

Kanban Practices



Kanban is a system for optimising flow of value through visualising work at each stage of a process. It has six key practices, listed below.



Visualise the work

Make all activities transparent at each stage of the process to aid better decisions and help the team understand flow and any bottlenecks. A kanban board is a great way to do this.



Limit work in progress (WIP)

Setting clear WIP limit's at column and board level will help the team to start less and finish more over time, building flow and helping to improve cycle time.



Make policies explicit

Agree and make visual any policies that help the team manage work. These may be entry/exit criteria for columns such as what needs to happen to transition from coding to testing, or how the team will work to expedite urgent items.



Measure and manage flow

By measuring metrics such as cycle time (time between starting & finishing) and throughput (volume of work completed in a period) teams can understand how efficiently work is moving through the process and adjust it as needed to improve flow.



Implement feedback loops

Through direct feedback loops with the customer and the team itself, opportunities to improve planning and delivery can be identified and implemented. Doing this regularly will help the team improve and evolve over time, helping to build flow and value delivery.



Improve collaboratively, evolve experimentally

Kanban is designed to be lightweight and easy to overlay on to your current way of working. However, it also accepts that we never attain perfection and should always look for possible improvements. Therefore, teams evolve their process continuously through small experiments, taking forward and implementing those that help flow.

