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How Would You Describe Kanban in a Nutshell?

- Visualize the workflow
  - Split the work into pieces, write each item on a card and put on the wall
  - Use named columns to illustrate where each item is in the workflow
- Limit WIP (work in progress)
  - Assign explicit limits to how many items may be in progress at each workflow state
- Measure the lead time
  - Lead Time (sometimes called “cycle time”) = average time to complete one item
  - Optimize the process to make lead time as small and predictable as possible

As you can see, Kanban is very lightweight and requires a lot of (self-)discipline to implement on a team. The specific practices that Kanban teams might use include:

- Kanban board shows all work of the team
- Kanban board shows flow of work of the team so we can find and work bottlenecks
- Different service levels (classes of service) for distinct types of work (e.g., expedite, fixed date, standard) are identified and supported
- WIP limits in place and enforced
- Kanban boards are processed “Right to left, top to bottom”
- Continuous improvement occurring
- Cycle time and throughput tracked, and improvements focused on improving these numbers

Kanban, FAQ

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