

CPM's Lean Tips

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How does Lean project management remove waste?

One of the ways Lean project management processes have removed waste is by reinventing the Request for Information process in construction projects so that communication can take place quickly and efficiently between the individual seeking the information and the individual most able to provide it. Lean practice encourages direct communication by requiring that all requests for information be initiated by a phone call directly from the seeker (usually a skilled trades foreman or superintendent) to the provider (usually a project architect or consulting engineer).

These individuals either work out the answer to the question, or agree on a method and timeline for the issue to be resolved. Either way, the results are reported out to the rest of the team through a variety of methods: e-mail, a confirming request for information (RFI), a discussion in an Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) team meeting. In that way, the problem gets solved, the affected individuals are notified, and the often cumbersome process of routing RFI paperwork back and forth through the system is short-circuited. It is not unreasonable on a Lean project to have a goal of “no RFI’s except those that confirm answers already agreed upon.”