

Waste

The single biggest barrier to identifying waste is called “the normalization of deviance.” This is a fancy way of saying that if you look at a pile of junk long enough, you’ll stop noticing it. The pile begins to seem normal. This tendency is the bane of PM inspection (when people stop seeing deterioration) and lean maintenance efforts (when people stop recognizing waste).

Sometimes we have to shake up our normal methods of seeing. A great way is to visit other plants, even in other fields. You’ll be surprised how easy it is to identify other organization’s waste. This ability lasts a few days – then you will normalize their deviance. Other eye-openers: going on vacation, taking a seminar or class, enjoying a book or an audio. But make quick use of your altered sight – in a day or two most go back to being blind to the waste.

Another good approach is to start a new list. Example: list the top ten parts used by part number and usage. The waste is right there and can be seen by asking the five whys. Why do we use this part? When you get the answer to that question, ask why that happens. Repeat asking “why” another three times.

In a few minutes you’ll get answers which can help reduce usage of many parts. Remember, for every part whose usage is reduced, you also reduce the labor and inventory costs associated with that part. This little trick can be repeated with the new top ten. It is okay to skip a part that does not yield a solution in 30 minutes. Simply go to the next one. Don’t forget to have some fun with this method.

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Landing page: <http://www.maintrainer.com/Lean-Maintenance-Toolbox-audio.asp>

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