

What is a Gemba Walk?

A **Gemba Walk** is a Lean management practice where leaders and managers go to the actual place where work is done—the "Gemba," a Japanese term meaning "the real place"—to observe, engage with employees, and understand how processes are functioning. The goal is to gain first-hand insight into operations and identify opportunities for improvement.

Purpose of a Gemba Walk

- **Understand the work** being done, rather than relying solely on reports or dashboards.
- **Engage with team members** and show respect for their roles and expertise.
- **Identify waste, inefficiencies, or obstacles** in real-time.
- **Encourage a culture of continuous improvement** by asking questions and listening to ideas.

What a Gemba Walk is NOT

- A performance evaluation or audit.
- An opportunity to correct or criticize workers.
- A time to implement changes on the spot.

How to Conduct a Gemba Walk

1. Plan the Focus

1. Select a specific process, area, or workflow to observe.
2. Have a clear objective (e.g., understand delays, evaluate flow, see safety practices).

2. Go to the Gemba

1. Physically visit the place where the work happens.
2. Observe with curiosity and respect.

3. Ask Open-Ended Questions

1. “What challenges are you facing today?”
2. “Why is this step done this way?”
3. “What would make your job easier?”

4. Listen and Learn

1. Focus on listening rather than offering solutions.
2. Take notes on observations, employee input, and potential areas for follow-up.

5. Reflect and Follow Up

1. Review your notes and discuss findings with relevant teams.
2. Prioritize issues and work collaboratively on solutions.
3. Communicate what was learned and what actions will be taken.

- **Key Benefits**

Builds trust and visibility

Uncovers real operational issues

Supports a culture of respect and improvement

Increases leadership understanding of daily operations

