

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Steering With Kanban



The Kanban Board can be used to visualize the process of collaboration in agile teams and to plan and control aspects of agile project management. The Kanban Board can be used at the individual, team and organizational level, but the team level is typical.

The Kanban credo is: "Stop starting – start finishing"

The Kanban Board facilitates communication on the tasks that currently need to be completed and ensures a continuous improvement process so that obstacles in the team are constantly made visible and eliminated.

In addition to setting up the Kanban Board, the stand-up and retrospective are supportive meeting structures that ensure efficient communication on work flow and blockages in the team. The appropriate working rhythm should be determined by the team.






What is special about this method?

The Kanban Board method makes it easy to coordinate tasks in (agile) teams by providing transparency regarding the individual tasks, those responsible and progress toward completion. As a result, collaboration can be more clearly structured and thus facilitated through the use of a Kanban Board.

Duration setting up the process 2–4 h	Participants all team members	Facilitation 1 pinboard for the Kanban Board and post-it notes or digital software that can be used for it
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SOURCE: Taiichi Ohno, Toyota Production System (TPS), lean manufacturing

Steering With Kanban | Process

Visualize the process on the board 10–20 min 	Write initial Kanban cards 40–60 min 	Set WIP limit 10 min 	Plan how to focus on the flow 20 min 	Monitor productivity 10–20 min 
<p>First, create the Kanban Board by creating columns that represent the individual process steps. Cards represent tasks/work packages and are drawn in the columns.</p> <p>Typical columns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Backlog: collects all tasks to be processed.● To-Do: contains prioritized tasks.● Doing: shows current processing.● Done: contains the completed activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Start with a quick individual brainstorming. Which tasks would every team member add to the board in each column?● Let participants share their thoughts, write the first Kanban cards where the team agrees on and placed them in the respective process step.● Minimum requirement on cards: precise title of the task (+ name of person responsible from Doing at the latest).● Give the orientation that cards in the backlog can have different granularities, but starting with the To-Do Column the tasks should be broken down into well-defined packages that can be processed by one person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Explain the work in progress limit: Limit parallel work in the team to optimize efficiency and focus.● Set a total WIP limit and per process step in the team.● Explain the pull principle: Move tasks forward in the columns depending on free capacity instead of pushing tasks onto people.	<p>The Kanban Board helps you to find an efficient working rhythm within the team. When working with a Kanban Board, it is recommended to hold regular stand-up meetings to keep an eye on the flow of cards in the process (see Tool “Stand up Meeting“). Discuss in the team which working rhythm could fit their needs and schedule the next appointments right away.</p>	<p>Define KPIs such as the total WIP, throughput, and throughput time, and use these to continuously develop the team and identify and deal with bottlenecks and blockages. Regular retrospectives can improve cooperation within the team (see Tool “Retrospective“). Finally, find a timeslot for a first retrospective in the team, ideally 2–3 months after working with the Kanban Board.</p>