Seeing is believing! – This phrase, which goes back to the 17th century, means that something that is strange, surprising or defies human logic is only believable after it has been viewed. One should therefore not underestimate the power of “seeing”. Seeing a situation or condition for what it is, is in fact, one the most effective means towards managing a workplace effectively and efficiently.

Visual methods have been one of greatest influence on human behaviour – hence advertisements, television and glossy magazines, just to name a few instruments that have successfully dictated societal norms and values. We are surrounded by visual methods, whether we realize it or not. Traffic lights, sign boards and lines direct the way we move on the road. Train time-tables, route maps and platform numbers help us get to where we are going on-time. Signage and labels enable us to find things in the supermarket. Different coloured jerseys enable us to find our team-mates or cheer for the right teams.

Well, visual methods work just as well in the workplace. From labels and signage to trend-charts and real-time LCD boards, these devices can provide quick, real-time information that can boost efficiency, quality, safety and timely decision-making in an instant. In some cases, they are the fine line between life and death situations.

Visual methods have been known to transform the workplace. Here are some examples from a transformed visual workplace:

- Self-explanatory workplace
- Real-time information at a glance
- Quick access to items – reduce or eliminate searching time
- Effective communication even with illiterate employees – a need in developing nations
- Faster respond to abnormal situations with potentially dire consequences
- Less errors, mistakes and accidents
- Higher productivity and output

The success of a visual workplace comes in tandem with increased employee discipline. Employees need to respond correctly to the visual stimulus. For that to happen, employees have to understand the meaning behind the visual signals and are familiar with the correct responses. On a daily basis, employees need to have the discipline to update, maintain and sustain the visual control mechanisms, as relevant. Only then can the visual methods be accurate, reliable and effective.

Is your workplace visual? Do employees take time and effort to access what they require to get the job done or understand the workplace condition? If so, then productivity will not be at its best, and neither will cost. Adopt a more visual approach. Let workplace situations be understood at a glance. Apply visual methods to your workplace and see the difference. After all, seeing is believing!