

7 STEPS FOR A GEMBA WALK

Steps	Description
<p>1. Pick a theme</p>	<p>Before a walk begins, managers should pick a theme to guide the entire Gemba walk. This narrows the focus of the Gemba walk and yields better results, as attention is not spread amongst different themes and objectives. Once a theme has been chosen it's easier to tailor your Gemba walk questions to the theme you chose, and ask quality questions.</p>
<p>2. Prepare the team</p>	<p>Inform the team by explaining what a Gemba walk is and what to expect from a routine Gemba walk. Share this in your Tier Meetings. Consider sharing your checklist, too. This lowers a team's anxiety as the Gemba walk will not be perceived as an evaluation, but rather, a collaboration between participants. Getting buy-in from the team beforehand will also raise questions that could have been missed.</p>
<p>3. Focus on the process</p>	<p>Stick to the evaluation of the process and how things are done. Here, a checklist can help. By writing questions that force you to assess the process, not the person, you can avoid the most common Gemba walk mistakes: blaming. Remember: You are there to identify opportunities of improvement in the process and barriers on the shop floor hindering productivity.</p>
<p>4. Keep the value stream front & center</p>	<p>Make sure your checklist traces the whole value stream. By sketching these questions out beforehand, you can ensure you don't miss any crucial stations or processes. Focusing the bulk of your Gemba walk on the value chain is more effective in identifying bottlenecks and potential pockets of waste. Removing such bottlenecks will improve overall performance across the value chain.</p>
<p>5. Record observations</p>	<p>Record everything. Hoover up every data point you encounter on your Gemba walk. Don't make assumptions or recommendations before journaling everything you find on the Gemba walk. Here, checklists are helpful. You can record your observations as answers to the questions you know you need answered. You can also just take notes or record and document your findings via video. Regardless of method: record, record, record!</p>
<p>6. Get a second vantage point</p>	<p>Once the Gemba walk has concluded and all relevant information has been recorded, seek a second opinion. Better yet, have another team member write their own checklist. Having a fresh set of eyes review your findings could yield important insights. Comparing checklists can help you locate any gaps in your own thinking. This second perspective could be someone far removed from the operations or an experienced operator who did not take part in the Gemba walk. Feedback reveals overlooked information.</p>
<p>7. Solicit feedback</p>	<p>Present your findings to the team regardless of outcome. Whether your findings were insignificant, and no changes need to be made to the operations or vice versa. This brings the collaboration between stakeholder's full circle and negates any feelings of being watched by the team during the Gemba walk. If changes need to be made, include them in your presentation tying back to your findings. This brings buy-in from all stakeholders and increases probability of success once the change to operations occurs.</p>