

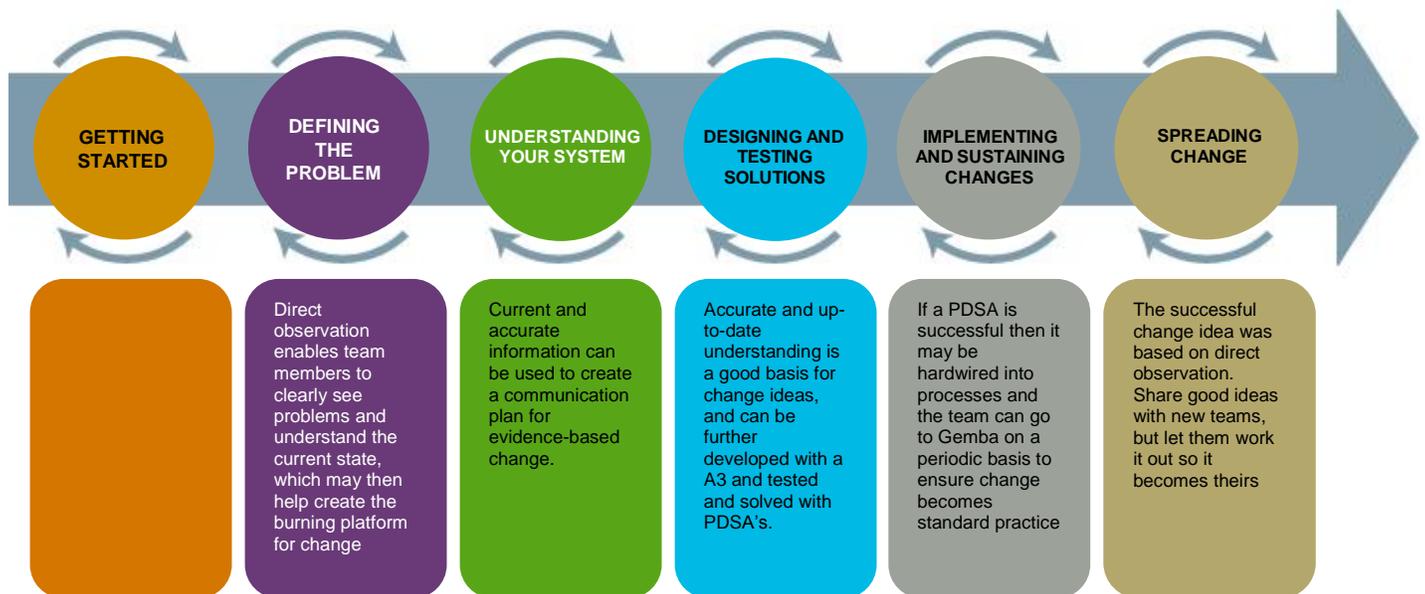
Going To Gemba

INSTRUCTION

Why go to Gemba?

Gemba is a Japanese term which means “going to the real place”. This is usually understood to mean the place where care is delivered, support processes are performed, or more simply, where the work gets done. Going to Gemba can provide an understanding of what is *actually* occurring at any level of an organization and may lead to valuable insights that can be used to improve processes and workflow. It is also may be used to engage staff who are doing the work that is undergoing improvement.

How would I use this tool differently at different stages of the QI Framework?



How do I go to Gemba?

1 Obtain permission from organizational leadership and notify team members of your purpose, and of what to expect during a going to Gemba session.

2. Prior to engaging directly with staff, determine the lens through which you will consider the processes under review:

- Waste view (Eight Wastes),
- Problem view (Quality, Cost, Safety, and PDSA),
- Kaizen view (seek patterns, forms, tools, routines and apply at the system level)
- Solution view, where QI tools can be applied to address the problem.

3. Once at Gemba, ask *what, why, what if*, and finally *why not*

4. Validate any observations made with staff members. In Gemba terms, this is “go see, ask why, and show respect.” This phrase essentially means that you must go observe what is really happening (at the Gemba where the work takes place), while showing respect to the people involved, especially the people who do the real value-creating work of the business.

What do I need to go to Gemba?

Materials

- Items for documentations
- A stop watch to time each step of a process
- Tracking sheets for defects, errors, and duplication

Timing

Observe the most typical process on all shifts to determine if there are differences.

Setup

- Please see methodology above.

What Tips and Tricks would be useful in facilitating Go to Gemba?

- Look at entire horizontal process that brings a service/product to a customer.
- Enlist staff that work within the process.
- It is critical to reinforce that the workers themselves are valued. Some of the activities that they are doing may not directly add value from the customers' perspective. If these non-value-add activities are removed, more time will be spent providing value to customers.
- When conducting a Gemba walk, it is important to give the staff permission to describe what really happens on the front-line, not what is supposed to happen (such as documented in policy and procedure manuals). The staff needs to feel safe to describe the actual current state and to provide suggestions for improvement. Active listening is one of the most important skills required in this activity.
- Conducting a Gemba walk can lead to Value Stream Mapping (VSM) and Kaizen activities to address problems observed in the processes under review. Gemba walks can also be used to observe resulting changes in processes and to ensure the sustainability of any improvements.
- Use tracking tools such as process maps, and the Eight Waste Walk tool to help document observations. Value Stream Mapping can be used to identify the gaps between the current state and the future, desired state. This will help to identify the focus of the improvement activities.
- Always validate observations with the staff so you don't make assumptions about what they were thinking and doing during the process.