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## The MUDA hunt – waging war on WASTE

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One of the first steps on your continuous improvement journey should be to launch a muda hunt or war on waste. In a true continuous improvement culture, this war will be a never ending one.

### **Rule #1 - Know your enemy**

You need to develop an understanding of what waste is and the many forms it can take on in your organization. Continuous training and cross functional brainstorming are key activities that could assist you and your team in this regard. Look for:

- Wasted time
  - o Ways to reduce time wasted searching for things
  - o Ways to reduce time wasted waiting for things
- Wasted effort
  - o Unnecessary duplication
  - o Activities that take place multiple times per day at different times during the day, that could potentially be consolidated
- Wasted money
  - o Cost saving opportunities
  - o Wasted water
  - o Wasted electricity
- Wasted paper or other physical goods
  - o Things that can be recycled and / or re-used

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it should be enough to get you going.

### **Rule #2 - Equip your soldiers**

You need to ensure that all of your team members know what waste is and then give them the authority, encouragement and recognition so that they end up doing something about it themselves. The logic is simple – if you have 100 employees all generating ideas waiting for the okay from 1 single person before they can implement anything, the lack of speedy results will smother whatever little faith there could have been in the process. However if 100 people are all generating and implementing improvement ideas themselves – just imagine the vast difference in the speed of value add generation to your organization! Just include a proper feedback mechanism so that you have a record of what was changed, when and how.

### **Rule # 3 - We are all on the same side**

Your team needs to be a real team before this will really work. Team members need to be able to trust each other that if someone identifies an improvement opportunity outside of their own area of work, that it will be communicated and received in a constructive and



appropriate way – it must not be perceived as an intrusion on their authority or as negative criticism. If you get this wrong it will bring a swift end to all your good intentions even before you could gain proper momentum.

Before it becomes an exercise in finding each other's faults, rather have team members focus on what they can do to make a colleague's life easier.

#### **Rule # 4 - Leave no man behind**

Everyone must get involved. Not only is there incredible power in diversity, but many hands also make light work. In the end you are only as strong as your weakest link, so every link in the chain should focus on becoming as indestructible and value adding as a diamond. Two heads really are better than one!

#### **Joining forces**

Once you have gained momentum internally - the next step is to get your suppliers involved. Be sensitive to the fact that if they are only starting out on their journey, they may not yet take kindly to your inputs into their processes. So rather approach them by getting their inputs into yours. As they see the value of what you can achieve by joining heads, they will soon be asking for you to return the favour and assist them in becoming stronger from the inside out as well.

Happy hunting and may the war be yours for the taking!

The Adapt To Change Team

Our Continuous Improvement and Supply Chain experts are assisting businesses in and around Cape Town to Continuously Improve and Adapt To Change. With more than 40 years practical experience – we know how to reduce your costs and make your business better!

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