



Conflicting Priorities:

How to Visualize their impacts & Influence Change



DOMINICA DEGRANDIS
Making Work Visible

**DEVOPS
ENTERPRISE
SUMMIT**

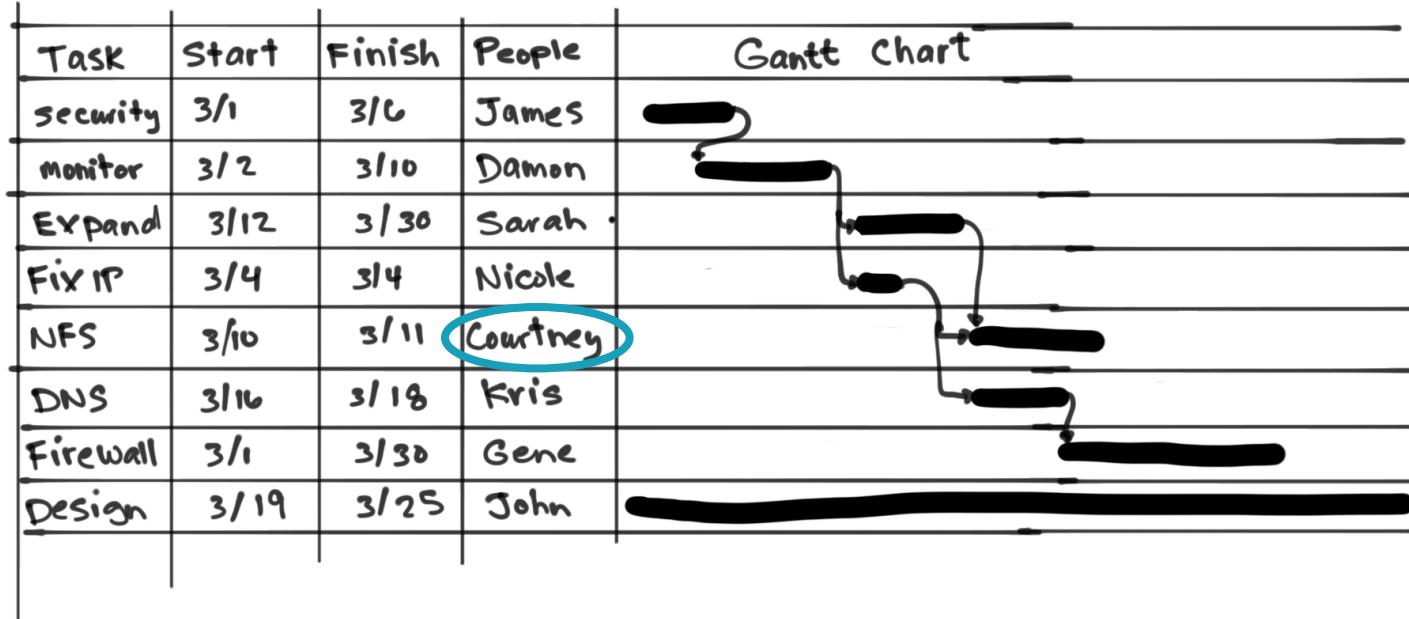
 **TASKTOP**

TEAM PAIN

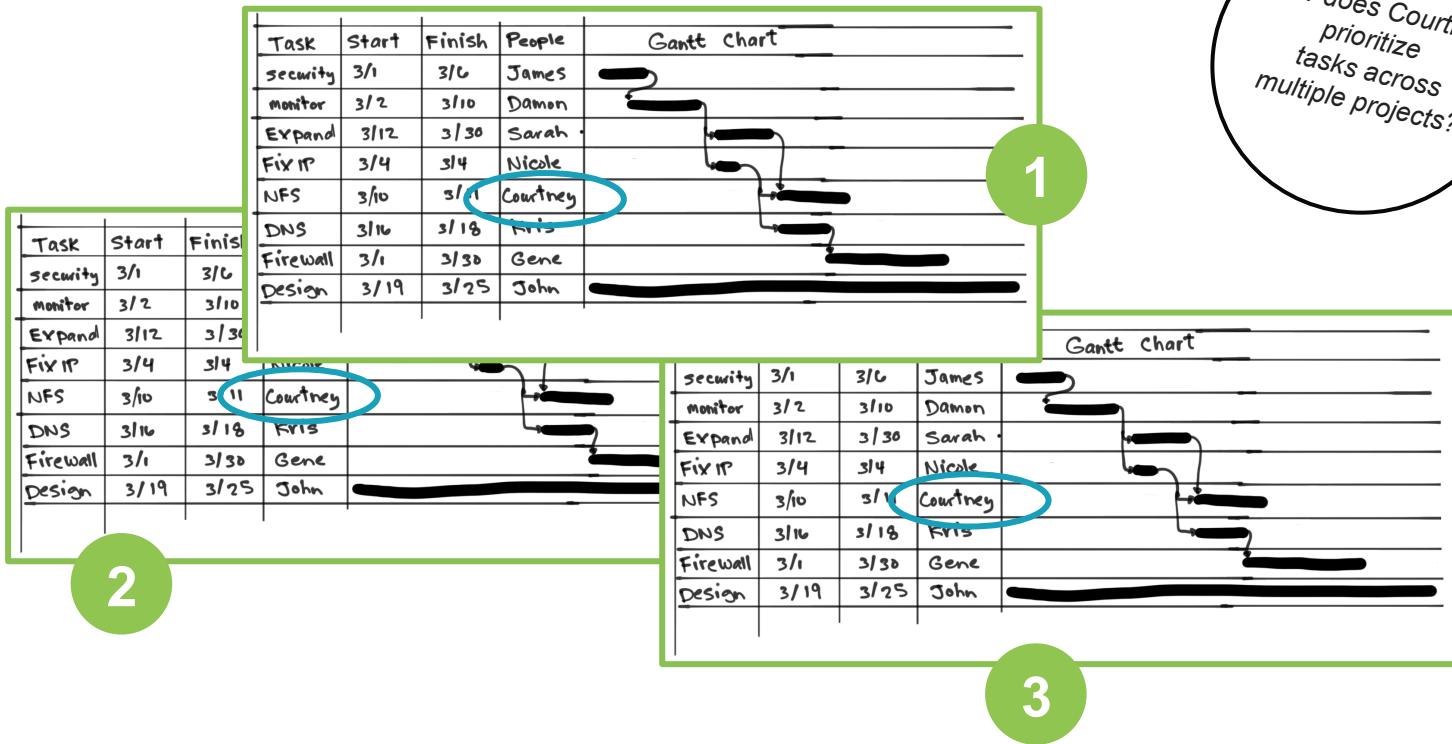
- Too many interruptions - can't focus
- Conflicting priorities - everything is a Priority one !
- Too many meetings
- No time for internal process improvements
- Too many different tools!
- Every reorg brings another process method.



