

The Seven Wastes

Lean for Business is a way of applying the principles of Lean Manufacturing to non-manufacturing processes. For example, it can be applied in a restaurant, office, shop etc. Many of the tools and techniques are similar. As in Lean Manufacturing, the ultimate aim is to eliminate waste. Waste is anything that adds cost or time, but is of no value to the customer.

The Seven Wastes include:

- Overproducing** - Producing more than needed or producing too much too soon does not improve efficiency. It consumes resources and leads to other wastes. Examples include keeping paper and electronic copies of documents; producing reports, which are put in a file and never studied.
- Waiting** - Waiting for people, machines (printer, photocopiers etc), information. It adds no value to the service, and can be the most aggravating to employees. Examples include waiting for a signature; waiting for a phone call.
- Overprocessing** - Processing more than needed. Examples include checking someone else's work; paying by cheque instead of by direct debit, requiring multiple signatures.
- Inventory** - Excessive stock can take up space and become a Health and Safety issue. Examples include a cupboard full of stationery materials like not-needed files. (How many post-it note pads, pens, etc do you have in your desk drawer?)
- Motion** - Any motion that is not necessary to the successful completion of an operation is waste. Examples include walking to the next room to retrieve print outs from a printer; walking to another room to pass on documents.
- Defects** - Producing defective work that needs to be redone. Examples include computer data entered incorrectly.
- Transport** - Transporting something further than is necessary. Examples include files kept in a central filing office; office supplies moved to a temporary location before being put away.

Contact us to find out what benefits you can achieve by introducing Lean techniques in your business.

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