

Name That Lean Waste--Developing "Kaizen Eyes"

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The real key to becoming a Lean thinker is to develop the ability to see and name the waste. This quiz is designed to help you develop the ability to see and name waste. Remember, value-adding activity happens when you change the form, fit, or function of the specimen or service to provide results or other information to your customer. Everything else is wasteful activity. If you can see it and name it, you can eliminate it-being able to see wastes is an excellent skill to develop.

Situation 1: An acute care laboratory has the practice of storing routine urines in the small department refrigerator until there is a STAT urine ordered. At that time, all routine, batched urines are analyzed along with the STAT one.



Identify all Lean wastes you can think of in this example.

Situation 2: An independent laboratory is attempting to keep the cost of transportation at a minimum by limiting the number of routes it staffs. Each route is four hours long from start (pickup at first client site) to finish (delivery of all specimens at the testing laboratory). Each workday six couriers deliver their collected requisitions and specimens between 6:30 PM and 7:00 PM. For the next five hours the entire laboratory is a bustle of activity in all areas-specimen processing at first and then the testing areas. Identify all Lean wastes you can think of in this example.

Situation 3: In a large metropolitan area there are two competitors vying for the physician office laboratory work.

- The smallest hospital-based outreach program has taken an information technology approach to order entry and result reporting. All of its physician clients order tests on line and receive results into their office-based electronic medical records system. No tests are missed, ABNs are always received, and front-end billing is clean.
- The largest sized national competitor accepts both paper and electronic requisitions-40% paper and 60% electronic. It has a combination of connectivity approaches including web-based applications and interfaces for reporting with physician offices so that results are delivered in a timely fashion. Reports are also delivered via morning couriers. The front-end billing staff works eight hours each day and there are seven of them on-site Monday through Friday. Each day they must work 5,000 third-party

requisitions; they begin the process with a sort based on insurance company name/type-Medicare, Medicaid, BC/BS, etc.... It is their job to ensure all tests have been ordered, all required ABNs have been received and located, and all insurance information has been validated prior to actual billing.

Identify all Lean wastes you can think of in this example.

Click the link to check your answers against mine [[ANSWERS](#)]. Let me know if you find this type of blog exercise useful. Let me know if it has enabled you see waste and develop your "kaizen eyes."

