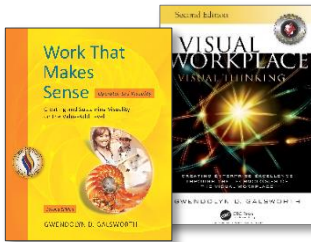# THE WTMS METHOD TRAINING CURRICULUM

The *Work That Makes Sense Training Curriculum (WTMS)* is a comprehensive method for launching, teaching, implementing, and sustaining operator-led visuality in manufacturing companies of every kind—high mix/low volume, low mix/high volume, job shops, and discrete and continuous process flow businesses. WTMS principles, concepts, methods, and tools are also highly effective in office and healthcare facilities.

This method was created by Dr. Gwendolyn Galsworth, a widely-recognized visual expert, with more than 30 years in the field and author of many books, including *Work That Makes Sense* and *Visual Workplace/Visual Thinking*, both Shingo-award winners.

THE HEART OF WTMS. The center of the WTMS curriculum are 13 training modules that teach value-add associates how to visually transform their work areas, step-by-step, showing them what a visual workplace is, why it is important, and how it works. Your hourly employees learn and immediately apply the concepts, principles, practices, methods, and tools that transform their process of work and themselves in the process. Operator-led visuality is a *system of thinking* first, then it is a system of visual devices.

OPERATOR MODULES. Each of the 13 operator modules is divided into learning segments that build understanding and application. Anchored in dozens of actual visual solutions per module, the WTMS course is designed for teaching groups, whether by Dr. Galsworth herself or one of her certified WTMS instructors … or through our WTMS online training system taught by your own in-house trainers. Any way WTMS gets delivered is a great learning and implementation experience for everyone.

MANAGEMENT MODULES. In addition to the 13 operator modules, the WTMS training curriculum includes three behind-the-scenes management modules for planning, preparing, and deploying a successful WTMS launch—and, once underway, for maintaining and sustaining the gains.

1,000 VISUAL SOLUTIONS. With some 1,000 actual visual solutions across all 13 modules, the WTMS method sets the field standard for excellence in training and deploying operator-led visuality.

DESCRIPTIONS: THE 13 WTMS OPERATOR TRAINING MODULES

OPERATOR MODULE 1
THE BASICS OF WORKPLACE VISUALITY

In this first operator module in the *Work That Makes Sense* (WTMS) curriculum, Dr. Gwendolyn Galsworth defines what a visual workplace is, how it works, and why it is so important to operational excellence. As part of this, she presents dozens of visual solutions from the community and the workplace that help operators understand and appreciate the power of visuality to stabilize, ensure, and connect.

Exploring these examples, your value-add associates develop a new understanding of reducing waste through visuality. They are inspired to transform their work areas and create a system of visual performance. Through vivid narratives and lots of humor, your employees begin to see how the visual devices they invent can translate the vital information they need in their daily work into exact behavior. The process of visual thinking has begun.
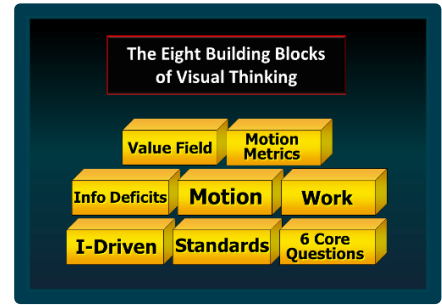
OPERATOR MODULE 2
THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF VISUAL THINKING

In WTMS Module 2, your group learns about—and gets ready to apply—the eight elements or building blocks that are the foundation of visual thinking.

The first is *I-driven*, a core principle that recognizes that when workplace information is missing, individual performance suffers—and that adds up to collective trouble.

Galsworth then defines the remaining building blocks and anchors them with examples that teach and inspire: Standards, Six Core Questions, Information Deficits, Motion (moving without working), Work, Value Field, and Motion Metrics. These form a platform for creating powerful visual devices that minimize—or even eliminate—information deficits at work: missing answers. As a result, operators learn to dramatically reduce risk, struggle, and mistakes through visuality. The benefits go straight to the bottom line.

As with each WTMS Module, this session ends with an Action Assignment and an inspiring insight ... food for thought.

OPERATOR MODULE 3
YOUR IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Module 3 targets your company's Improvement Infrastructure, a platform that makes sure your visual conversion gets off to a strong start.

First your associates learn about the three big-picture outcomes that WTMS creates. Then they consider the two management pillars that support the conversion: a) the company's official Improvement Time Policy; and b) the Accountability Team that handles key behind-the-scenes preparation for—and support of—operator-led visuality.

