



## WORKINGSMARTER

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# The '8th Waste' can be the worst

**F**or those of you who are familiar with the Working Smarter and Lean philosophies, you know there are seven types of waste. As a quick review, they are transportation, inventory, motion, waiting, extra processing, overproduction and defects. As you see, waste can be an issue in every part of our businesses — and learning to identify it is the first step.

For the real Working Smarter enthusiast, you may also know of an 8th Waste. If left unmaintained, it can be more detrimental to your business than all the other types of waste combined. The eighth waste most people never think of is: unused employee creativity.

Our people will always be our most valuable asset. That is not a new concept. I have often said, every great thing that has ever been accomplished or will be accomplished has and will happen through people. It makes sense that it will be our people who will learn to find and drive out waste, and

it's up to us to make sure each individual realizes his or her important role in doing just that.

I'm willing to guess, however, too often we fall far short in providing the opportunity for this great asset to creatively find solutions and produce at its fullest potential.

### A continual process

We work to eliminate waste so that our people can work smarter. Remember, however, they are a critical part of the equation. You not only want employees to perform more efficiently, but you want them thinking about continual improvements

they can initiate at every opportunity. Imagine what we could accomplish if we consciously worked to provide our team with the opportunity to engage their minds and exercise their creativity on a regular basis. Despite what some may say, everyone can be creative in the sense that they can provide a new perspective or idea on how to improve the business they help support.

A Working Smarter culture flourishes and falters with your team's ability to gain contribution at all levels. If your culture is reluctant to provide opportunities based on job title or seniority, think of all the wasted creativity that is being passed over. The greatest idea may come from the 15-year crew member who knows his job better than anyone, or from the new hire who has not been around long enough to know better.

What if your culture promoted the following habits?

- ▶ An idea board with incentives for posting Working Smarter ideas.
- ▶ A management team that regularly asks the newest hires, "How do you think we can do this better?"
- ▶ Time set aside each week, without compromise, for your team to communicate on ways to Work Smarter.
- ▶ Time set aside each week, without compromise, for crew members to ask one of their clients about ways they can add more value through their service, even if it requires a translator.

Look at your culture and your strategy for improvement, and be cautious not to overlook the waste that can build up in unused employee creativity. Never discount the potential that rests in fully using your greatest asset: the great people who make up your organization.

### MONTHLY CHALLENGE

Find a way to engage every single one of your employees in an activity that helps them each Work Smarter.



More than 250 Green Industry companies have participated in JP Horizons' Working Smarter Training Challenge (WSTC), typically saving tens of thousands of dollars annually. To learn whether your organization qualifies to participate in the WSTC, visit [www.jp horizons.com/LM.htm](http://www.jp horizons.com/LM.htm) today.