Traditional Project Management



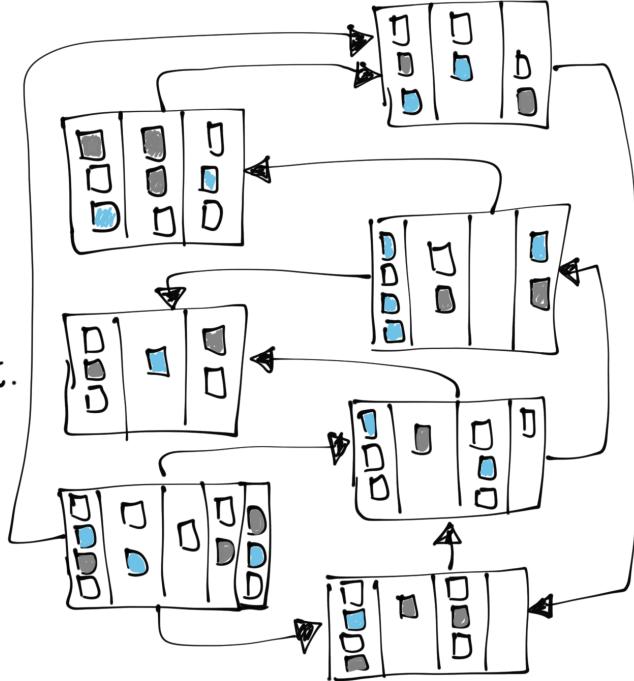
Teams rarely work in isolation



Team A's top priority is not team B's top priority

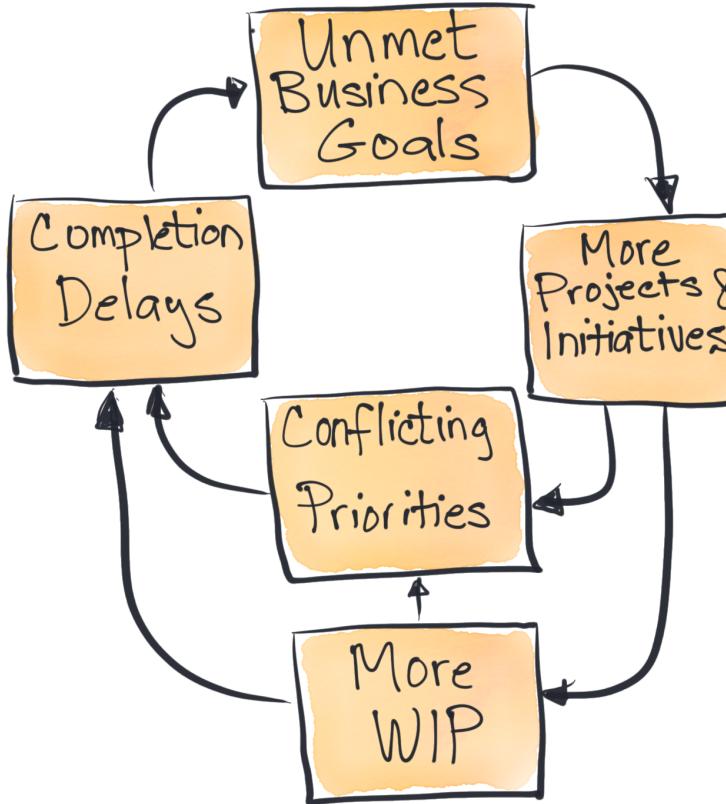


Problem:
All the thieves
across all
these teams.
It's hard to
see the big
picture impact.





