

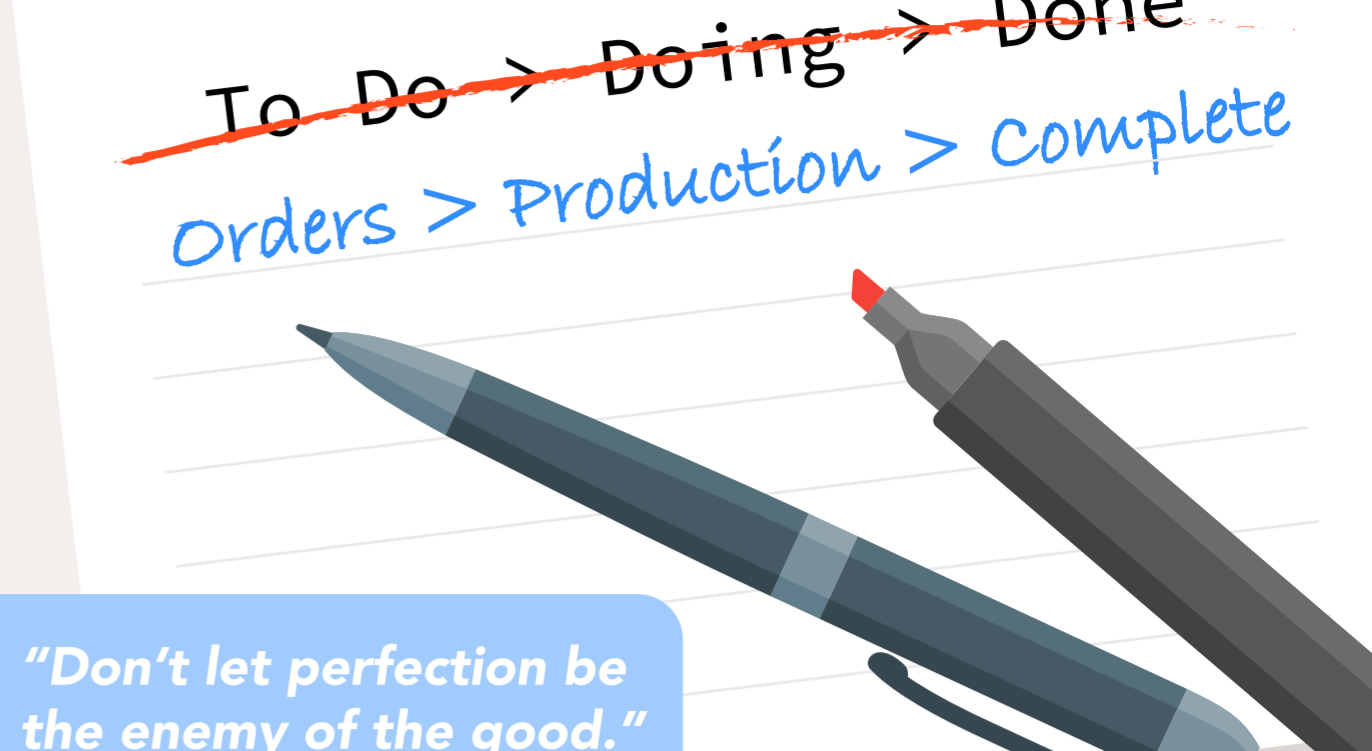
# 7 Principles of Smart Kanban Board Design

Ready to start visualizing your team's work on a Kanban board? Are you feeling excited, intimidated, or perhaps a combination of the two? The first step is to design a board that accurately reflects your team's current process. Follow these 7 principles of smart Kanban board design to get started!

## 1

### Start where you are.

Getting your team's work onto a workable Kanban board might seem like a daunting task – but don't let that keep you from getting started. The beauty of Kanban is that it is designed to be a work in progress; you don't have to get it perfect in order to start seeing benefits from your Kanban board!



*"Don't let perfection be the enemy of the good."*

#### PRO TIP

Start with the basic process of To Do > Doing > Done and build it out from there.

## 2

### Involve your team.

Your board will best if it accurately reflects the way your team actually works. So don't think of building your team's board as a solo mission – get the whole team involved from the very beginning. Not only will your board be a more accurate representation of your team's workflow, but building your board together will also get everyone invested in making it work.



