Visual Management

What is it?

Visual management is the communication of information in a simple, non-verbal manner which is quicker for our brains to process. It helps you to:

- share information with others (**Visual Display**)
- see what's happening and how well things are going to plan ... or not (**Visual Control**)

Figure 1: An example of Visual Management

Benefits at a glance....

- understand a situation within a matter of seconds
- identify problems more rapidly than you would be able to through text-based communications
- alerts you to take action before it's too late
- provides focal point for communication, review and problem solving

From a continuous improvement perspective, **Visual Management** is about orienting and supporting people and not about controlling their actions.

Visual Management can be used by a team to track and monitor how well progress is being made against the measurable criteria or KPIs (key performance indicators) identified as 'Critical to Quality' to the customer experience from *Voice of the Customer (VoC)* data.

When to use it?

Use Visual Management when you want to:

- communicate quickly and accurately
- expose problems and highlight good practice
- spot trends in data and compare performance
- keep everyone in the loop

How to use it?

The Focus Programme uses **Visual Management** to enable a *Daily update* for each of their projects and for the programme itself. This provides the basis for communication through **Visual Display**, for

example, the team barometer and **Visual Control**, for example, showing progression on the tasks using quarter circles or colour coding on the physical and digital communication board examples as shown in Figures 3a and 3b below.
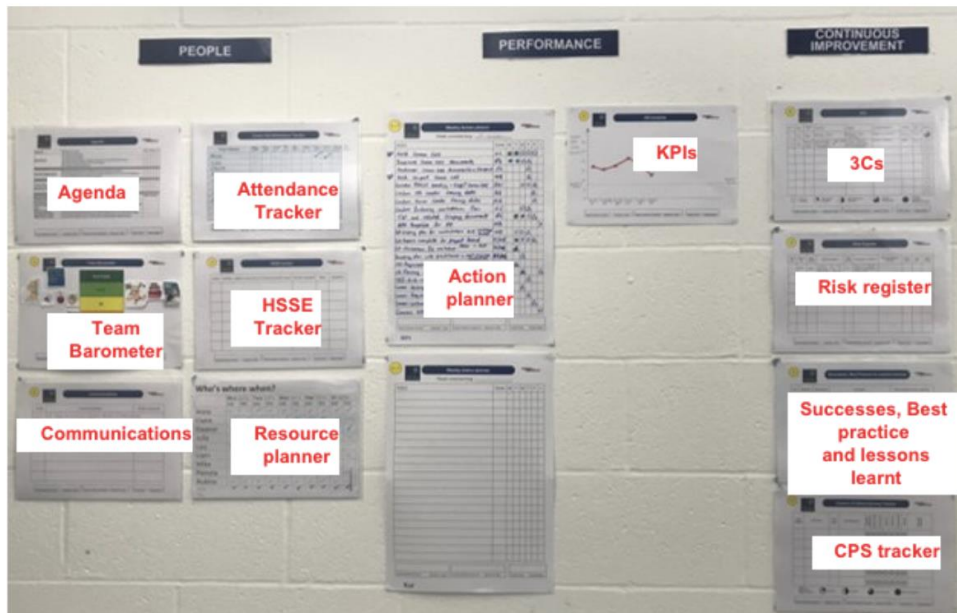

Figure 3a: A physical example of using 'Visual Display' to share information and' Visual Control' to see how well things are going to plan
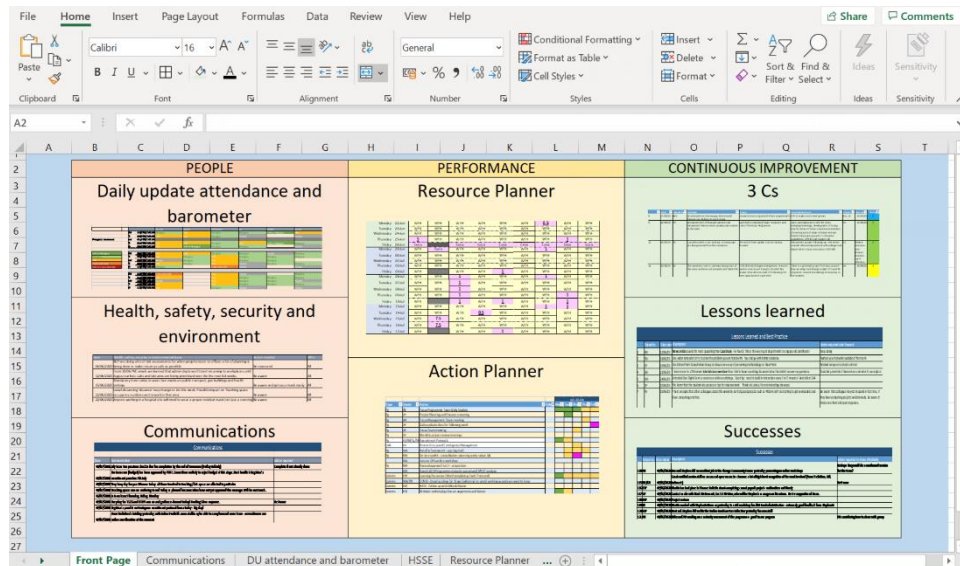

Figure 3b: A digital example of using 'Visual Display' to share information and 'Visual Control' to see how well things are going to plan

Visual management is just as important in the presentation of information online. Think how you could apply the principles to the high-level structure of a team SharePoint site or even to the design of forms and spreadsheets.

Visual Management can be used so that differing levels of risk can easily be communicated, at a glance, using red-amber-green (RAG) colour-coding relating actions required to the level of risk as show in the risk register in Figure 4 below. Red is high-risk, amber is medium-risk and green is low-risk.

Figure 4: An example of actions colour-coded relating to level of risk

Other examples of **Visual** Management tools include:

- **Andons** – a visual device that indicates status or warns of problems or failure and alerts you to take action. A simple example of Andon is the availability status displayed in your profile on Microsoft Teams.
- Warning signs, such as the one below in a store room at the Ashmolean.

'A visual device is a mechanism or thing intentionally designed to influence, guide, limit or even guarantee our behaviour by making vital information available as close to the point of use as possible to anyone … who needs it without speaking a word'

Dr Gwendolyn Galsworth, visual workplace expert