

ROAD 2 MASTERY

WELCOME TO KUNG-FU KANBAN

4.1

PRESTUDY



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ENTER THE DOJO

Meet your sensei who will challenge you to master the art of Kanban. This expedition takes you on a path that blends ancient wisdom with modern effectiveness.

You will be challenged to redefine your understanding of workflow dynamics.

Much like a martial artist perfecting their kung-fu techniques, you'll delve into the essence of defining, visualizing, measuring, and optimizing workflow. You'll learn to master your steps—pull, flow, and balance.

Unleash the workflow warrior within, in a way that transforms the mundane into the extraordinary.



KUNG-FU KANBAN AGENDA

4.1

Prestudy

4.4

Visualizing Workflow

4.2

Kanban Spirit

4.5

Managing Workflow

4.3

Defining Workflow

4.6

Measuring Workflow

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Concepts

- ✓ Defining Workflow
- ✓ Managing Workflow
- ✓ Visualizing Workflow
- ✓ Measuring Workflow
- ✓ Flow
- ✓ Pull
- ✓ Balance
- ✓ WIP
- ✓ SLE
- ✓ Cycle Time
- ✓ Throughput
- ✓ Ordering
- ✓ Queueing
- ✓ Item Aging
- ✓ Context Switching
- ✓ Bottlenecks
- ✓ Little's Law
- ✓ Probabilistic Forecast

Plays

- ✓ Mythbusters
- ✓ Cracking Nuts
- ✓ Bamboo Board
- ✓ Balance Stones
- ✓ Yin Yang
- ✓ Jenny vs Jimmy
- ✓ Headliners
- ✓ Belts
- ✓ Traffic Lanes
- ✓ Traffic Simulator
- ✓ Kanban Simulator
- ✓ Grandma Panda

MYTH OR FACT



circle what applies

- | | | |
|----------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Kanban is only for service/maintenance work. | MYTH - FACT |
| 2 | Items can take as long as they need in Kanban. | MYTH - FACT |
| 3 | Kanban requires every column to have a WIP limit. | MYTH - FACT |
| 4 | It's either Scrum or Kanban. | MYTH - FACT |
| 5 | If you use post-its on a board, you are doing Kanban. | MYTH - FACT |
| 6 | Kanban doesn't need events and accountabilities. | MYTH - FACT |

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THE KANBAN SPIRIT

The spirit of Kanban is the philosophy and practice of workflow management rooted in continuous improvement, adaptability, and holistic optimization.

It emphasizes visualizing work, limiting work in progress, and optimizing flow. It fosters a culture of empowerment, adaptability to change, and data-driven decision-making.

Ultimately, it enables organizations to balance effectiveness, efficiency and predictability in value delivery.

The true Kanban spirit recognizes that mastery is not achieved through rigid adherence to predefined practices, but through a deep understanding of underlying principles and a commitment to continuous learning.



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DEFINING WORKFLOW

Definition of Workflow (DoW) is a fundamental concept of Kanban.

At minimum, the DoW must have all of the following elements:

- 1 A clear definition for when work items start (enter) and finish (leave) the workflow.
- 2 A definition of the individual units of value that are moving through the workflow.
- 3 One or more defined states that the work items flow through from started to finished.
- 4 Explicit policies about how work items can flow through each state from started to finished.
- 5 A definition of how WIP will be controlled from started to finished.
- 6 A service level expectation (SLE), which is a forecast of how long it should take a work item to flow from started to finished.



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VISUALIZING WORKFLOW

Kanban is best known for the visualization of workflow on what we call a **Kanban Board**. This board serves as a dynamic representation of how value flows through your system.

The beauty of Kanban lies in its flexibility and adaptability. There are no rigid guidelines dictating how your visualization should look. Instead, it's about crafting a representation that aligns with your team's unique processes and fosters a shared understanding of how work moves from ideation to delivery. You're only constrained by your imagination when it comes to making flow transparent.

To ensure the effectiveness of your Kanban board, it's essential to make at least the minimum elements of your DoW (Definition of Workflow) transparent. This includes elements such as work items, policies, and any other context-specific factors that influence your process. Whether it's using swimlanes, visual indicators, or customizing columns to reflect different stages of your workflow, Kanban empowers you to tailor your visualization to suit your team's needs and preferences.

By doing so, you enable your team to gain valuable insights into workflow dynamics, identify bottlenecks, and drive continuous process improvement.



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MANAGING WORKFLOW

Optimizing the workflow can be achieved in different ways, like:

1. **Making sure there's not too much work in progress.**
2. **Preventing items from building up at any stage.**
3. **Making sure items don't wait around (age) too long.**
4. **Unblocking work.**

In Kanban systems, it's common for team members to regularly check how the workflow is being managed. While some teams might have a meeting every day for this, it's not necessary to have a formal meeting or stick to a strict schedule, as long as they're actively managing tasks.

The kanban team is collectively accountable for managing the workflow. How responsibilities are defined and governed must be transparent. Kanban does not mandate roles or job titles.



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MEASURING WORKFLOW

Using Kanban effectively means keeping track of certain key numbers, called flow measures or metrics. These metrics show how well the Kanban system is working and help make decisions about delivering value.

There are four main metrics that must be tracked. They sound familiar:

1. **Work in Progress (WIP):** This is the number of items that have been started but aren't finished yet.
2. **Throughput:** This measures how many items are finished in a certain amount of time. It's a precise count.
3. **Work Item Age:** This tells you how long it's been since an item was started.
4. **Cycle Time:** This measures how long it takes for an item to go from start to finish.

But just having these numbers isn't enough; they need to be used to improve the Kanban system. So, it's recommended to visualize them with charts. The type of chart doesn't matter as long as it helps everyone understand how the system is doing. These four metrics are just the basics. Teams can and often should use other specific metrics to make better decisions.





R2M