

KANBAN

Idea in brief

'The Kanban Method is designed to minimise the initial impact of changes and reduce resistance to adopting change. Adopting Kanban should change the culture of your organisation and help it mature.'

David Anderson, Kanban: Successful Evolutionary Change For Your Technology Business (2010)

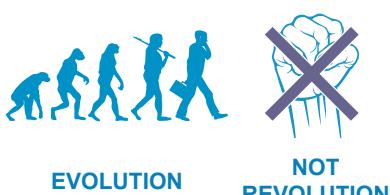
Kanban is a 'pull' system where an upstream process does not begin work until a downstream process has signalled that it is ready. Within that system, visibility remains crucial.

Importantly, Kanban is implemented on top of an existing system, rather than requiring the imposition of a completely new system. As such, changes tend to be smaller and more organic, which lessens resistance and sees changes adopted more enthusiastically as and when the positive effects of Kanban are observed.

Kanban defines itself as having five core properties: 1) Visualise workflow 2) Limit WIP 3) Measure and manage flow 4) Make process policies explicit 5) Use models to recognise improvement opportunities.

In Kanban the process and policies that build the process are transparent and subject to continual change based on evidence. This continuous improvement and focus on quality enables the emergence of a 'high-maturity' organisation.

Ideas in practice



- Kanban is evolutionary, not revolutionary.

"Job descriptions are the same. Activities are the same. Hand offs are the same. Artifacts are the same."

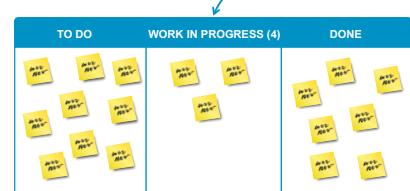
David Anderson

We need to visualise our workflow



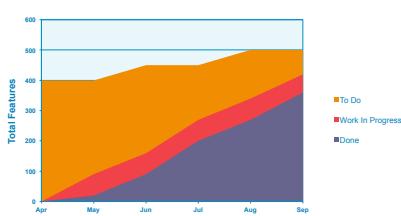
- Use a kanban board and visualise the boundaries of your ability to impose WIP limits.
- Sketch out the process that work will follow.
- Use cards for each task.
- Annotate and track these cards.

Limit the amount of Work In Progress
Keep this small!



- WIP limits encourage flow, reduce queues and thus enable faster development.
- Set a work limit by process and by each working unit.
- Limit the amount of work in buffers and purge stale tasks.
- Adjust capacity for demand.

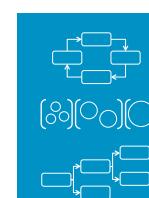
A Cumulative Flow Diagram



- A Cumulative Flow Diagram gives an overall picture of flow over time.
- Highlights the importance of small batches and managing them to avoid bottlenecks.

Make process policies explicit

- Transparency is in the DNA of Kanban.
- Negotiate policies upfront to manage risk and improve customer satisfaction by delivering against expectation.
- Avoid making exceptions to these policies.
- Review policies frequently.



Use models to recognise improvement opportunities

- Kanban believes that continuous improvement is built on objective data and empirical evidence.
- Measure projects performance against the business case that supported it.
- Conduct the Kanban-specific Ops Review Meeting to give a department-wide overview focused on transparency and continuous improvement.