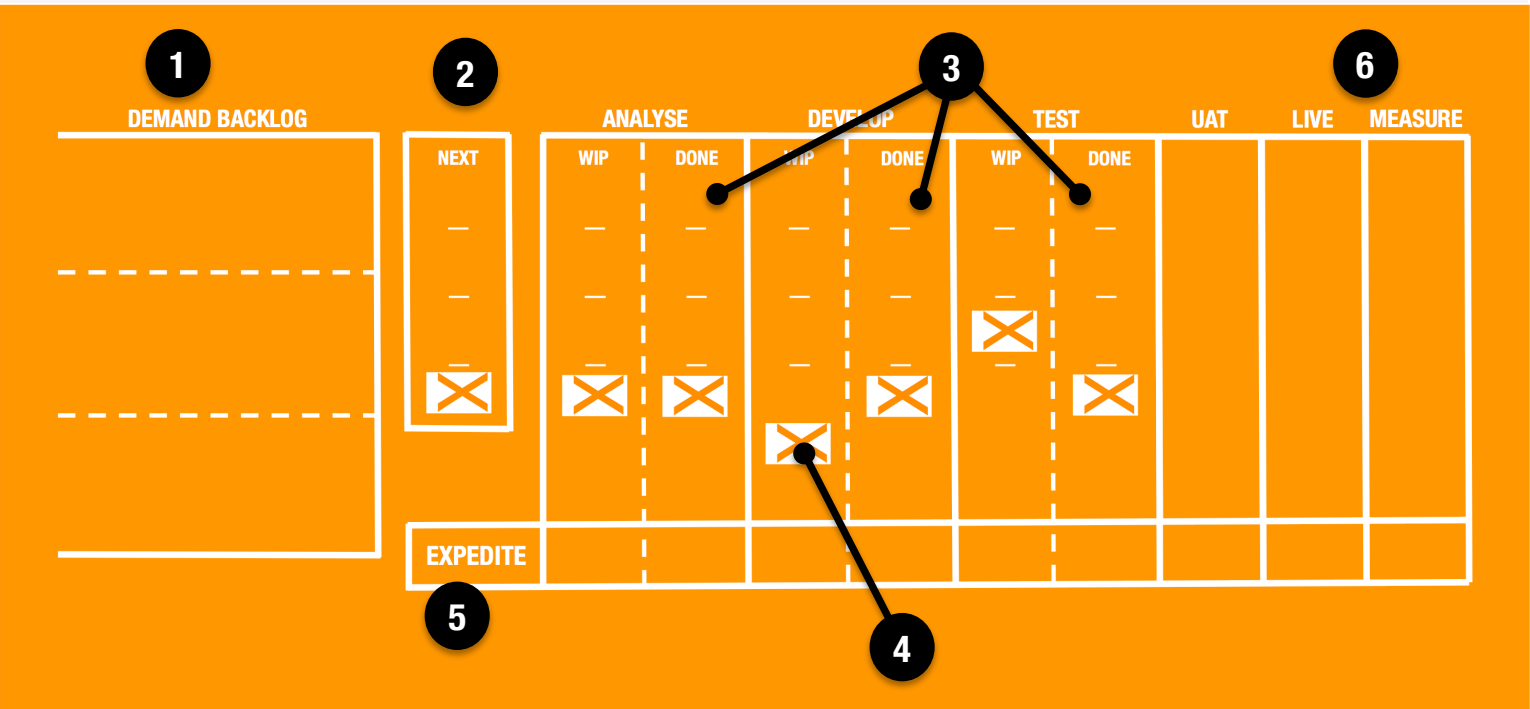


KANBAN CHEAT SHEET

FIRST EDITION

Kanban is a highly tactile and visible approach to orchestrating work across organisations. It works at the team level, straddling departmental boundaries (aka Silo's) as a highly effective organisational change tool. The 'Kanban effect' results in profound changes in the behaviours and interactions of individuals, teams, and sometimes entire organisations.



- 1 Visualise the **BACKLOG**. Organise by demand type or by product feature area. For multiple stakeholders some teams organise by stakeholder. For Iteration focused teams organise the backlog into iterations.

2 The **NEXT** column is an extremely powerful mechanism for selecting the next items to be delivered. Powerful due to the conversations and clarity on value. Extremely useful when dealing with multiple stakeholders with conflicting perceptions on priorities. Use this mechanism for sustainable long-term organisation change.

