

Types of Waste in Service Organizations

Waste is found in work processes from:

Waiting. When individuals (staff and/or clients) cannot proceed with their work or next step of a process as they wait on other parts of the process to be completed, such as when a client cannot receive a service with minimum wait time because the process design results in unavoidable delays.

Convoluted Pathways. When there are complicated pathways, with many twists and turns that people and/or material must travel through a value stream, such as when an application for a service moves back and forth through a number of offices for various signatures and/or additional information before it can be approved and the client receives the service.

Rework. When a process is set up in a way that requires the same activity to be done more than once, such as when there are multiple places a piece of information is stored that requires a person to do the same data entry or filing activity more than once.

Information Deficits. When information is missing that is required for a work process to move forward, such as when applications come into an agency without all the required information completed, resulting in staff spending time to gather the missing information.

Errors/Defects. When services are delivered and/or materials produced and rejected because of errors, mistakes, and/or poor quality, such as when a complex data management system has been developed to help maintain an organization's ability to track delivery of services and or accomplishment of outcomes, and the system lacks quality control on the data entry process, rendering the data unusable due to the amount of error.

Inefficient Work Stations. When a work station is set up in a way that requires more movement of an individual to complete a set of tasks, such as when an individual must continuously get up from his/her work station and go across a room or down the hall to retrieve material that is used frequently.

Extra Processing Steps. When there are numerous steps in a process that do not contribute to the delivery of a service or creation of materials, such as when a request for service must go through many levels within the organization for review and approval before a decision can be made.

Stockpiled Materials/Supplies. When more materials than needed are produced and maintained in inventory, such as when an organization produces 20,000 copies of a brochure or flyer because it is less expensive in quantity, yet it becomes dated and cannot be used, resulting in extra handling and storage space being used, cash being inappropriately consumed for unneeded material, and labor being used to move the material around and/or dispose of it.

Excess Services/Materials. When an organization delivers more services and produces more materials than are needed by clients, such as when a program offers a standard package of services to clients, regardless of their needs.

Process Variation. When there are no standardized or defined work flow processes in place, such as when staff are doing the same work differently, or when there are exceptions to a work flow process that create the need to work around the process and there are no guidelines as to how this is done.

Resource Depletion. When an organization allocates critical resources (e.g., personnel, time, and money) to completing work activities that add no value to the service delivered or materials produced, thereby diverting these resources away from what is needed for value-added work activities.

Source: Miller, J., Bogatova, T., and Carnohan, B. (2011). *Improving Performance in Service Organizations: How to Implement a Lean Transformation*, p. 44-46. Chicago, Il.: Lyceum Books, Inc.