

Since good stewardship requires lean thinking, let's use the word STEWARD as an acrostic to help remember seven types of waste. Read the definition and examples of each type of waste, and document what each type of waste looks like in your business.

WASTE

DEFINITION

MY COMPANY WASTE

SURPLUS

Expending energy or resources to produce or sustain anything that is not needed now. Often called overproduction, we see it in fast food restaurants where food awaits customers under heat lamps.

TRANSPORT

Also known as waste movement or conveyance, expending resources to convey information, material, product, supplies, or people. We easily see how this applies to people or material, but consider how far a document or drawing must travel in your process.

EXECUTION

Expending resources to perform tasks or duties that do not add value to customers. Also known as processing or overprocessing, it specifically identifies unnecessary or non-value added activity. Redundant communication, email, phone, USPS. Data entry in multiple locations, by multiple persons, extra paper copies or email copies, using three of anything when one or two will do.

WAITING

Idle resources due to starving for something required to complete necessary value-added work. Sometimes called delay, it is the most visible type of waste. People waiting for a specialist, supplies, tools, materials, or other resources, also machines waiting for people. Standing in line longer than necessary.

ACTION

Physical motion that requires energy to accomplish work. Often referred to as motion, it represents any activity that takes extra time or energy as it relates specifically to time-consuming or strenuous bodily actions. Reaching, stepping, twisting, bending, lifting, getting and placing objects, opening, wrapping, or unwrapping.

RESERVES

Assets not immediately necessary to operate the business, often called "inventory." This also includes any resource not immediately required to satisfy customers. Stockpile of raw materials, finished product, or work in process inventory. Reserves or stockpiles drive secondary waste: the cost of holding, storing, managing, moving, insuring, and protecting the stockpiles. The opportunity cost of not deploying the energy or tied up elsewhere represents additional secondary waste.

DEFECTS

The waste of energy, time, or resources required to inspect, repair, or correct any product or process, also known as the waste of correction. Detecting and correcting errors of any kind in any process represents waste. Do it right the first time. Although easier said than done, in the continual improvement process, we strive to eliminate causes of defects of any kind.