

The 8 Wastes of Lean

Waste is simply anything that does not add value to a product or service.

Waste (“Muda” in Japanese) comes in various forms, and it is easily remembered through the use of the acronym “DOWNTIME” (or sometimes “TIMWOODS”).

Waste exists due to variation, unevenness, inequality, or irregularity (“Mura” in Japanese).

Waste also exists due to unreasonable or excessive overburdening or stressing of people, equipment, or systems (“Muri” in Japanese).



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The 8 Wastes - “DOWNTIME”



Defects

Efforts caused by rework, scrap, and incorrect information.



Overproduction

Production that is more than needed or before it is needed.



Waiting

Wasted time waiting for the next step in a process.



Non-Utilized Talent

Underutilizing people's talents, skills, & knowledge.



Transportation

Unnecessary movements of products & materials.



Inventory

Excess products and materials being processed.



Motion

Unnecessary movements by people (e.g. walking).



Extra-Processing

More work or higher quality than is required by the customer.



The 8 Wastes - overview

Taiichi Ohno, architect of the TPS, initially identified 7 wastes, to which was later added an 8th waste focused on people.

The 8th waste refers to non- or under-utilised employees, talent, creativity, intellect, skills, or potential. It is directly linked to the respect for people principle underpinning lean.

Eiji Toyoda, cousin to Kiichiro Toyoda (founder of the Toyota Motor Corporation), served as President and later as Chairman of Toyota. He said that:

“Employees are offering a very important part of their life to us. If we don’t use their time effectively, we are wasting their lives. Not only that but companies are wasting enormous untapped potential in their workforces if they do not create and sustain a work environment and organisational culture that is truly respectful of people, and that enables, engages, and empowers them to give their all”.