Why Conflicting Priorities matter

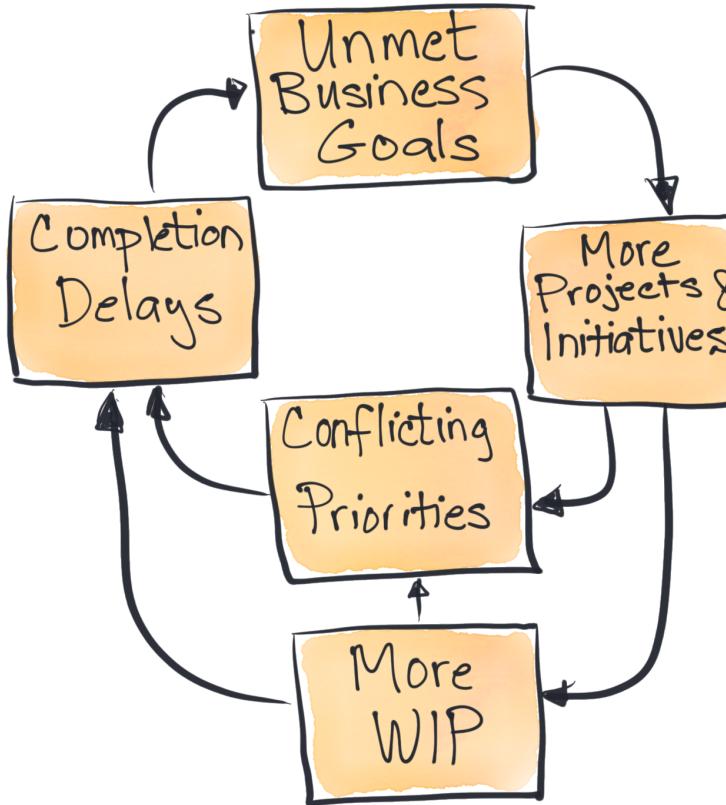


People have a finite amount of capacity



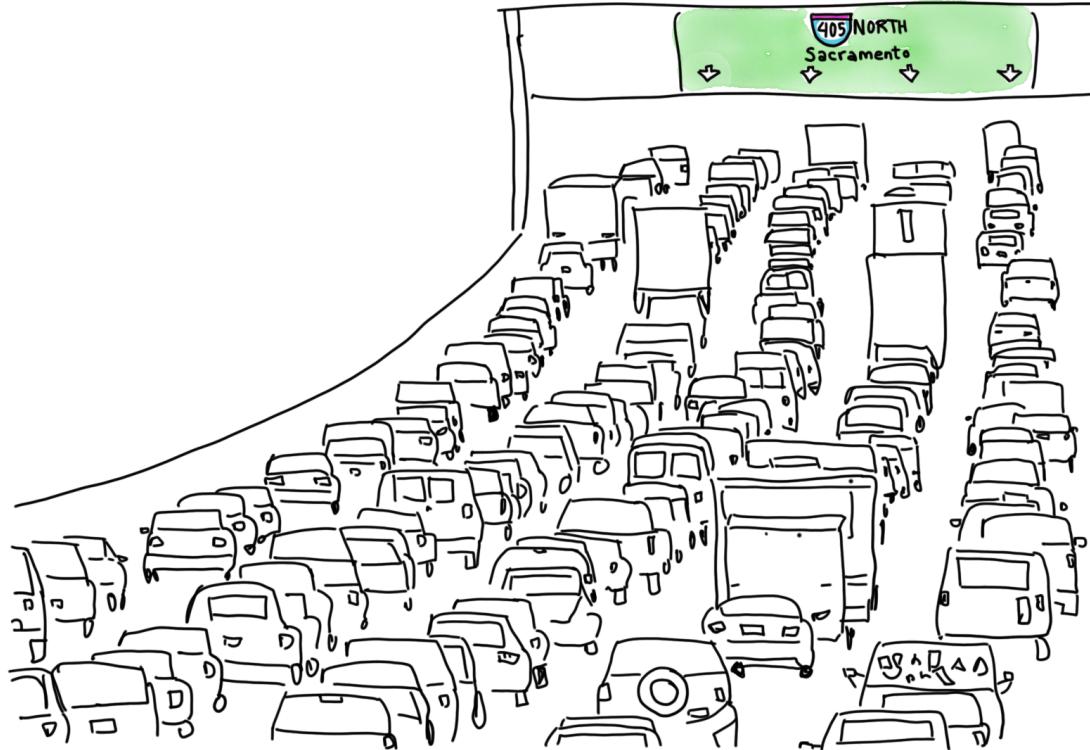


Why Conflicting Priorities matter



People have a finite amount of capacity





High WIP means that other items sit waiting for service longer.

The single most important factor that affects queue size is capacity utilization.

Queuing Theory: Applied statistics that studies waiting lines

Queuing Theory allows us to quantify the relationship between wait times and capacity utilization.

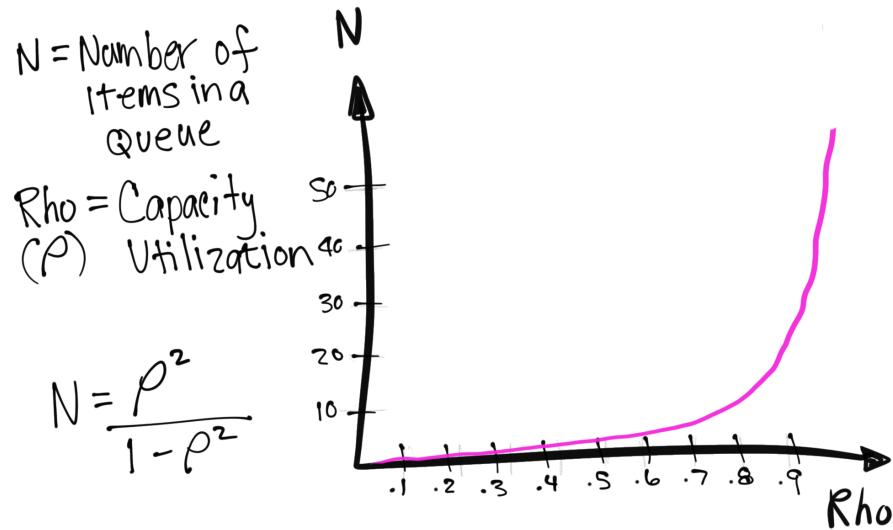
Wait times increase exponentially as utilization approaches 100%.

If the goal is speed, consider managing work by queues.

N = Number of items in a Queue

Rho = Capacity (P) Utilization

$$N = \frac{\rho^2}{1 - \rho^2}$$



Conflicting priorities show up in the calendar



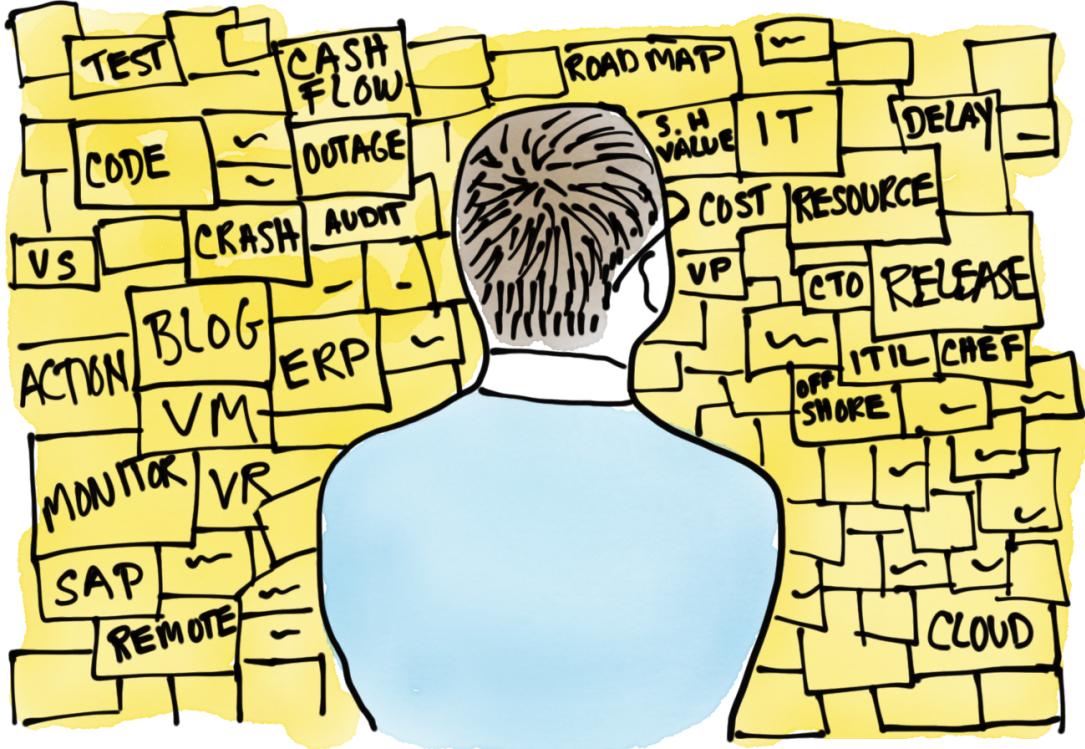
- Can't be in 2 places at 1 time.
 - When the right brains aren't at the meeting, decisions get delayed.
 - What's the cost of rescheduled mtgs to your biz?

