

KANBAN COACHING

Kanban is not just another method that can be deployed using the same coaching/consulting techniques used for Agile methods. One cannot (or at least, should not) deploy Kanban like Scrum or TDD.

We don't advocate or evangelize. We observe and advise.

We don't judge. The current situation is what it is and it got to be that way because of the current people, their circumstances and the demands of their customers. Wishing it were different is not useful. Criticizing because current practices are not aligned with a trendy modern approach or with a belief system is disrespectful.

We respect the current situation and do not pass judgment upon it.

We make a situational assessment to establish whether Kanban is appropriate or not. Kanban systems offer deferred commitment, control of variability in flow, elimination of over-burdening, reduction of multi-tasking, and better alignment with high level risk management decisions regarding allocation of supply against various competing demands. If any of these things are problems in the current process, such as committing too early and then failing to deliver against a promise, then a (virtual) kanban system might help.

The full Kanban Method uses virtual kanban systems and several other practices to create an evolutionary capability within an organization and promotes evolutionary change. This is useful in complex domain situations that are almost always present in knowledge work.

We assess whether Kanban is appropriate before recommending it!

We don't 'sell' an evolutionary approach to a revolutionary client. Situational awareness is a critical skill for us.

Water flows around the rock. The rock is emotional resistance to change - change that will lead to better economic and social outcomes for all stakeholders and lead to better satisfaction all round. We learn how to anticipate emotional resistance - to identify the rocks before they design and deploy a kanban system process solution.

We avoid rocks initially!

Where a rock cannot be avoided we design the kanban system to raise awareness and create emotional motivation for change. Water smooths out rocks over time. We know that it takes only one of them to change a lightbulb, but the lightbulb must really want to change. We create the circumstances for self-motivated change.

We don't try to force change that will meet with resistance.

We avoid designing a (virtual) kanban system that fixes all the dynamic system problems they may have identified from initial observation. Perhaps the solution to over-burdening -

introducing WIP limits - will meet with resistance? This resistance can be predicted by understanding the emotions of those involved - how such a change affects their self-image, self-esteem, ego, social status, or other psychological or sociological elements.

The art and science of great (virtual) kanban system design for knowledge work processes is knowing where to stop and knowing how to create a situation that will raise awareness and create motivation so that the next step can be taken.

SCRUM/AGILE COACHING

We've found that after some initial training it's best that an agile team "dive in" and start iterating on their work as soon as possible. However, to be most effective they need some guidance along this path until they get comfortable with their agile techniques and team behaviors. Since agility has very little prescriptive guidance for what to do, we've found this coaching phase to be critical for team & organizational success.

We speak in terms of this as a "Coaching at the Endpoints" model, meaning - the most effective times to interact and adjust your agile approaches are at the beginning and end of your iterations. To that end, our coaching involvement is part-time and focused there, with perhaps some sampling of team activity during the iteration so we can have some

technical and team context. We'll jump-start your team, then coach them during the transition from one sprint to the next.

Afterwards, we prefer to periodically check-in and assess your progress--providing ongoing guidance. We feel this "light touch" model better aligns with the spirit of agile self-directed teams and their continuous improvement.

We provide coaching in the following areas:

- ✚ Performing agile adoption readiness assessments & helping plan adoption strategies
- ✚ Product Ownership – Story writing, Backlogs, Roadmaps, Story-maps, Portfolio Management
- ✚ Kanban Coaching– Helps to assess the Value Chains in the System and leads the teams and Organization towards Successful Evolutionary Change.
- ✚ Helping to jump-start your agile iterations
- ✚ Assess more mature teams and jump-start accelerated improvement and performance
- ✚ Release Planning
- ✚ Helping develop Agile Coaches – Scrum Masters by working with them individually and in groups, coaching 'good' agile leadership behavior
- ✚ Situational coaching around Scrum ceremonies
- ✚ Situational coaching and mentoring to Organizational Leadership in their Agile Transformation