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**To continually examine our processes to provide greater value to our customers without waste.**

# The Lean Line

# ELIMINATING WASTE IN ACCOUNTING & IT



All of Grunau's Accounting and IT personnel recently completed value stream mapping (VSM) of their main processes to identify areas of waste and make improvements. We included a couple participants on the IT VSM team that aren't part of the department to provide an "outside" perspective.

The IT team and 4 Accounting teams started in March with reviewing previous process mapping that they created about 5 years ago; they updated the VSMs with changes they've made in the last 5 years. Time studies were then completed to identify amounts of time spent on various procedures and documented using the "sawtooth method" to show value vs. non-value added times. Armed with this information, below are a couple of the time wastes they have improved upon.



- The IT department discovered setting up a new employee for computer use took 8 days previously with about 7 days of sheer wasted time. By changing some of their actions, they were able to bring this down to an average 6 hours of value-added time.

- Accounts Payable determined over $8,000/year could be saved by paying all vendor bills from electronic invoices (email or fax) versus hard-copy mailed invoices. The new process cuts down on processing delay times with a 60% savings per invoice. We are now receiving approximately 55% of our invoices electronically, with the hopes of increasing this percentage as more vendors see the value of using electronic invoicing.

- Accounts Receivables is creating standard checklists for job billing requirements and changed their scanning process for electronic filing.

- With a simple change of repeating the Job or WO name and number to the person calling in for a PO, this confirmation eliminates time-consuming problems later when the PO and invoice are processed in our computer system. Purchasing also eliminated hand-written PO logs for several departments that can now access their logs on our common computer drive.

- Payroll started to streamline their process when Grunau changed to the computer-based "Timesheet Application" which cut down on double data-entry and error-proofed the system. This change reduced weekly payroll processing time from 3 days to 1½ days.



The IT and Accounting teams have several action items that they will continue to work on based on their findings from the VSM process. The teams expressed the VSM activities reinforced the idea that we can do something different even if we've always done it a certain way. The team members' work shows how Grunau's culture has changed over the years so we are constantly looking for ways to reduce waste.

We hope that your mindset has also remained open to the endless possibilities of improving upon your everyday tasks. If you've found a better way or eliminated waste, let one of the Lean Steering Committee members know so we can share your story.

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