CSRA Team
Sparrow Hawks
Kevin Kirkpatrick
Thanks to Paula
Thrasher

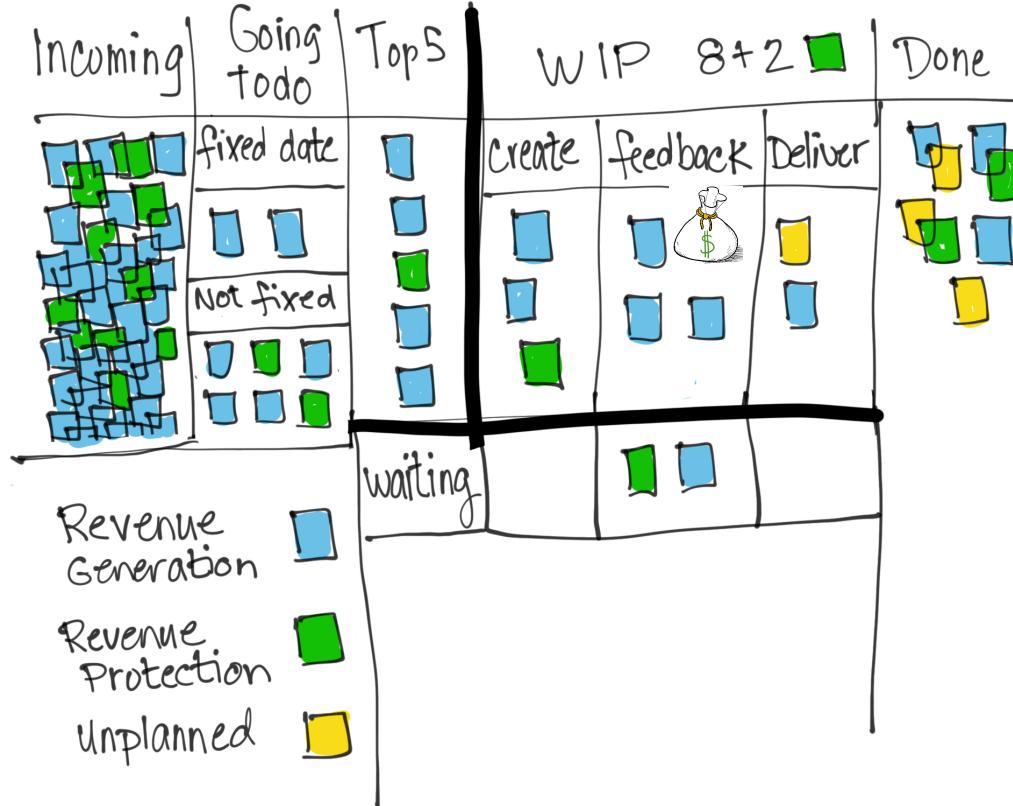


A decision to do one thing is a decision to delay something else

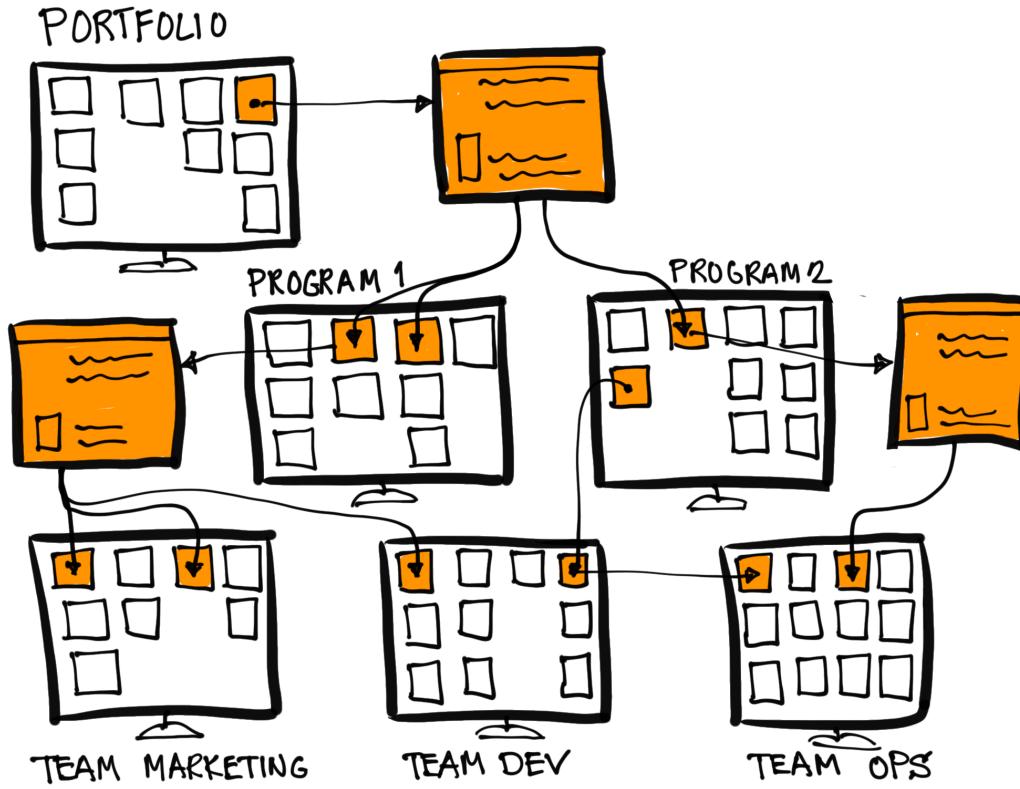
Help others see the impacts of conflicting priorities.



