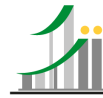# USING KANBAN BOARDS

CONSTRUCTION *ACCELERATOR*®

What is Kanban?

It is a visual representation of work to be done, allowing work to be completed as it is needed, or *pulled*. If you've been to a sushi restaurant and filled out your order on a menu checklist, you've used a simple Kanban. It allows you and your team to see work as it flows from a backlog, to being worked on and then is completed.

Kanban Board Basic Elements

- **Backlog**. Your backlog is all the work you need to get done. If your project or need is small, it may span the entire effort. If large, you may just have the tasks required to complete the next major task, milestone, or what's coming up in the next two week period.
- **In Process**. Once a team member begins work on a task they put it in this column so everyone knows! If tasks typically have multiple steps you can sub divide this category. For example, if there is a "Review" for each task, you might add "Doing" and Review" sub categories.
- **Done**. Once a task is 100% complete, move it to this column. Team members should agree that the task is complete.
- **Team Size**. The ideal is 9 people (+/- 2). More than that becomes complicated to discuss and view on one board, leading to less productivity! Less is generally OK. You could make a Kanban just for your work, but it is most powerful when used in a small group.
- **Daily Huddles**. Answer these 3 questions and move on: 1) What work has been completed? 2) What are you working on? 3) What do you need from others? A daily huddle should last 5-15 minutes and is NOT a place to problem solve, it is just the huddle before the play!
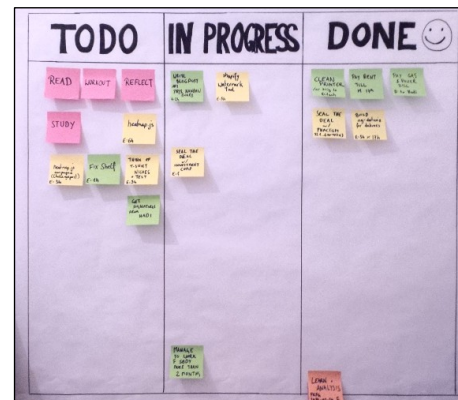
To make your Kanban Board, draw lines on a white board for your columns or put masking tape on the wall, or use giant sticky flip chart sheets - we love em! Large or small, basic or elegant, keep it visual and keep it simple!

Principles and Key Ideas

Make Work Visual. Have you ever completed a task and not been sure what to do next? Or what is important? Visual work reduces the guesswork and helps align priorities.

Small Batches Increase Flow. Are you working on a task that is multiple days in duration? How can you break that down into tasks that don't take longer than a day or so? Reducing large tasks into smaller tasks enables teammates to identify what they can help with. If you break that larger task into 3 smaller ones, after the second one is completed perhaps someone can begin another task, which also increases flow. Speaking of which….

Do Work That Releases Other Work. Perhaps a team member needs a review of a report or a backcheck on some calculations. If a task is holding up someone else, make it a priority!

Reduce Work In Process. Work that is half-done doesn't help anyone. Identify a limit for your team that makes sense and don't allow more activities than that to be in progress. If you exceed the limit… the team should swarm to help move things past the finish line and/or discover what the bottle neck is!