What is 3P?
3P is a planning tool that stands for Production, Preparation and Process. It is used to create a prospective work space design that is efficient and effective. 3P is based on a “starting from scratch” principle; whereas other improvement initiatives such as Kaizens typically focus on the current process and systems. In 3P the limitations of current constraints is not present, allowing the flow to be optimised and waste minimized by building it into the design of the space.

The Specifics
3P is typically facilitated in multiple stages. Before the 3P event pre-event work is done such as flow mapping, Gemba walks, determining budget constraints, and identifying any equipment dimensions. This preliminary information is used to guide the 3P team activities and exercises. A wants/needs list is initially created and the physical and resource constraints are identified by the team and architect. The team then creates multiple drawings of what the new space “could” look like. The team frequently stops to share their drawings and creates a “nugget list” of great ideas to keep. Once the team lands on a final drawing a physical model of the facility is constructed. It can be created from many forms such as a model up to life sized. If a model is created actual process flows can be mapped out using threads. From here the designs and considerations are passed onto the architect. Once the designs move from concept to actual the team directs its activities to training and planning relating to the use of the new space.

Nugget List
A nugget list is a product of the team further developing the needs/wants list. These “nuggets” are additional ideas the team comes up with during their brainstorming activities. The “nuggets” improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the new environment.

Prototyping
There are many different ways of physically modelling the space. An inexpensive and easy way is using LEGO®, it allows stakeholders the opportunity to better visualize how the space will work for all departments. This scale model makes for easy revisions before the ideas and challenges are forwarded to the architect to incorporate into the conceptual design.