Pull system provokes prioritization convos



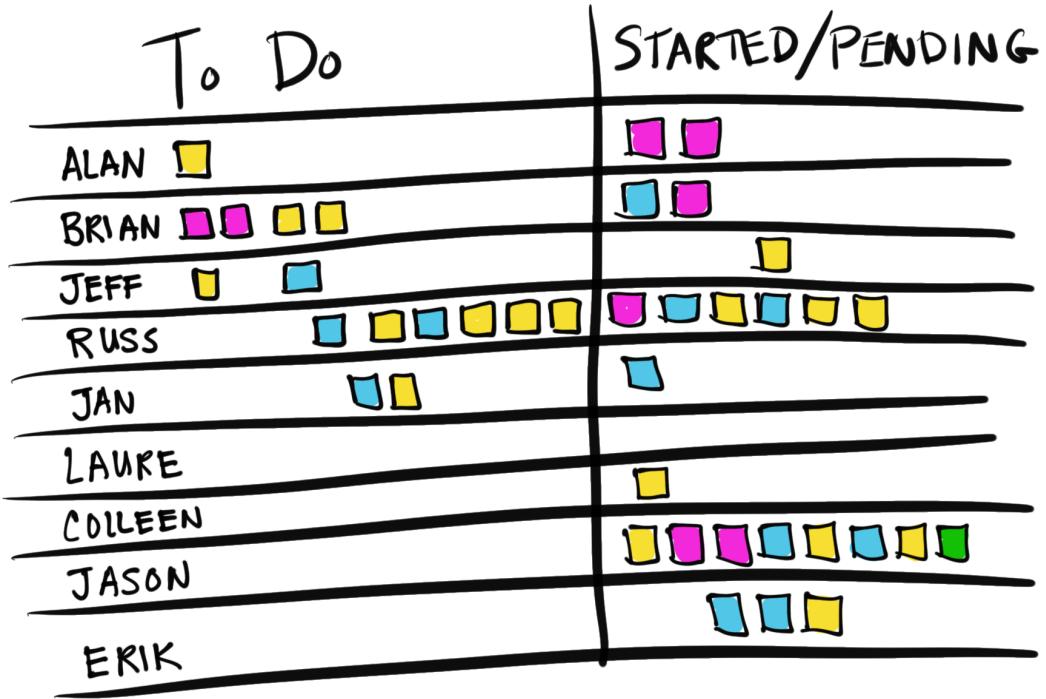
Work Management Visual: Multi-level view



Dependencies linked across different boards exposes Conflicting Priorities

Beastly Practice

Individually named swim lanes



People may prioritize based on making themselves look good to the detriment of the team performance! Same thing at the team level w/ local optimization.

How to Prioritize? Explicit Prioritization Options

ROI: Return of investment \div Cost of investment

CoD: Missed revenue (gen, rev protection) $+$ costs (staffing, operational)

WSJF: Delay cost \div Duration

if work is same size, do work w/ high CoD
If work is same Cod, do short work 1st
if size & CoD are diff, do WSJF

FIFO: First In First Out

HiPPO: Highest Paid Persons Opinion

Beware the Red Yellow Green (RYG) Report

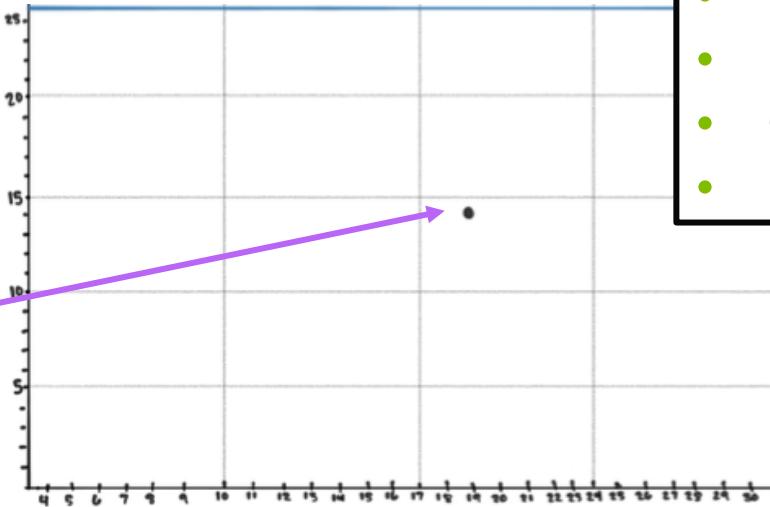
PROJECTS	MGR	SCHEDULE	BUDGET	SCOPE	NOTES
A	John	Green	Yellow	Green	~~~
B	sarah	Green	Green	Green	~~~
C	Jerry	Yellow	Green	Green	~~~
D	Julia	Green	Green	Green	~~~
E	Adam	Red	Yellow	Green	Conflicting Priorities
E	Ann	Green	Green	Yellow	~~~

"If we have data, let's look at data. If all we have are opinions, let's go with mine."
~ Jim Barksdale

Think abt when you visit a badly designed website and how little you trust it

Show me the data

Work Item Types	Day Done	Day Ready	Flow Time (#days)	Failure Demand?
biz request	4-Sep-17	3-Sep-17	1	
Tech debt or process improve	5-Sep-17	29-Aug-17	7	
biz request	5-Sep-17	27-Aug-17	9	
biz request	6-Sep-17	1-Sep-17	5	
biz request	7-Sep-17	4-Sep-17	3	
biz request	8-Sep-17	6-Sep-17	2	
biz request	8-Sep-17	5-Sep-17	3	
biz request	9-Sep-17	3-Sep-17	6	
Tech debt or process improve	11-Sep-17	30-Aug-17	12	
unplanned work	11-Sep-17	10-Sep-17	1	yes
biz request	12-Sep-17	6-Sep-17	6	yes
biz request	13-Sep-17	5-Sep-17	8	
biz request	15-Sep-17	5-Sep-17	10	
unplanned work	15-Sep-17	13-Sep-17	2	
unplanned work	16-Sep-17	15-Sep-17	1	
unplanned work	16-Sep-17	17-Sep-17	1	yes
rec'debt or process improve	20-Sep-17	3-Sep-17	17	
biz request	19-Sep-17	5-Sep-17	14	
unplanned work	20-Sep-17	18-Sep-17	2	yes
biz request	22-Sep-17	11-Sep-17	11	
biz request	21-Sep-17	6-Sep-17	15	
biz request	26-Sep-17	5-Sep-17	21	
biz request	27-Sep-17	9-Sep-17	18	
biz request	27-Sep-17	14-Sep-17	13	
biz request	29-Sep-17	14-Sep-17	15	
Tech debt or process improve	30-Sep-17	13-Sep-17	17	



- 1 metric trend in 4 areas:
- Speed
 - Productivity
 - Quality
 - Predictability