After that, your teams learn about five implementation tools they use that keep the visual momentum going and growing: Vision Place, Visual Workplace Action Hit List, Visual Workplace Supplies, the Visual Workplace Blitz, and the Laminated Map. This implementation toolbox is described in detail so you and your associates can begin to put it in place.
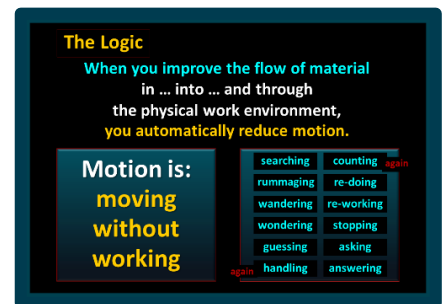
OPERATOR MODULE 4
SMART PLACEMENT: THE PROBLEM AND THE WHAT-IS MAP

The next four modules are a part of the WTMS sub-protocol called *Smart Placement*. They represent a powerful opportunity for your associates to launch an all-out attack on motion, caused by the illogical layout of function. Module 4 describes that problem through a series of hands-on experiments.

As part of this, your teams examine a company case study that demonstrates the struggle caused by the un-intentional location of function. Then they develop *What-Is Maps* of their work areas in order to discover the current level of motion there, triggered by un-smart placement.

This process also un-covers safety concerns and risks that are often un-seen and therefore unaddressed. The session concludes with each team's frank and grounded presentation of their findings. By then, associates have internalized their interest in making the placement of "things" in their work areas smarter—much smarter. They are ready to own the problem and solve it.

OPERATOR MODULE 5
SMART PLACEMENT: THE LOGIC, COULD-BE MAP & FOUR PEOPLE PROCESS TOOLS

In Module 5, operators return to the case study in order to learn what happened when that company applied Smart Placement principles and practices, including the central formula: *Function + Location = Flow.*

Next, they complete the set-up their second map: The *Could-Be* or *Dream Map.* This will be the tool they use for re-thinking the current layout of functions in their area, by applying to it the 14 Smart Placement Principles that they learn in the next two modules.

In the final section of Module 5, your teams learn about the *Four People Process Tools* that will help them keep new ideas flowing and growing—even in the face of strong and lively discussion.

The four tools are: 1) brainstorm; 2) gatekeeper; 3) talking stick; and 4) consensus. With these understandings, your group is ready to learn and apply the first set of Smart Placement principles, taught in the next module.

The location of function determines the **direction, quantity, and rate of the flow.**

Function + Location = Flow

▲ the formula ▲

OPERATOR MODULE 6
SMART PLACEMENT: PRINCIPLES 1 THROUGH 7

In this module, your teams study and re-think their current layout of function.

With their *Could-Be Maps* laid out on tables (and *What-Is Maps* on nearby walls), associates apply the first seven of the fourteen principles of Smart Placement and learn how to streamline the flow of materials, people, and information into and through their areas by re-thinking the location of things—of functions.

Using the first seven principles, they identify possible improvements: Locate function at/near the point-of-use; No drawers/no doors; Put it on wheels; Capture the full range-of-function; Nothing on top/nothing on the floor; Make it safe/ergonomically sound; and Make function appear/disappear at will.


Your value-add associates apply these principles directly on their maps and see their own assumptions about function evolve. Exciting improvements are on the way.

OPERATOR MODULE 7
SMART PLACEMENT PRINCIPLES 8 THROUGH 14

In this, the fourth and final Smart Placement module, your associates learn and apply the remaining seven principles. The *Could-Be Map* remains the paper laboratory. This time, however, they focus on larger, more abstract principles of flow: Let the flow do the work; Do major and minor sorts; Design to task; Use the existing architecture; Store things/not air; Double the function; and Use the natural flowline. These powerful principles help associates dive deeper into the motion caused by un-conscious functional location.

Smart Placement Principle 12
Store things, not air · Squeeze out the air

Think! Can you **apply** this principle in your work area? If so, **where?**

When ready, teams present their thinking to management for appreciation and—as needed—authorization. Between this module and the next, the way is paved for actual changes to the existing layout of work.
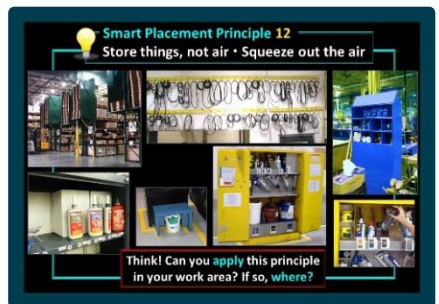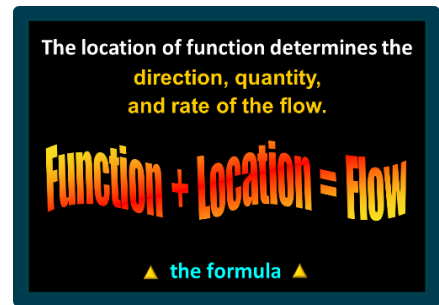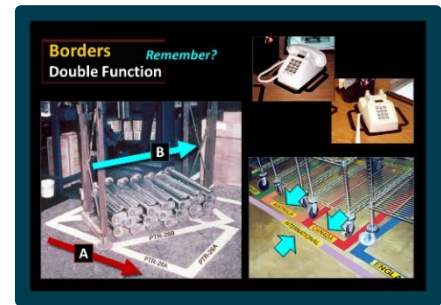
OPERATOR MODULE 8
THE VISUAL WHERE: BORDERS

Now that operators have improved the current location of function in their area through Smart Placement principles, they are ready to "nail" those locations in place through *the visual where*. That process begins with borders, the focus of Module 8.

