Overview:

**Visual Management** is a set of controls designed to create a transparent and waste-free environment. The three basic fundamentals of visual management are: 1) a signal is made, 2) a person detects that signal, and 3) appropriate action is taken. One of the primary uses of visual management is to create process control. Mechanisms that control the execution of a process are needed to create consistency. The three mechanisms of process control are: knowing who does what, knowing when to act, and knowing how to deal with exceptions.

The potential benefits of visual management include:
- Showing productivity in “real-time”
- Providing transparency to the process
- Improving customer service improvement
- Increasing “flow” in the process
- Lowering operational costs
- Promoting a safer workplace
- Empowering employees

Types of Visual Management Systems:

*Production Boards*

*Kanban:* Japanese term, “Billboard.” Creates PULL in a process flow to reduce lead times and inventory.
Andon: Japanese term, “Lantern.” Used to alert team about issues or opportunities for change.

How to create Visual Management Systems:
In order to create a visual management system, it is important to establish what information needs to be communicated. The order to follow is:
1. Define critical information
2. Create a signal
3. Select a desired medium (light, sound, etc.)
4. Define the appropriate action
5. Communicate actions

The type of visual management system to be used can vary depending on the organization. The three main types mentioned above (Production Boards, Kanban, and Andon) are three of the more popular options.

Helpful Hints
- Be mindful of company culture when creating visual indicators. Make sure to avoid offensive symbols or language.
- Implement reward systems. Most employees are more inclined to follow the queues of a visual management system when rewards are given occasionally.
- Place signals where the information makes the most sense.
- Keep visual management current and do not over use indicators or signals.
- Be creative! There are several different types of visual indicators such as diagrams or pictures, checklists, videos, and signs. Each type has its own benefits and weaknesses. Choose the one that makes the most sense for your workplace.