

Visual Management

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Visual management is a business management technique used to allow information to be communicated by using visual signals instead of texts or other written instructions. It makes operation standards visible so that workers can follow them more easily. Visual management should be designed thoughtfully allowing quick acknowledgment of the information being communicated. The objective is to increase effective¹ and efficient² work in a clear way. These techniques expose waste so that it can be prevented and eliminated.

This technique should never be used to cause fear. Its main purpose is to keep issues in the mind of the whole company. If the Cost of Poor Quality (COPQ) is posted it is a visual exposing of an area the company wants to work on to eliminate. Following any posting of desired waste elimination, there should be visual tracking of progress. This is easily done using a bar chart showing to progress as it is being made.

- **Visual management needs to be standardized:** Without a normal condition, there can be no abnormal. From tool racks to defect costs, everything should become a standards way of doing things.
- **Visual management must be observable.** It should be easy to understand. A tool missing from a show board is obvious.
- **Visual management should be used.** This process must be used every day in every way possible.
- **Visual management responses should be standardized.** The response to a condition should be a planned process well in advance of problems. The result should be finish up by prescribing a remedy.

Examples of visual management are found in our everyday life.



¹ Effective Work: to accomplish the desired outcome of the customer by doing requirements and standards

² Efficient Work: Assuring that work that is done is evaluated by resources used versus return on investment

Other examples are. A production line can be stopped by anyone on the live if they detect a defect. They can pull a line that turns on a light that everyone can see and that causes the line to be stopped until a supervisor and line people can solve the problem. When the line stops (very expensive) everyone can see there is a problem. What would happen if a company failed to weatherstrip a door properly and the company stopped all houses needing door weather-stripping until they had solved the problem? That's in view of everyone in the company. The action speak loud that that company is serious about quality and customer loyalty.

A Cost of Poor Quality (COPQ) board or wall in the office or crew staging area is a very helpful use of visual management. The cost of a defect or inefficiencies can be posted along with a Prato chart (Bar chart) showing improvement over the following months. **REMEMBER DO NOT BLAME WORKERS BLAME THE PROCESS.** Our workers want to do good work. We need to support them in their effort.

Visual management benefits:

1. Expose waste so that it can be eliminated and prevented from recurring making work more efficient
2. Make defects in process inputs of man, machine, material, and methods visible to everyone for prompt corrective action
3. Enable trends in Quality, Safety, Delivery, Cost (QSDC) and abnormalities to be visible for timely preventive action to be taken
4. Motivates everybody to improve by clarifying key performance targets
5. Makes operation standards quicker and easier to understand by all employees so they can follow them
6. Builds participation through shared information
7. Creates flow in the value stream and allows pull to the voice of the customer