*"We're better together!"*

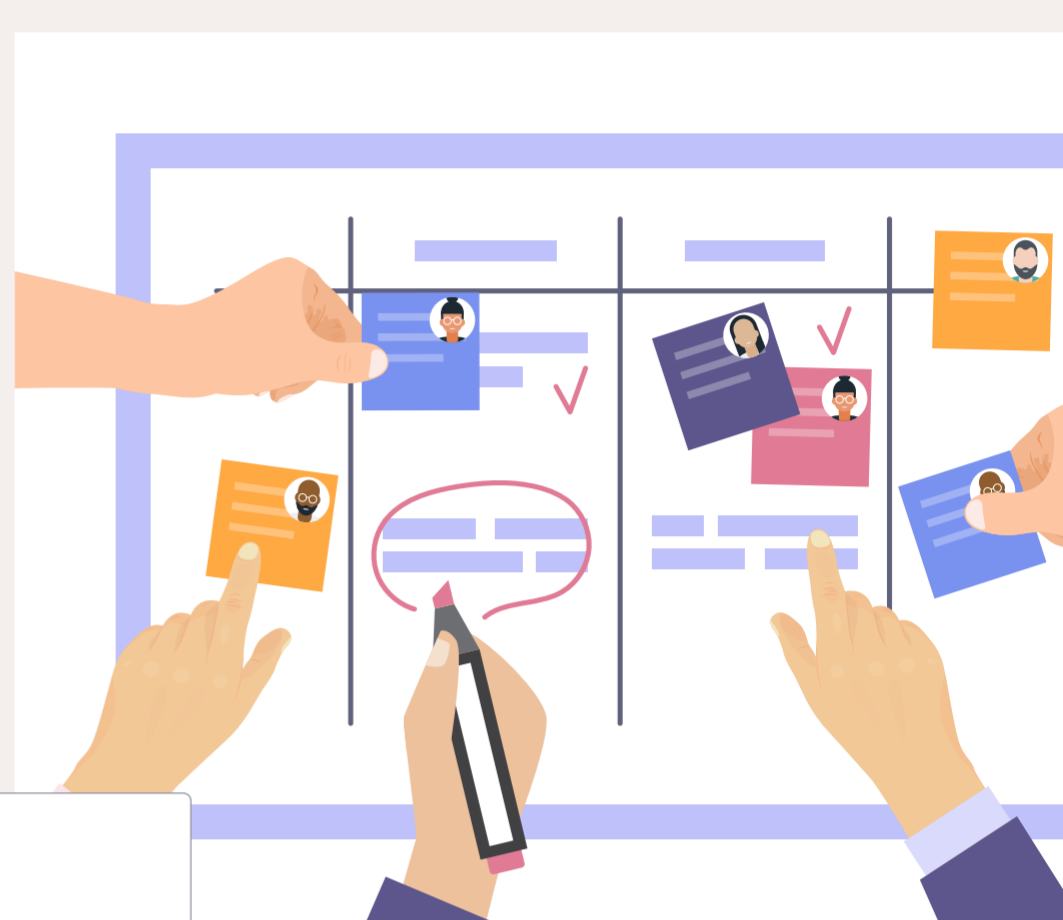
#### PRO TIP

Ask everyone on the team to talk through a recent project – what steps did the work move through? Try to identify patterns in your workflows and design your board around those common steps.

## 3

### Get your team on one board.

Fight the temptation to create boards for individual team members. Instead, challenge each other to create a Kanban board design that works well enough for everyone on the team, and use board filters to give everyone a personalized view.



*"There is no 'I' in Kanban!"*

#### PRO TIP

Once your team is set up on the board, make sure everyone is visualizing all of their work items so that you get a true sense of capacity across the team!

## 4

### Keep information visible.

Don't bury important information in lengthy card descriptions! Keep information visible and easily digestible by making full use of card attributes like icons, due dates, assigned users, tags, and other features that display information on the "face" of the card.



