

The seven deadly muda of pitching

 By [Sid Peimer](#)

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In lean manufacturing lingo, Muda is a traditional Japanese term for activity that doesn't add value - is wasteful. Here are the seven muda as they relate to new business pitching.



For example, let's say you have three slices of bread and you can only toast one side at a time (you have one of those old toasters). The logical thing to do is to toast the first two slices completely and then do the third. That's waste - if you turned over the one piece and then put in the new piece, you would cut 25% off your time. This has worked wonders for Toyota (not the toast - the process) and the principles can be applied to many business activities prone to waste - such as pitching.

1. Overproduction

This comes from a deep desire to be accepted, which causes a deep desire to show the client how brilliant you are which causes a deep desire by the client for you to shut up already.

2. Transportation

Moving things one step too many is one step too much muda. If there is an informal environment where creatives can show their work at an early stage with a casual "Hey, what you think of this?", that's so much better than a bunch of twittering creatives presenting finished work to his lordship. Oooh, I hate that.

3. Waiting

You want to get it right. So you wait. And you tell a story filled with last minute detail of the correct data. And that comes second to a story crafted over time well told. Even if it's wrong. You are not there to get it right, you are there to get chosen.

4. Inventory

If you've got it and you're not using it, that's waste. I would like to propose the converse: sometimes putting your own creatives on the job can be a waste - they have as much history on the client as a perfect stranger. So why not use the perfect stranger? It's all about productivity.

5. Motion

Some agencies appoint a pitch ayatollah who has supreme power over the process and the people. Maybe that works for you. Rather get everyone to agree on the story you want to tell, and see how much more you get. Not more content, but more clarity - without everyone running around like headless chickens.

6. Over-processing

We often want to give them three concepts, to show the prospective client how talented we are. However, client will remember you for one thing. You need to commit to something. It doesn't have to be absolutely right. It just needs to be clear.

7. Defects

We all want to be heroes. So, we get the pitch and head for the finish line. We answer the brief in great detail and immense flair. However, sometimes the brief needs to be discovered. Never skip a thorough read through by everyone. Sometimes, the best decision you can make is not to pursue it at all, saving you much muda.

ABOUT SID PEIMER

Sid Peimer hates waste. But he has been known to be caught having a snooze by his wife when he should be fixing the roof. He has explained to his wife that this is preparation and not waste. She punched him in the muda. They have no children as yet. Visit www.stratplanning.com for lots more stuff on pitching, especially Pitch Secrets 2008 - the one-hour show plays August 2008 in Cape Town and Johannesburg! Sid is also the strategist-at-large for BBHP, a full service agency based in Cape Town. He does not go to work often, as he feels this wastes petrol.

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