STOP STARTING.
START FINISHING.
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Most Companies are Drowning in a Sea of Opportunity
Another example of sub-optimizing measurements is the focus in some companies on making sure that everyone is busy all of the time; and generally this is done by assigning people to work on several things at the same time. However, this strategy causes enormous waste because trying to drive utilization high creates the equivalent of traffic jams and slows everything down, while time spent thrashing between assignments mounts.

What is the Impact of Change?

Working on many items in parallel

Working on items in value order

Highest Value
Let’s Play a Game
Multi-tasking

Form groups of 4-6

In each group 1 person will do the work and the rest are customers

The customers need to have a stopwatch (i.e. phone, watch) – it is possible share

The worker is going to write each person’s last name 1 letter at a time

The worker will write each name in parallel – 1 letter at a time

The worker will start with the customer on their left, ask for a letter, write it down, then move to the next customer

The customer’s will time from the beginning (all at the same time) to the point in which their name is fully written

Record your time

Average across all customers on your team
The worker will write each name in serial

The worker will start with the customer on their left, ask for a letter, write it down, and keep writing until their name is fully written before moving on to the next customer.

The customers will time from the beginning (all at the same time) to the point in which their name is fully written.

Record the second time.

Average across all customers.
Debrief

How did the times compare?

As a worker, which method did you prefer? Why?

As a customer, which method did you prefer? Why?
Why do we work on too many projects at one time?
Little’s Law

\[
\frac{\text{WIP}}{\text{Throughput}} = \text{Avg. Cycle Time}
\]
If we focus on fewer items at a time, we can:

1. Increase productivity and deliver more
2. Get our customers more engaged
3. Have agility to adjust when changes occur
4. Limit the costs of delay
5. Lower our cycle times
So What Do We Do?
Focus on improving both the ability to deliver and the predictability of delivery.

Why waste effort trying to order the input when there is no dependability in the order of delivery?

*Kanban, David J. Anderson, 2010*
Balance Demand Against Throughput
Slack capacity gives the team time to try improvements
It can be counterproductive to improve individual steps in our process. We need to optimize the whole!
How long will it take to process 10 items?

Starting State

1 Minute

2 Minutes

3 Minutes
How long will it take to process the 10th batch of 10 items?

Batch 10 -> A (10 items/ min) -> B (5 items/ min)

12 Minutes!
How can we address the bottleneck?

A
10 items/ min

B
5 items/ min
If you have level Flow

Prioritization is no longer about ordering all the Work

But picking the next one as work finishes
Kanban kick-start example

Next
2

Analysis
3

Development
3

Acceptance
2

Prod

Definition of Done:
- Goal is clear
- First tasks defined
- Story split (if necessary)

Definition of Done:
- Code clean & checked in on trunk
- Integrated & regression tested
- Running on UAT environment

Definition of Done:
- Customer accepted
- Ready for production

Feature / story

Date when added to board

2009-08-20 2009-09-30

(description)

Who is analyzing / testing right now

Hard deadline (if applicable)

★ = priority
★★ = panic

Task / defect

description
	= task
	= defect

= completed

= blocked

= who is doing this right now

What to pull first

1. Panic features ★★★ (should be swarmed and kept moving. Interrupt other work and break WIP limits as necessary)
2. Priority features ★
3. Hard deadline features
4. Oldest features
Throttle demand to meet throughput in order to gain leveled flow

Shortening cycles and increasing the rate of delivery will build trust

Identify the constraint in your system and focus on optimizing the whole
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