

Kaizen is the Japanese word for 'improvement'. It literally translates to mean **change (kai) to become good (zen)**.

When using *The Gemba House* as a basis for kaizen, there are five fundamentals that underpin the process:

1. Team work;
2. Self discipline;
3. Improved morale;
4. Quality circles; and
5. Suggestions for improvement.



After establishing the five fundamentals of the Gemba House, kaizen suggesting the elimination of *muda* (waste and inefficiency).

In the construction sector we identify 8 types of waste/inefficiency, which is easily remembered using the acronym DOWNTIME:

- D** = Defects / rework – not doing it right first time.
- O** = Overproduction – making or purchasing too much of an item, or producing it too early.
- W** = Waiting – not being able to perform a task when ready.
- N** = Not utilising employees Ideas or skills – keeping process the same despite the ideas.
- T** = Transportation – moving material more than needed.
- I** = Inventory – having too much of an item.
- M** = Motion – walking around or moving more than necessary to complete a task.
- E** = Excess processing – doing paperwork for the sake of doing paperwork (is it necessary).

After the elimination of **muda** (waste/inefficiency), good housekeeping is introduced using the 5-S method.

- **Sort (Seiri)**

Seiri is sorting through all items in a location and removing all unnecessary items from the location.

- **Set in order (Seiton)**

Seiton is putting all necessary items in the optimal place for fulfilling their function in the workplace.

- **Shine/Sweep (Seiso)**

Seiso is sweeping or cleaning and inspecting the workplace, tools and machinery on a regular basis.

- **Standardize (Seiketsu)**

Seiketsu is to standardize the processes used to sort, order and clean the workplace.

- **Sustain/Self-discipline (Shitsuke)**

Shitsuke or sustain the developed processes by self-discipline of the workers. Also translates as "do without being told".