Visual Management

Visual management refers to visually representing work processes and key performance data to optimize productivity, quality, and safety. It promotes transparency around operational metrics and issues in order to drive continual improvement.

Common visual management tools include:

- **Dashboards** - Display vital metrics like service level agreements, cycle times, defect rates, etc. Make performance highly visible.

- **Kanban Boards** - Illustrate workflow states and movement of work items through stages on cards or boards. Highlight bottlenecks.

- **Andon Boards** - Indicate problems in real-time, such as with a production line stopping, using visual signals. Enables quick response.

- **Standard Operations** - Use diagrams, photos, drawings, signs to demonstrate standardized procedures. Avoid reliance on tribal knowledge.

- **Scoreboards** - Show progress towards goals for teams or departments using simple figures like red, yellow, green indicators.

- **Metrics Boards** - Track a wide range of KPIs at individual, team, process, or organization levels.

- **Goals/Strategy Boards** - Communicate objectives, initiatives, values, and priorities to align efforts.

Effective visual management requires consistency, simplicity, intuitiveness, and strategic placement of information displays. Standard work instructions, metrics boards, floor layout markings, and kanban systems create an informative visual workplace. Integrating simple visuals into daily communication, rather than just written or spoken formats, conveys information rapidly.

Benefits of visual management include exposing abnormalities quickly, improving transparency, aligning priorities, conveying expectations clearly, and empowering teams to identify and solve problems. It institutes a continual improvement culture. The adage "what gets measured gets improved" applies - but measurement must be highly visible in order to drive change.