In it, associates learn what borders are, how they work, and why they are considered the single most important element in achieving visual order—order you can see/order that functions.

When operators commit to applying borders as a regular and required part of their visual conversion, they not only lay down the pattern of work but begin to learn and master a visual, visible vocabulary of performance. Borders embed and stabilize performance, even as they provide natural communication links within and between departments. Borders are fundamental to the flow and precision of work.
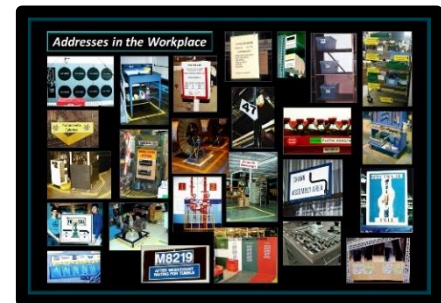
OPERATOR MODULE 9
THE VISUAL WHERE: ADDRESSES AND ID LABELS

Module 9 targets the two operational partners of the border function: addresses and ID labels—what they are, how they work, and their powerful impact on motion.

Too often, the real importance of addresses is overlooked or merely given lip service. When addresses are inaccurate, unreadable, incomplete or weak, they can trigger a ton of motion, some of it gross, much of it microscopic. It is not enough to hang up a "parts storage" sign and expect people to figure out the rest.

In this module, operators study dozens of addresses—some basic, others highly innovate; some very exact, others generic. The same with ID labels.

Teams learn the central lesson of this session: the absence of either an address or ID label (or both!) often results in accidents, mix-ups, defects, frustration, delays, long lead time—and a ton of struggle. As the module concludes, operators prepare to implement in their own work areas the addresses and ID labels they developed during this important session.

OPERATOR MODULE 10A
INERTIA, RESISTANCE AND SIMPLE VISUAL MINI-SYSTEMS

Module 10 begins with a hands-on experience so your teams learn more about the important difference between inertia and resistance—and how to handle both in themselves and in others.

Then the group studies visual mini-systems: clusters of visual devices that work together to promote a single performance outcome. They learn what they are, how they visually clarify and stabilize performance, and how to develop them. A key part of this is learning the difference between simple and multifunctional (multi) visual mini-systems. For this reason, the module is separated into two instructional sessions so your teams can develop and implement both types of mini-systems in their own work areas. In this way, they experience, firsthand, how mini-systems connect and align operational performance, remove struggle from day-to-day work, and build flow. The financial and cultural outcomes are remarkable.

Moule 10A is the first of two WTMS modules on visual mini-systems. Yes, they are that important.

OPERATOR MODULE 10B
MULTI-FUNCTIONAL VISUAL MINI-SYSTEMS

Your value-add associates have just learned what SIMPLE VISUAL MINI-SYSTEMS are and why they are important at work. As a result, they created an array of these simple systems of their own.

In Module 10B (the second visual mini-systems modules), operators expand their understanding—and their applications—as they branch out into MULTI-FUNCTIONAL VISUAL MINI-SYSTEMS and learn to increase mini-system effectiveness by adding two new types of function: VISUAL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS and VISUAL IMPROVEMENT FUNCTIONS.

Visual Support Functions include: Visual Scheduling, Visual Storage, Visual Retrieval, Visual Replenishment, and Visual Change Over, to name some.

Visual Improvement Functions include (but are not limited to): Visual Scheduling, Visual Measurement, Visual Problem Solving, and Visual Connects with Other Operations.