See impacts of change in 1 metric by showing all 4 metrics

Balanced
Flowchart
Exercise

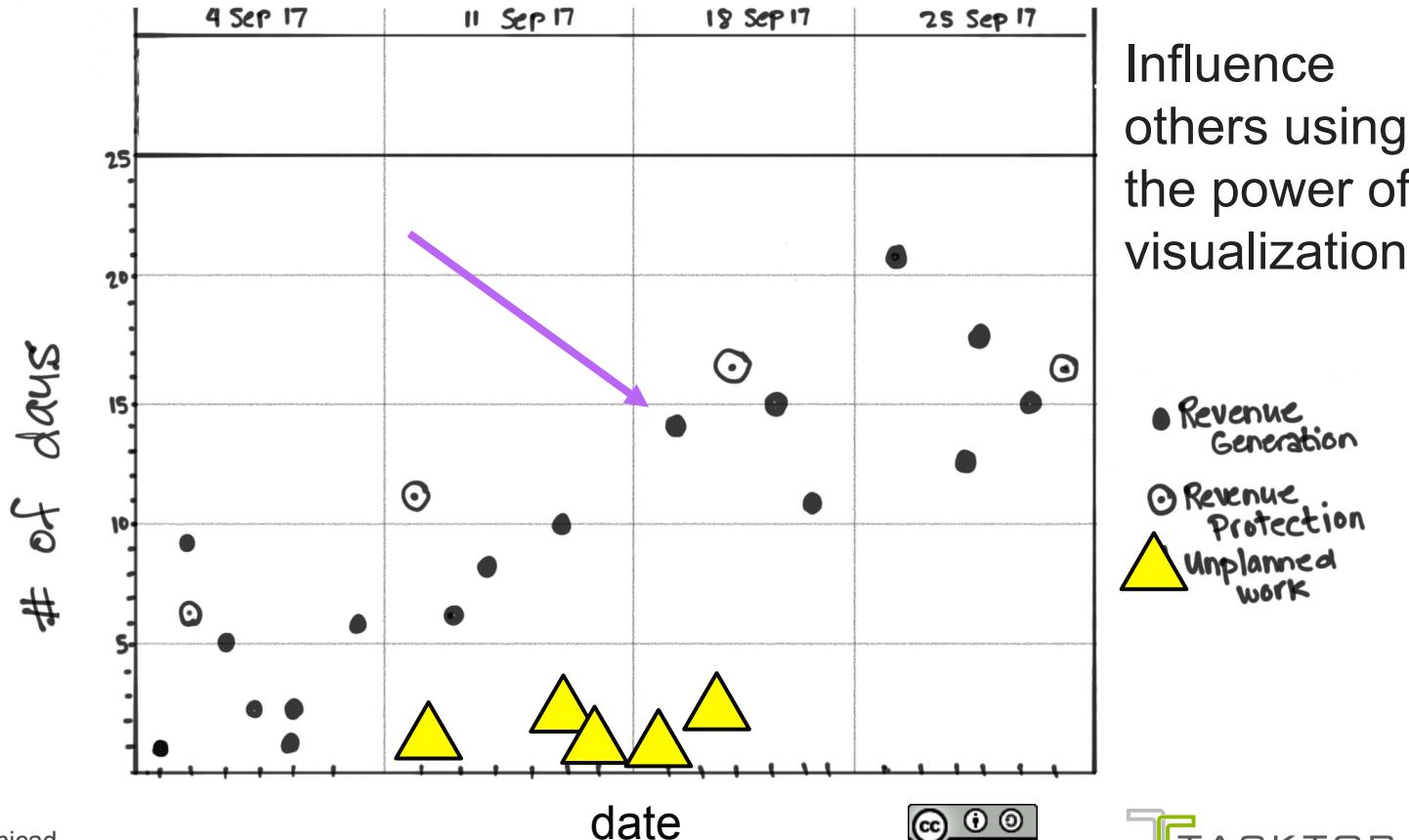


COMPANION EXERCISE TO
MAKING WORK VISIBLE

DOMINICA D'GRANDIS

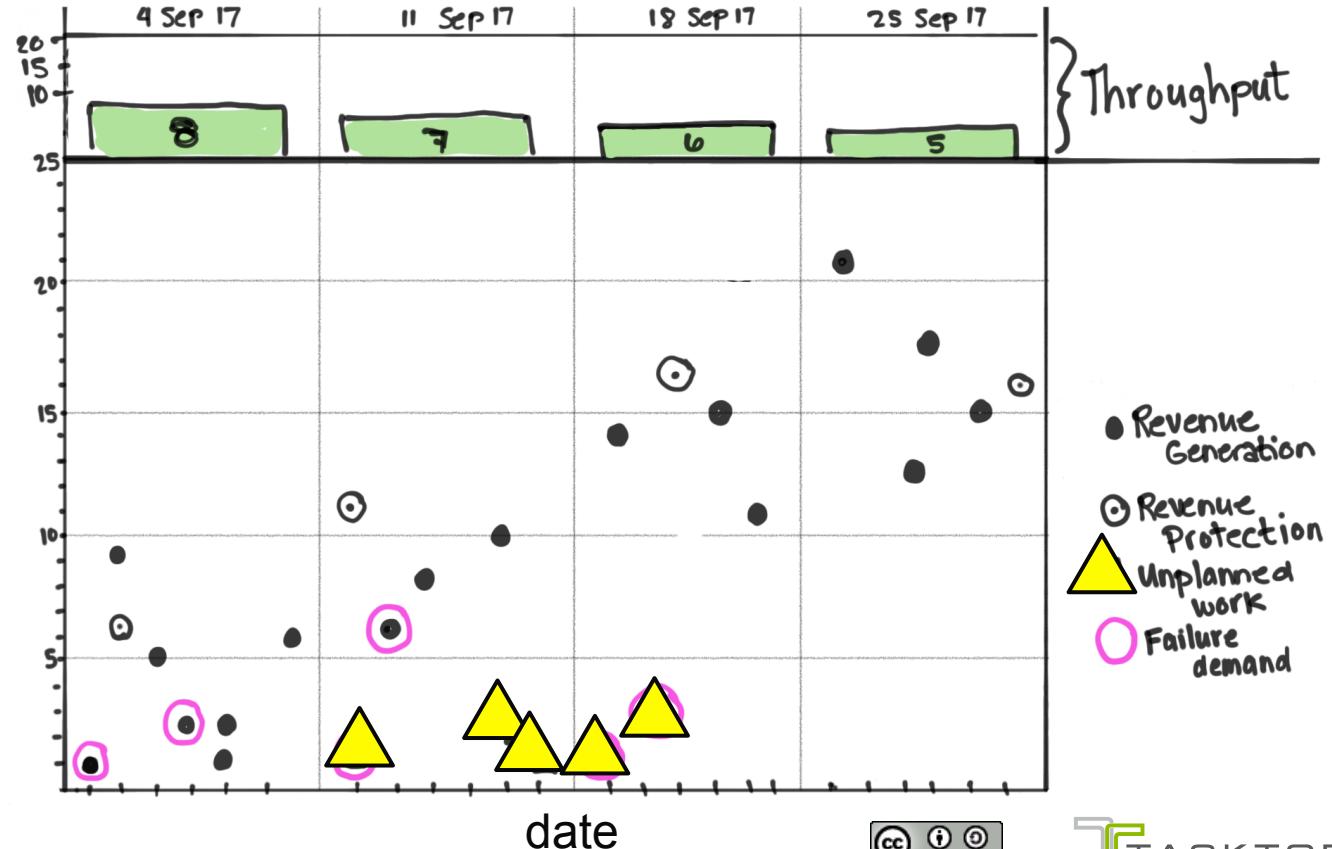
1/4 How fast? Flow Time

Unplanned
work delays
Planned
work



2/4 How productive? Throughput

What we're measuring impacts people b/c people value what is measured.



