

New Hire Training – The Importance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

In a tightly regulated industry like Biomanufacturing, it is important that products are made exactly the same way EVERY time. The instructions for how to do this must be written out in extreme detail. These instructions are similar to a recipe or a laboratory protocol, but with every step spelled out in great detail. These detailed instruction documents are called standard operating procedures or SOPs. Biomanufacturing companies are legally required to follow SOPs.

To get you started thinking about how important good instructions can be, watch the following video, in which a father challenges his kids to give him instructions for how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. He follows their instructions to the letter.

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5d16ph>

After watching the video each biomanufacturing team should discuss:

1. Why did the instructions need to be edited so many times?
2. What types of assumptions were made by the kids when they wrote their instructions?
3. If you wanted the sandwich to not only look the same each time it was made, but to taste exactly the same each time it was made, what other things would need to be specified in the instructions?

Possible answers (remove this information in student version of this document):

- a. Brand of peanut butter
- b. Brand of jam
- c. Flavor of jam
- d. Brand of white bread