**Kanban**

Kanban is an Agile management method built on a philosophy of continuous improvement, where work items are “pulled” from a product backlog into a steady flow of work. The framework is applied using Kanban boards—a form of visual project management. In a Kanban board, tasks—represented as cards—move through stages of work—represented as columns. That way, your team can see where work is in real-time.

Kanban is especially popular with product, engineering, and software development teams. But they can be used by any team that’s interested in building a more dynamic, flexible workflow.

**The 4 core principles of Kanban**

**1. Start with what you do now**

You can apply Kanban to any current workflow or process. Unlike more defined Agile management processes like Scrum, Kanban is flexible enough to work within your team’s core practices.

**2. Agree to pursue incremental, evolutionary change**

Big changes can be disruptive to your team—and if you try to change everything at once, your new system may not work. Kanban knows this, which is why the Kanban framework indexes on continuous improvement and incremental change. Instead of changing everything all at once, start by pursuing incremental change in order to truly evolve your team’s processes over time.

**3. Respect the current process, roles, and responsibilities**

Unlike other lean methodologies, Kanban doesn’t have any built-in team roles, so it works within your current team structure and process. Additionally, your current process may have some great elements, which would be lost if you attempted to completely revamp your working system in one day.

**4. Encourage acts of leadership at all levels**

In the spirit of continuous improvement, the Kanban method recognizes that change can come from anywhere—not necessarily just “top-down.” With Kanban, team members are encouraged to chime in, brainstorm new ways for processes to evolve, and take the lead on new work initiatives.

The 6 practices of Kanban

**1. Visualize work**

One of the biggest advantages of Kanban is that you can physically see work “move” through stages. Not only does this practice give you a broad sense of how work moves through stages, but you can also get real-time, at-a-glance insight into the stage of work.

**2 . Limit work in progress**

As an Agile methodology, Kanban is built on a principle of early delivery—which means tasks should move quickly between columns instead of languishing with an ambiguous “in progress” status. There’s no set requirement for how many tasks should be “in progress” at any given time, but in general, encourage your team to reduce multitasking and focus on the production of individual work.

**3. Manage flow**

Practice #2 states that you want to limit work in progress—and the best way to do that is to optimize the flow of tasks within your Kanban board. Managing and improving your flow will decrease your lead time (the amount of time spent between starting on a task and moving it to the “Done” column on your Kanban board), and ensure you’re delivering tasks or shipping new products while they’re still relevant.

**4. Make process policies explicit**

Because tasks move so quickly in Kanban, make sure your team has established and clearly communicated conventions. Your process policies should guide how your team implements the Kanban methodology.

Additionally, everyone on your team should be encouraged to participate and innovate on your Kanban policy, in accordance with the fourth Kanban core principle: Encourage acts of leadership at all levels.

**5. Implement feedback loops**

In Kanban, you want to gather feedback from two distinct groups: your customers and your team.

Customers: Gather feedback from customers on the quality and effectiveness of the solution your team produced. Was it the right thing to produce? Were there any problems? If there were problems (like bugs in code or defects in a product), revisit your Kanban flow and add more time for review, vetting, and evaluation.

Team: Check in frequently with your team on the process of running a Kanban framework itself. How do they feel about their output? Here you have another opportunity to encourage acts of leadership at all levels and improve your team’s process policies.

Feedback is an integral part of continuous improvement and therefore the Kanban framework.

**6. Improve collaboratively, evolve experimentally**

Kanban, at its core, is about continuous improvement. But this also means other systems might work well in conjunction with Kanban. Whether it’s Scrum or something else, always be willing to collaborate, experiment, and evolve your processes if necessary.

A basic kanban board has a three-step workflow: To Do, In Progress, and Done. However, depending on a team's size, structure, and objectives, the workflow can be mapped to meet the unique process of any particular team.

For kanban teams, every work item is represented as a separate card on the board.

The main purpose of representing work as a card on the kanban board is to allow team members to track the progress of work through its workflow in a highly visual manner.

Kanban is one of the most popular software development methodologies adopted by agile teams today. Kanban offers several additional advantages to task planning and throughput for teams of all sizes.s