

What is Mistake Proofing (Poka-Yoke)?



KEY LEARNINGS: WHAT IS MISTAKE PROOFING (POKA-YOKE)?

Introduction: Everyday Frustrating Mistakes

- Common small errors in service:
 - Receiving food orders incorrectly (e.g., burger with onions when you asked for none).
 - Packages delayed due to incorrect shipping addresses.
- Impact: Though minor, these mistakes accumulate, leading to:
 - Wasted time and money.
 - Loss of customer trust, which is hard to regain.

The Core Question

- How can we prevent small mistakes before they happen?
- The answer: Poka-Yoke – a Japanese concept for mistake-proofing.

What is Poka-Yoke?

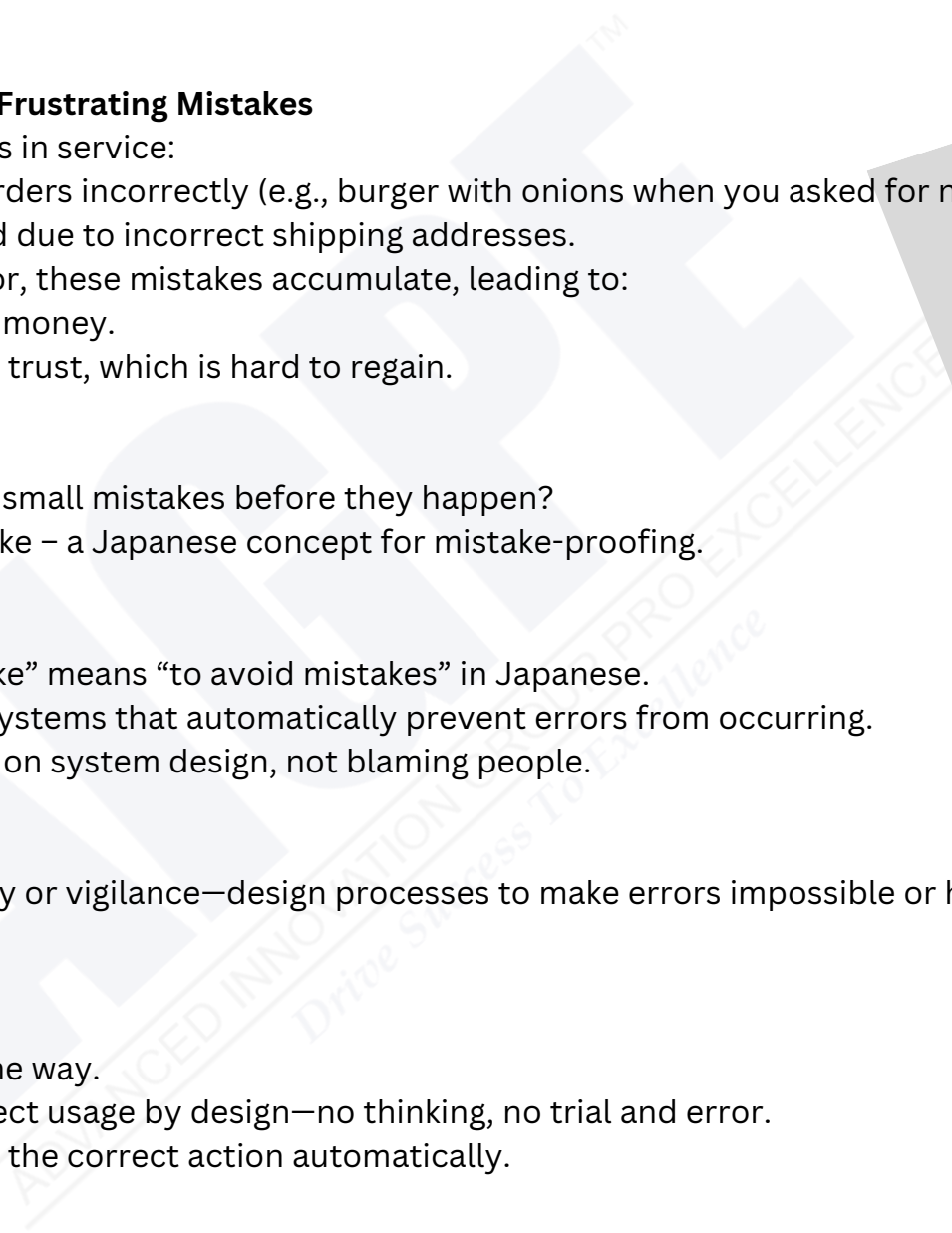
- Definition: “Poka-Yoke” means “to avoid mistakes” in Japanese.
- Purpose: To design systems that automatically prevent errors from occurring.
- Philosophy: Focuses on system design, not blaming people.

Key Principle

- Don't rely on memory or vigilance—design processes to make errors impossible or highly unlikely.

Example: USB Drive

- USB sticks only fit one way.
- This prevents incorrect usage by design—no thinking, no trial and error.
- The system enforces the correct action automatically.



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Why Poka-Yoke Matters in Services

- Mistake-proofing isn't about working harder—it's about working smarter.
- Helps reduce:
 - Customer frustration
 - Employee stress
 - Costly rework and service recovery efforts
- Encourages consistency and reliability, leading to higher customer trust.

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