

Bring Lean methodology into work

At our hospital, we work to promote a culture of continuous improvement through the use of Lean methodology. This methodology was adapted from the Toyota Production System (TPS) and focuses on the elimination of waste within work.

Administrative professionals could benefit from the implementation of Lean concepts. Two of them are 5S and the use of Kanbans for visual management.

5S is a method for workplace organization and consists of working through five steps:

- 1. Sort.** Separate what is necessary from what is not necessary. Ask yourself, "What do I need to do my job?"
- 2. Set in order.** Find specific storage areas for equipment, supplies, and files that make it easier to use those items when needed for work.
- 3. Shine.** Clean the space and keep it orderly, creating a pleasing workplace.
- 4. Standardize.** Maintain order by standardizing the updated storage procedures.
- 5. Sustain.** Make the change a lasting habit.

Goal: To organize and maintain neat and clutter-free spaces that encourages productivity. The 5S concept can be applied to desks, drawers, filing cabinets, supplies, binders, etc. The 5S's will reduce waste, increase efficiency, and reduce inventory.

The use of **Kanban** is a means of communication through visual signals.

Problem example: A staff member finds a specific form is missing from the supply cabinet. The staff member orders an excessive supply to avoid this problem in the future. Changes are made to the form and the excessive supply now becomes obsolete, creating waste and increasing costs.

Kanban: Staff establishes minimum and maximum quantities for a specific form. The forms are stacked in the filing cabinet with a visual signal when the form reaches the minimum level. A staff member sees the visual cue and re-orders the form in a quantity that reaches the maximum level. This avoids over-ordering and allows time for the order to be received before the minimum amount is depleted. This Kanban has eliminated waste and excess inventory.

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