3 **DONE** columns are used as queues for two main purposes – 1) to remove 'chuck it over the wall syndrome' and thus drive better collaboration and induce a pull, and 2) avoid work starvation downstream and thus encourage flow.
- 4 Use **LIMITS** to subordinate activities to bottlenecks and improve flow. For individuals new to Kanban, when limits are hit the hardest thing is to not blow the limit (essentially stopping work) and going downstream to help unblock the pipeline. Limits help you to *stop starting and start finishing*.

5 If you use an **EXPEDITE** lane make sure you have a row limit of 1 card in play at anytime. If you don't limit this guess what will happen? ;) Cards in this lane trump the priority of all other work items.

6 In Kanban we **visualise the whole pipeline** including UAT, DEPLOY, MEASURE. This is often an effective way to bring together dev and IT Ops teams. Measure is a critical step in understanding if our anticipated value was recognised, or whether we need to feedback into the backlog. See Eric Ries cycle or Deming cycle.

CONCEPTS

- How we visualise the world dominates how we perceive the world
- Pull work across the wall, don't push it
- Focus on unblocking blocked work instead of starting more work
- Make all work visible irrespective of 'type'
- Stop starting, start finishing
- Use column limits to limit work in process to increase flow
- Nothing has value until it's live
- All work before live is cost with no value other than learning
- Walk the wall (right to left) at the daily stand-ups focusing on finishing work
- Value trumps flow, flow trumps waste elimination
- De-coupled cadences – release on demand, plan on demand, real-time retro's, real-time showcase.
- Encourage swarming to resolve blockers and bottlenecks
- 'Stop the line' defect resolution
- Continuous improvement
- End-to-end flow is more important than individual activity
- Use NEXT column to have the right conversations about value and prioritisation
- Items to the right of the card wall have higher priority than cards to the left
- Kanban overlays on top of your current practices – it doesn't replace them.

TIPS

- Keep the card wall TIDY!!! It's a system not a notice board. Straighten cards, redraw faded lines, refresh tatty icons and avatars.
- Don't change the card wall design without buy-in and support from the team. It's not your card wall it is the team's card wall.
- Use arrow icons to show movement on the board and 'reset' them after each stand-up
- Laminate, laminate, laminate!
- Use 'classes of service' to service tech debt or other types of demand such as BAU
- Know the difference between efficiency and effectiveness – don't deliver more of the wrong thing quicker!
- Create a 'super-tribe' by theming your card wall
- Get your stakeholders to run some stand-ups and rotate on a daily basis who hosts the stand-up
- For teams new to Kanban stick rigidly to the rules initially in line with Dreyfus Model for skills aquisition

MYTHS

- No need for planning as we now use cycle time instead of velocity
- No need for estimation in Kanban
- Cards can only go one way (left to right)
- Limits cannot be broken – it's the LAW!
- To the left of the 'select' (prioritisation) column is not the delivery team's concern
- We don't do iterations in Kanban
- Kanban is all about eliminating waste

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PRINCIPLES

- Start with what you do now
- Agree to pursue incremental, evolutionary change
- Respect the current process, roles, responsibilities & titles

CORE PROPERTIES

- Visualise the workflow, make all work visible
- Limit Work-In-Process (WIP)
- Measure and Manage Flow
- Make Process Policies Explicit
- Improve Collaboratively (using models/scientific method)

USUAL OUTCOMES

- Release value earlier
- Value discovery through accelerated learning
- Maximise throughput
- Reduce multi-tasking & task switching
- Reduced variation, improved predictability
- Create 'safety' for the team
- Open up capacity absorbed in wasteful activity
- Improved collaboration by cutting through org silo's
- Clarify macro & micro prioritisation

METRICS

- CFD – Cumulative Flow Diagram
- SPC Chart – Statistical Process Control Chart aka Control Chart
- Cycle Time, Lead Time, Waiting time
- See <http://iancarroll.com> for templates and samples of these.

BACKGROUND & FURTHER READING

- Theory of Constraints, Eliyahu M. Goldratt
- Kanban, David Anderson
- Queuing Theory, Little's Law
- Systems Thinking, John Seddon
- Lean Software Development – Mary & Tom Poppendieck
- Toyota Production System (TPS), W. Edwards Deming
- The Lean Start-up, Eic Ries

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