



# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MANAGEMENT (KAIZEN)

The word "Kaizen" is a Japanese term used to refer to continuous improvement. "Kai" refers to change or action, and "zen" to goodness or virtue. Together, they signify continuous improvement or improvement in small steps.

The idea behind Kaizen is that small continuous improvements lead to significant improvements in quality and efficiency. Instead of attempting drastic changes, gradual and constant changes are promoted, enabling employees and the organization to adapt and continuously improve.

## Everyone participates in Kaizen

Continuous improvement is a process that involves all personnel, whether it's to reduce variation and waste, improve efficiency, facilitate work, reduce fatigue, or enhance order and cleanliness, among other things. Problem-solving and risk management are also forms of improvement, but these are addressed using [Corrective Action](#) and [Risk Management](#) tools.

Continuous improvement enhances productivity, increases customer satisfaction, and makes the organization more profitable.

## The Kaizen process

Kaizen is a systematic process based on the continuous improvement cycle PDCA. It integrates the following phases:

### 1. Establish a methodology.

*Develop or improve the procedure that dictates how to carry out this process in the organization, ensuring that all processes and areas execute it in the same manner (systemic) and regularly (systematic).*

### 2. Form teams (5 to 8 people).

*Improvement projects are typically classified into three*

*groups: individual, natural teams, and global teams.*

*Natural teams are composed of individuals who naturally work together as a team. Once formed, they add individuals without an assigned team to ensure multidisciplinary composition.*

### 3. Project Proposal:

*The procedure should establish a "minimum annual quota" for improvement proposals per person and natural team. These proposals should specify at least the current state, desired future state, the proposed improvement action, and its cost-benefit evaluation.*

### 4. Proposal Evaluation:

*An evaluation committee analyzes the proposals and categorizes them based on their cost-benefit ratio to optimize the available resources and achieve the maximum beneficial impact. The results are published, and approval is given to the selected projects.*

*Individual or natural team proposals that may impact other products, processes, or areas are classified as generic or global to increase their scope and maximize their benefit.*

### 5. Project Implementation:

*Approved resources are allocated to develop the projects, and timely monitoring is conducted until their completion. The effectiveness and impact are verified.*

### 6. Recognition:

*The results are communicated, and participants are publicly recognized. If possible, incentives are provided to those who achieve the best results (e.g., points in an electronic wallet) to encourage participation.*

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