

# Kanban

Kanban is a transparent work-limited value pulling system.

Derived from Japanese meaning 'visual card', the term Kanban as used by the Kanban community, represents much more than a standard big visible task-board or chart.

Whilst at first glance Kanban looks very similar to a standard Agile process there are some key distinctions. For example,

- **Timeboxes are not used.** This had led to Kanban being referred to as 'iterationless Agile' or using "naked planning". The goal is no longer about what can be achieved within an iteration but is instead focussed on the *flow of work*, removing sources of variability, in order to ensure that the flow is steady and predictable.
- Work is **pulled** from the back of the flow **rather than pushed** from the front.
- **Work in Progress (WIP) limits are set** for how much work can be in any one flow state at a point in time. Enforcement of WIP limits encourages 'swarming' around roadblocks to ensure they are removed as soon as possible.
- Rather than measuring story throughput by velocity, **measurement of flow is performed** end to end as 'lead time'. Charts such as Cumulative Flow Diagrams and Variability Diagrams are used to track progress rather than Burn Up or Down charts\*. (\*Other Agile and Lean related Practices can also be found by clicking on the YouTube icon on the Agile Academy website— [agileacademy.com.au/agile/knowledgehub](http://agileacademy.com.au/agile/knowledgehub))
- Work is assumed to be broken down to a roughly similar size.
- **Flow of not only stories are represented** but their associated 'epic' or 'minimum marketable feature' are as well.
- **Kanban contains an embedded process** for handling items that need to be expedited through the flow, fixed delivery dates, and work type splitting (e.g. enhancements, production defects, and text changes).
- **Slack is deliberately encouraged** in order to allow for continuous improvements to the process to be identified and actioned.
- **Prioritisation of the backlog is performed just in time (JIT).**



#### REFERENCES:

- <http://www.limitedwipsociety.org>
- *Kanban*, by David Anderson. The key evangelist for taking Kanban from the Toyota Production system and transforming it into software development method. This book provides a foundation layer of understanding of Kanban and how to apply it to software development.