3/4 How good? Quality

Change Failure Rate

$$\frac{2}{8} = 25\%$$

$$\frac{2}{7} = 28.5\%$$

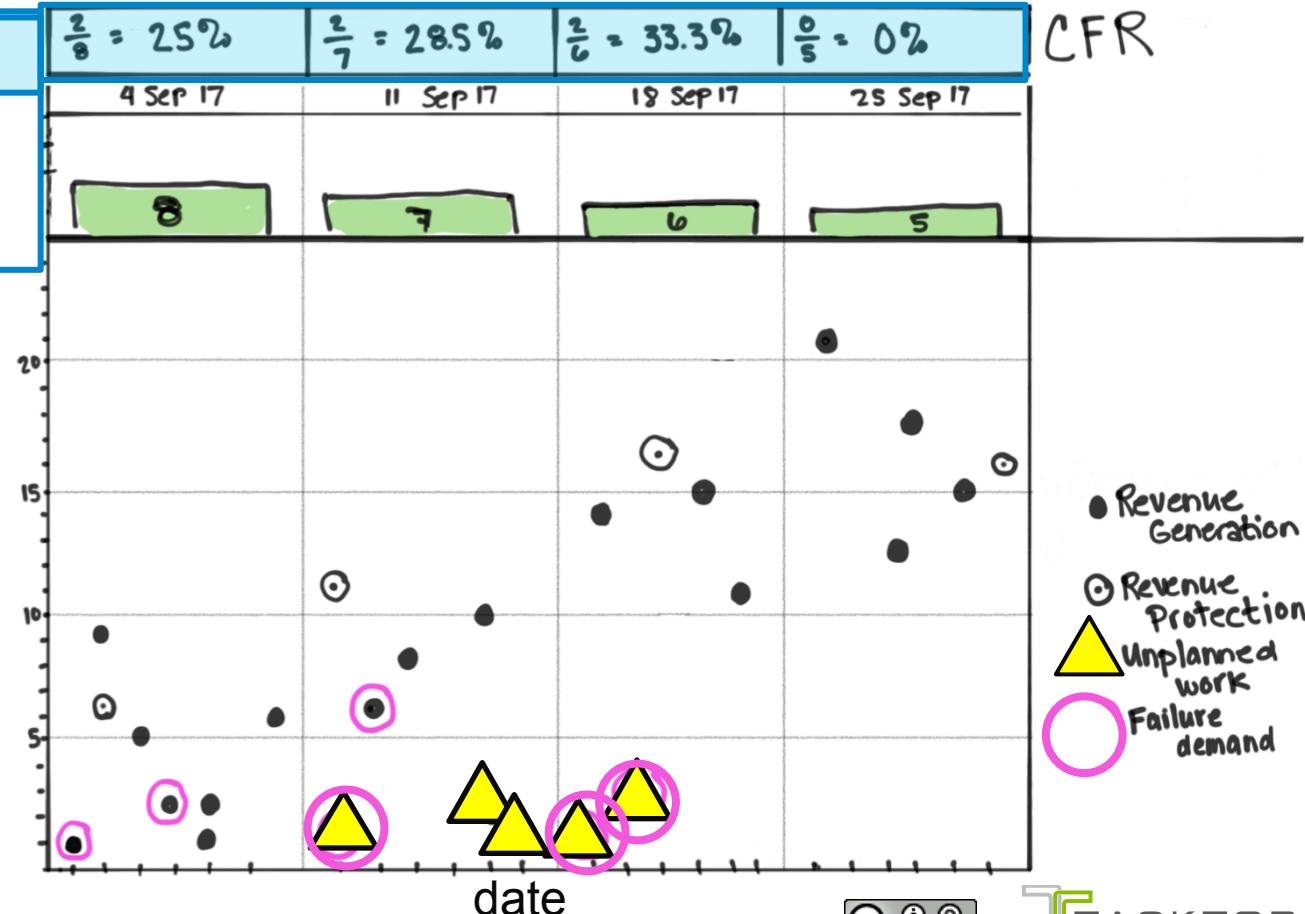
$$\frac{2}{6} = 33.3\%$$

$$\frac{1}{5} = 0.2$$

CFR

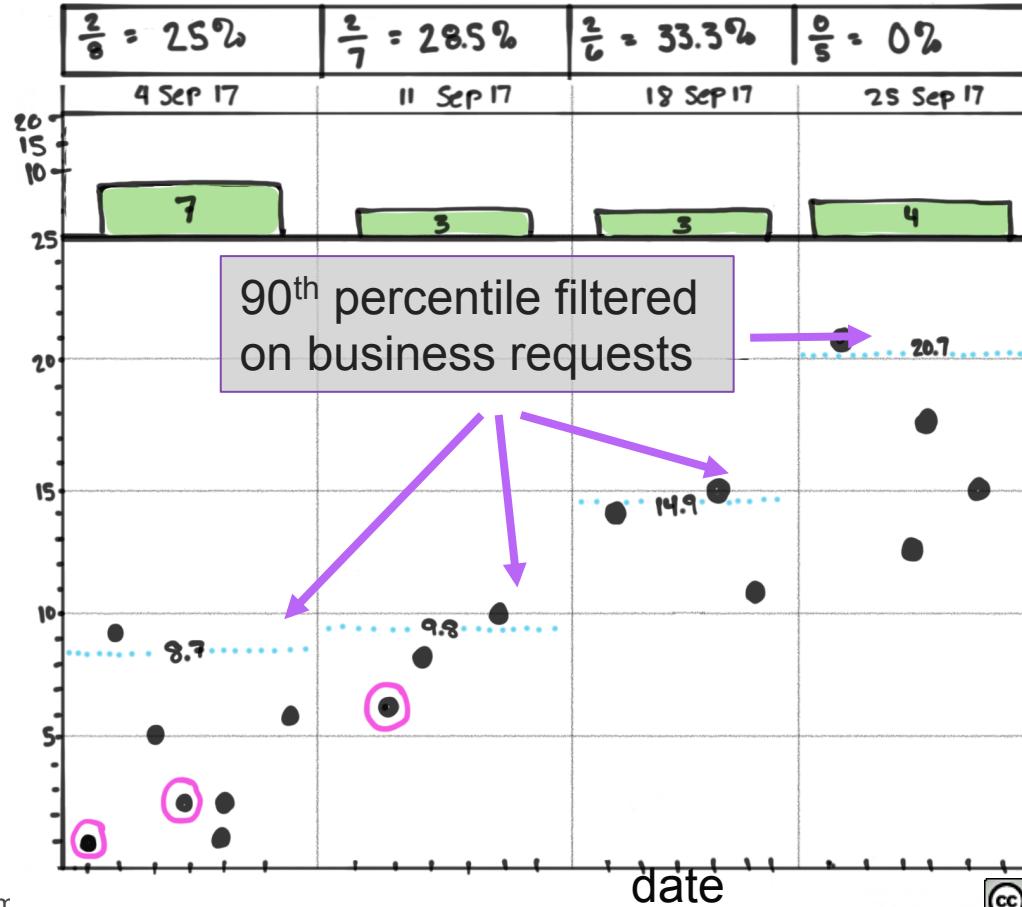
FD done items
of total done items

Oh - ok - I
see what
you mean!!!



4/4 Balanced Flow chart exercise – How predictable?

Percentiles answers Q:
“*What’s the probability of completing work in x days?*”

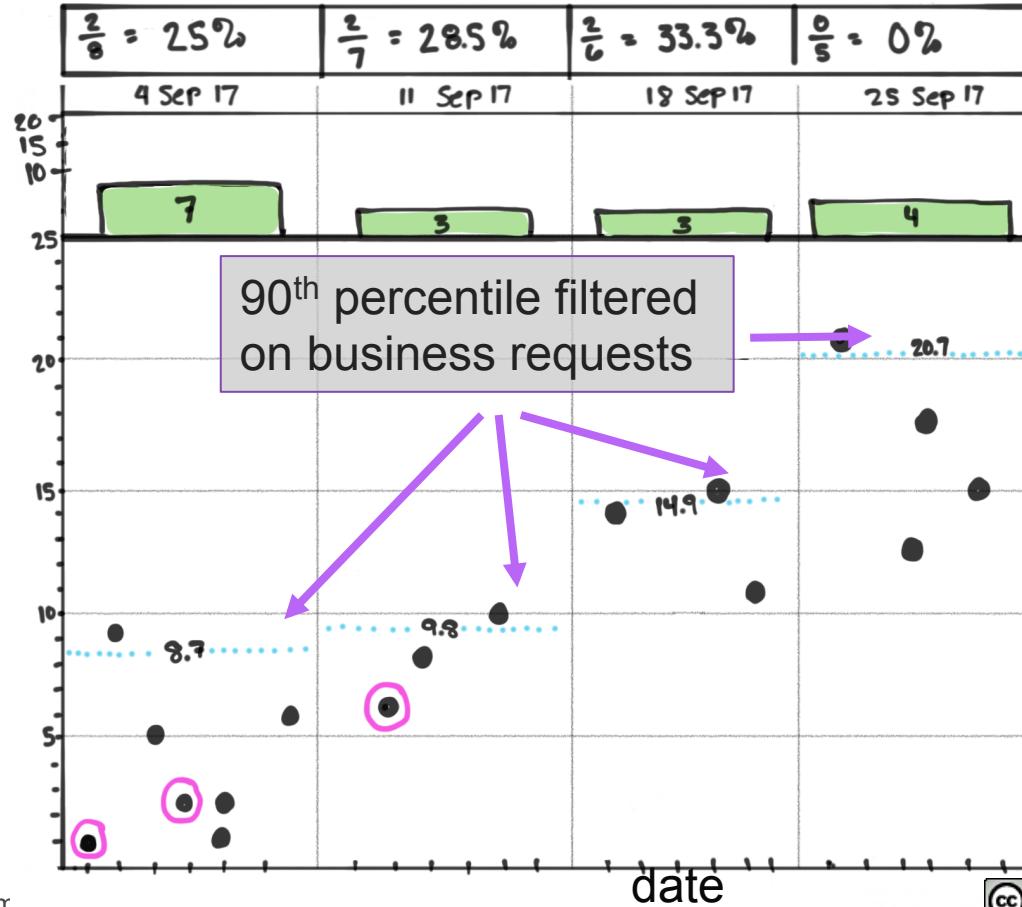


When people complain that things take too long, measure actuals.

It's useful to test opinions against data.

4/4 Balanced Flow chart exercise – How predictable?

Percentiles answers Q:
“*What’s the probability of completing work in x days?*”



When people complain that things take too long, measure actuals.

It's useful to test opinions against data.

Dominica's Hypothesis:

Explicit prioritization policies and correct WIP levels will help teams be more predictable.

