

Never Underestimate the Impact of the “Update”

Pam Vaccaro, MA, CSP

Why add even more items to your already lengthy list of to-dos? To reduce waste! One of the main tenets of the successful Japanese quality approach to management—Kaizen—is to reduce waste (defined as “activities that increase cost, but do not add value”.)

In our complex world of communication, the humble “update” has never been more valuable in its ability to reduce waste by keeping communication, production, and change clear and current. Here’s what the “update” can do for you for you as you move towards a well-managed business.

- **Relieve stress and worry.** Most of your employees and customers do not do well in a state of suspension. They feel more confident with a status report even if there is not significant, new information.
- **Save time.** When we fail to keep others apprised of changes in a task, we often spend more time responding to their multiple e-mails to “see what’s happening.” Also, important tasks won’t “fall through the cracks” so easily.
- **Reduce Conflicts.** Your associates, especially management, like to be kept in the loop. Unexpected changes can lead to anger and frustration. This is especially true in situations that directly affect a person’s sense of sense of accomplishment, appropriate control, or heightened expectation. Expect an increased productivity from less time spent of resolving personal or operational.
- **Build relationships.** Never underestimate the power of the update in developing loyalty and respect from customers, staff and colleagues. Updates show that you respect their time. Expect/require the same from them. Let associates know when, how, why you would prefer updates. This manages the over-zealous updater.
- **Can be quick.** A brief email, one-way voicemail, or quick phone call create a simple and effective update routine. When using email, limit the update to the subject line. Even though your position warrants your emails a priority status, recipients will appreciate your brevity as a way to respect their time.

Make updates part of your company culture.

Pam Vaccaro, CSP is a professional speaker whose expertise in managing time and attention brings her before audiences internationally. She is a Certified Speaking Professional, the highest earned designation by the National Speakers Association. Her company Designs on Time challenges companies and associations to rethink traditional time management. She is most known for tailored programs and innovative ideas.

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