Designing your Kanban Board to Map your Process

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Need help mapping your process?
Introductions
Review: Kanban

1. Visualize your work
2. Limit your Work-in-Process (WIP)

This definition comes from the book *Personal Kanban*, by Jim Benson and Tonianne de Maria Barry
Review: The Kanban Method

4 Basic Principles:
1. Start with what you do now
2. Agree to pursue incremental, evolutionary change
3. Respect the current process, roles, responsibilities and titles
4. Encourage acts of leadership at all levels

The Kanban Method was developed by David J. Anderson
Review: The Kanban Method

**5 Core Properties**
1. Visualize the Workflow
2. Limit WIP
3. Manage Flow
4. Make Process Policies Explicit
5. Improve Collaboratively
What Process To Model?

The Team
A Rule of Thumb

• Cards are often Nouns (or noun phrases)

• Lanes on the board are often Verbs (or verb phrases)

Grammar is fun!
Another Way to Put It

Cards: The *Things* that have value, that the team delivers.

Lanes: The *Activities* performed on the *Things* in order to deliver them.
Start With What You Do Now

- Map the process collaboratively, as an exercise for the entire team
- Resist the urge to re-engineer or make improvements to the process

Just start with what you do now
Exercise: Discovering Work-in-Process

5 Minutes:
On a sheet of paper, write down 5-10 things that you’re currently working on.
Exercise: Discovering Work-in-Process

10 Minutes:
For each item of WIP you wrote down, answer the following questions:

1. What type of work is it?
2. Where is it now?
3. Where was it just before I got it?
4. Where will it go when I’m done with it?

(Try doing this exercise in pairs)
What type of work is it?

• Project
• Deliverable
• User Story
• Task
• Request
• Ticket
• Defect
• Feature
• Test
• Campaign
• Requirement
• White Paper
• Landing Page

These eventually become your card types
Where is it now?

I’m working on it, so I’d say it’s *In Development*

I’ve finished it, but it hasn’t been tested yet, so I’d say it’s *Waiting for Testing*
Where was it just before I got it?

Susan, the business analyst, had it before me. So, I’d say it was *Done with Analysis*, but not yet started in Development.
Where will it go when I’m done with it?

When I’m done with it, it’ll be **Ready to Deploy**

After I’m done with it, it will be **In Production**
First shot at mapping your process...

Finally! Time to draw something!
To Do, Doing, and Done

Most processes boil down to some version of:

*To Do, Doing, and Done.*

And most of the detail we are looking to model is in the *Doing* part.

Once we’ve started it, what steps does work go through on its way to “Done”? 
Systems Thinking

Our team is a **System**. We succeed or fail together. Some of us are specialists, true, but we’re still one **Team**.
Jeff, I’m gonna need you to re-calibrate the unilateral phase detractors of the RetroEncabulator, and I need it done by Monday.

Sure thing, Mr Lumbergh. Should be no problem at all.

Identify the Source of Demand

There’s often more than one!
Work Exiting the System

Where does work go when the team is “Done” with it?

Where is it when you stop thinking about it and move on to the next thing?
Looking for Queues

“Searching for Queues”, get it?
Ha! You know, because
“queues” sounds like “clues”,
see?
Queues, and Who “Owns” them.

This “Done” lane is a Queue

“Ownership”

And so is this “Ready to Deploy”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>VERIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>QA Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ready to Deploy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why does it matter who owns it?

It’s about whose WIP limit it counts against. And it defines “push” vs. “pull”.

A Pull system helps me balance my demand against my available throughput, and prevents major WIP from building up around my bottlenecks.
Push vs. Pull

Design is done.
I’m **Push**ing it into your ready queue.
You own it now.

Um...Ok.
Design is Done.

Thanks. I’ll **pull** it and start working on it when I have capacity.
Handoffs

For many teams, there are handoffs in the process where the work leaves your control.

For example, a development team where a software release must be submitted to another department for approval before release.

Ideally, you want to reduce those friction points. But until you do, call them out specifically on your kanban board.
Don’t forget to “Start with what you do now”. These are just examples of how you might visually model your current reality.
Parallel Workflows
An “Expedite” Lane across the top
Getting your WIP on the Board

Improve collaboratively
Looking for Hidden WIP

Am I working on, or waiting on, any WIP that’s not on the board?
Metrics

Start with the basics:

- Total WIP
- Blockers
- Throughput (Cards complete/day)
Anti-Patterns

• A lane per person

Kanban Pro Tip

*Keeping the work moving* is much more important than *keeping the workers busy.*

I expect each individual to perform at optimum capacity!
Multiple Value Streams

• What if we’re not really “one team”?
Start with What you Do Now

Pursue Incremental, Evolutionary Change
Questions?

• Should you map more than once process on the same board?
• What level of granularity is suitable when dealing with large, complex workflows?
• What’s your opinion on using a web-based board vs. a physical board?
• Can Kanban be incorporated into a non-Agile workplace?
Next Steps

• Give it a try – and remember you don’t have to get it 100% right.

• We’ll be sending you some additional resources to help you get started:
  – Blog post by Jim Benson, co-author of Personal Kanban
  – Short video on how to modify your board in LeanKit so that it reflects the steps in your process
Designing your Kanban board to map your process

Thanks!

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