Why? Because people are clear on what to do and have capacity to finish work before time thieves sneak in and do damage.



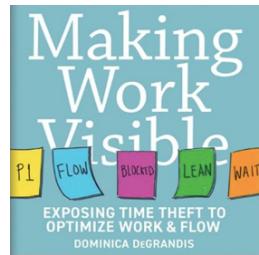
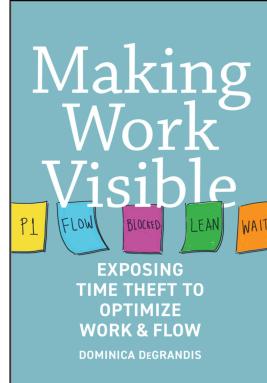
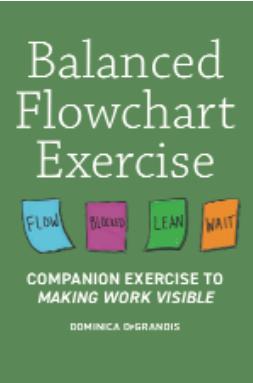
THREE TAKEAWAYS

1. Visualize work to see problems & risks to provoke necessary convos for change.
2. Capture & present metrics to help others understand the impacts from risks like Thief Conflicting Priorities.
3. Be clear on what too much “Yes” does to your organization.

*“The difference between
successful people and
very successful people
is that very successful
people say “no” to
almost everything.”*

~Warren Buffett





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- excerpts of Making Work Visible
- Tasktop video on TFS/SN tool integration
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