10 pitfalls when implementing kanban

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Kanban and Scrum
making the most of both
Henrik Kniberg & Mattias Skarin

Forewords by Mary Poppendieck and David Anderson
#1 Purpose first

You cannot improve what you don’t understand
Beware of trojan horses..
Some purposes from real teams

“Enable higher degree of self organisation..”
“Growing team member skill sets”
“Know when we can deliver..”
“Get focus. (On completing, not starting)”
“To be able to complete more assignments on time, with less stress and more laughter!”
Even we managers need WIP limits.

Kanban principles:
1. Visualize workflow
2. Limit Work in Progress
3. Measure and manage flow
4. Make process policies explicit (.. living by them; or remove them..)
My management checklist

- Can I see the most valuable things to work on?
- Are we keeping WIP limits?
- Are policies transparent, and in use?
- Is there any blocking problems that should be dealt with?
- For learning over time: Are we measuring flow?
#3 Not ready for the transparency

People who build their case on heroic efforts might be in for a surprise..
#4 Loss of overview

|-------------|---------|---------------|------------|------|

I’m I using the right granularity?

Kanban sanity check:
• I can see the most valuable thing to work on right now
• I can see if we are keeping our WIP limits
• Team members are discussing in front of the board

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#5 Ignoring WIP limits

"That looks fun, I'll take that on.."

"..but they asked me to.." ??

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Potential cure: Physical WIP Limits
#6 All tasks must be on the board

![Kanban Board Diagram]

Potential mistakes:
- Confusing tasks with demand
- Treating all demand equal
- Ignorant about incurring overhead

Want a coffee?

Sure, write a Jira ticket and add it to the Kanban board
Ask: “What demand do we want to learn about?”

✓ It’s nature
✓ And our capability to meet it

Low value demand

High value demand

“White noice”
Caught under a big pile of work?
### Treatment #1: Hold back "Overanalysis"

#### "Pile of work"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis required for next sprint</th>
<th>Analysis we don’t need right now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Document" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Documents" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Document" /></td>
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<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Document" /></td>
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<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Document" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Document" /></td>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Documents" /></td>
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Treatment #2: Early screening of purpose

 Senior team member

|----------|-------------------|---------|---------------|------------|------|

"I understand why this feature should be made"
Treatment #3: Let your bottleneck set the pace

- **In queue**
- **Front end team**
  - 5 stories / week
- **Legacy team**
  - 2 stories / week

Limit to 2 legacy team stories already here!

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Treatment #4: Fix failure demand upstream

“Pile of work”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value demand</th>
<th>Failure demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand for service from customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caused by failure to do something right for the customer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#7 Overbelief in value of planning

"How I plan"
1. Project
2. Unplanned

"How I behave"
1. Unplanned
2. Project

Why are you not delivering the planned stuff??

So, what you rather want?

Backlog | Dev | Done
---|---|---

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#8 Not having a strategy for dealing with variance

"Does it need a deadline? Define why.."
#9 Improvement efforts gets eaten upp by events (lack of endurance)
### Getting endurance in problem solving

**Managers door**

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#### Improvement kanban

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we as a team do</th>
<th>Next [2]</th>
<th>In work [2]</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="example_img.png" alt="Next" /></td>
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Example from Fredrik Lindgren, Crisp
“Everybody thinks of changing the world, but no one about changing himself”

- Leo Tolstoy
Good news! Fixes can be applied

To our demand

And our capability

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Now, go practice!

Expand your toolkit: www.crisp.se/utbildning
Kanban training with David Anderson
May 30 – 31, Copenhagen

www.trifork.com