, Anderson, and Charleston locations in the United States.

**Disruption Discovery Teams:** For a period of two months, international teams of six associates each worked on ideas that go beyond traditional Bosch business models and build the company’s innovative strength.

**Improvement Day:** The Schwieberdingen location in Germany invited all associates from Schwieberdingen and the surrounding locations to an intensive day of CIP training, which included workshops and a number of opportunities to discuss ways of making production more flexible and efficient.

Sustainable economic growth, lower natural resource consumption, and social prosperity depend largely on the innovative strength of business. At Bosch, the quest for continuous improvement has a name: CIP.