When you add the above functions to the visual information sharing that is already a centralized, stable, and coherent part of your WTMS conversion, you strengthen the operational fabric of your company's work culture even further and promote self-accountability, self-leadership, team-mindedness, and a reliable, interdependent community of contributors and thinkers—visual thinkers. You can be sure that all of this goes straight to the bottom-line.
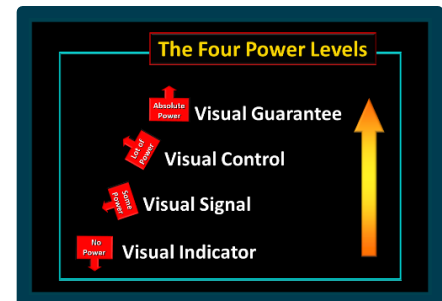
OPERATOR MODULE 11A
THE FOUR POWER LEVELS OF VISUAL DEVICES: VISUAL INDICATORS AND VISUAL SIGNALS

Module 11A, the *Four Power Levels of Visual Devices,* is the first of two modules that show your associates how to increase the visual effectiveness of their devices so these are more reliable in ensuring that *what is supposed to happen, does happen.*

This module targets the first two power levels: visual indicators (still useful but with no power at all) and visual signals (some power). As your operators begin to understand the difference, they can also begin to create more successful devices. Anchored in dozens of visual teaching examples, this learning leads to the next steps your teams can follow now that they have put the foundation in place (the visual where and visual mini-systems). Associates are ready for more advanced visual solutions: visual displays, visual metrics, visual dashboards, flags, andons, and others. Dozens or visual indicators and visual signals are examined in this module alone.

OPERATOR MODULE 11B
THE FOUR POWER LEVELS OF VISUAL DEVICES: VISUAL CONTROLS AND VISUAL GUARANTEES

In this final operator module of the *Work That Makes Sense System*, your associates learn how visual devices can literally govern—even control—performance. This is the science of adherence: making visual devices, and the thinking that produces them, more powerful.

The focus is first on visual controls, where structure forces or limits human and machine behavior. Supported by dozens of actual solutions, your associates also learn the relevance of pull systems and using structure to control material consumption.

Then they move on to visual guarantees or poka-yoke devices—the highest level of visual devices, with absolute power. Studying an intriguing assortment of examples (from Galsworth/Hinckley's *Online Mistake-Proofing System*), your teams learn about a set of visual solutions that is in a class of its own: visual error-proofing. The workplace speaks on an attribute level.
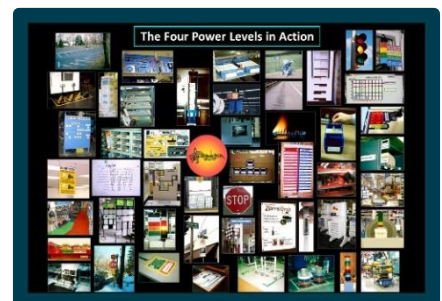
Visual controls and visual guarantees are advanced forms of visuality. Expanding the visual thinking in this way further strengthens and aligns your company work culture, increases performance precision and accountability, and enriches your bottom line.

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3 MANAGEMENT-FOCUSED TRAINING MODULES

MANAGEMENT MODULE 1: SEVEN START UP REQUIREMENTS

Every successful improvement implementation requires preparation—including WTMS. In this module, managers and your trainers learn how to prepare for WTMS success. This begins with finding and holding a clear picture of the outcome you seek (your Vision Place)—and includes understanding how your KPIs reflect your WTMS progress (Baseline Metrics). Among the several other success elements covered in this module are: a) your accountability structure (3-Legged Stool), b) how to find and keep a tight focus (Laminated Map), and c) how to liberate time for improvement (Improvement Time Policy). Your WTMS success and its sustainment starts here.

MANAGEMENT MODULE 2: GETTING READY TO BLITZ

The real test of knowledge is in its application: What are the results in terms of an improved work culture and the bottom line. WTMS uses a special blitz formula (called the *Visual Blitz*) for making sure that improvement happens, depends, and spreads.

In this management module, your in-house trainers and coaches pass the baton. They use this module to teach area supervisors how to organize, conduct, support, and coach effective Visual Blitzes in their own work areas. Their ability to conduct effective visual blitzes is an indispensable part of what will make your company's visual conversion a success.

MANAGEMENT MODULE 3: COLOR-CODE SYSTEM FOR BORDERS

Your system of floor borders is the bedrock of the *visual where* (taught to your operators in WTMS Modules 8, 9, and 10). The effectiveness of your borders greatly increases when you develop and test a rational color-coding protocol.

Color-coded borders do not happen by accident. They result instead by applying the logic of visuality first. Using the step-by-step process mapped out in this module, a small team of managers, maintenance staff, planners, and supervisors learn how to develop a powerful color-code system that makes your operational system even more effective. If you already have a color-coded system in place, use this process to vet and verify it.
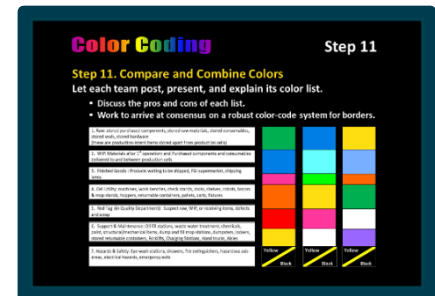
This concludes the descriptions of the modules in the WTMS Training Curriculum (Sept 2024).
Click the video link at the top of the WTMS Method webpage for video clips of each of the 13 modules.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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