



Soft Skills Top Tips

Removal of waste

Introduction

The removal of waste and non-value added activity is a key principle of LEAN. Seven wastes were originally identified by Ohno: Transporting; defects, inappropriate processing, waiting, over-production, unnecessary motion, and unnecessary inventory. Four other wastes have been identified in recent years; untapped employer potential, inappropriate systems, misused natural resources, and environmental irresponsibility.

It is unlikely that all wastes will be removed in one go, and a culture of continuous improvement and regular reviews to ensure that waste is continuously identified and eradicated is key to success. However, few people recognise that it is much harder to develop the soft skills of continuous improvement.

Use these top tips to ensure you utilise the soft skills required to implement the removal of non-value added waste effectively.

- ☐ Need to know your business, processes and procedures
- ☐ Brown paper flow process/value stream mapping of processes – involve and consult with people
- ☐ Engage everyone to do their bit; you don't know it all
- ☐ What are the essentials vs. the nice to haves
- ☐ Understand efficiencies of people and/or machines
- ☐ Look to adopt lean thinking throughout the organisation
- ☐ Contrary to popular belief, lean does not just apply to manufacturing process but services too
- ☐ The whole organisation can benefit
- ☐ Break the whole thing down and ask if I didn't do X,Y,Z what would that mean
- ☐ Challenge current norms
- ☐ The only way to drive out waste is to first identify it
- ☐ It's not always physical – stress, anxiety, negative emotion all amount to waste
- ☐ Training courses are a must to embed lean thinking and train the trainer
- ☐ Give authority for team members to solve problems and identify improvements
- ☐ Evaluate and reward effectiveness and keep momentum going
- ☐ It can be addictive once the process has started; communicate quick wins and successes
- ☐ 1000 small steps to continuously improve, not 10 big leaps, is the key to success
- ☐ Fewest people to achieve best possible outcomes removing NVA activity

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