*"Harness the power of visual information!"*

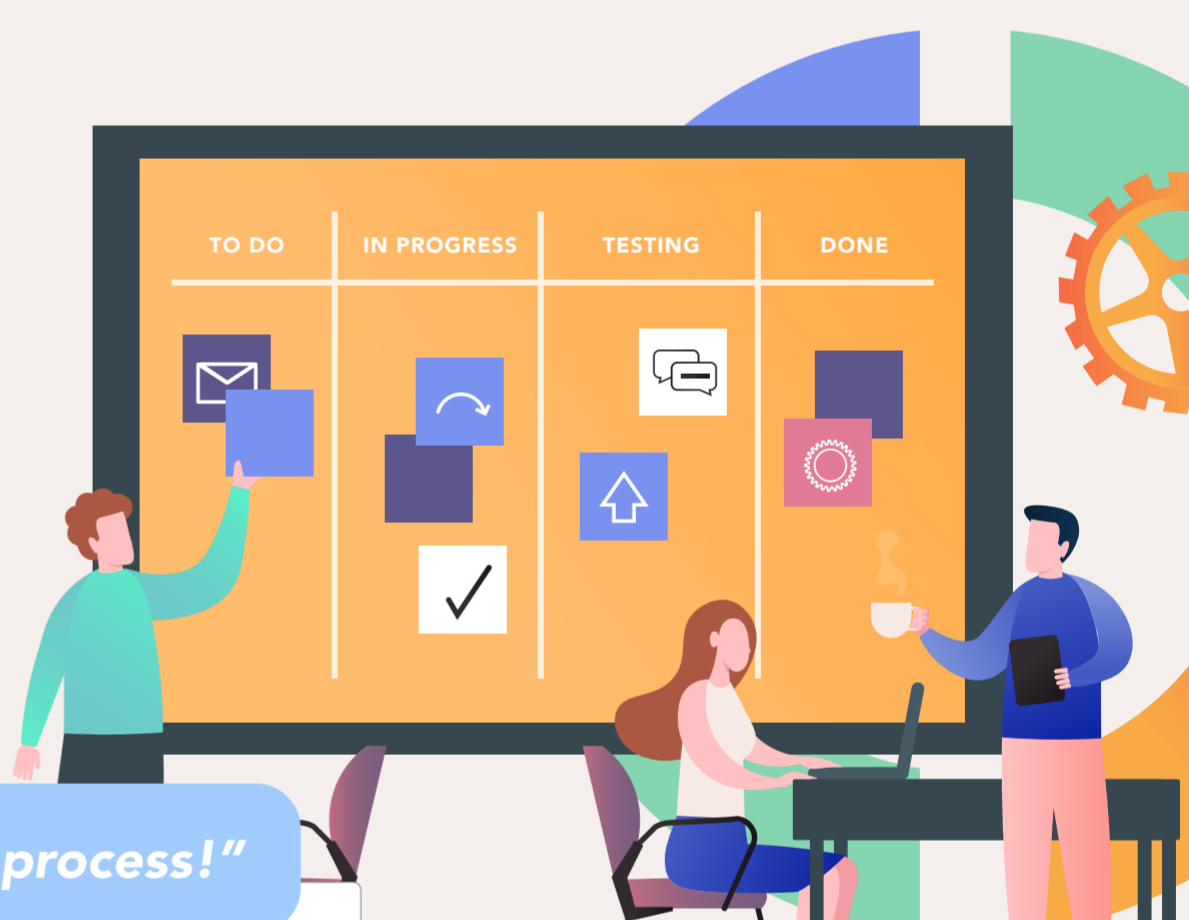
#### PRO TIP

As a team, discuss how you will use card attributes to communicate key information. Make sure you're on the same page about what each card detail means, and when and how it should be used.

## 5

### Model your own process.

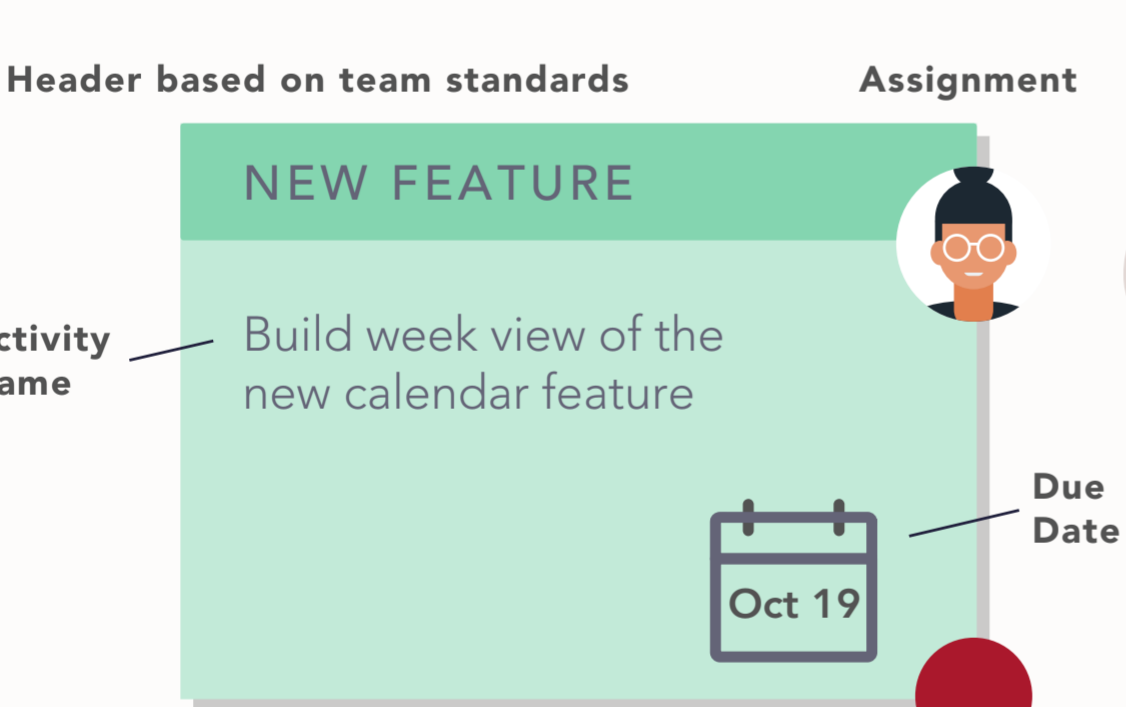
Board examples can serve as an excellent source of inspiration for your own Kanban board design. But remember, the best Kanban board is the one that accurately represents your team's unique process – so take the elements that make sense for your team, and leave the rest behind.



*"There's no process like your process!"*

#### PRO TIP

Keep your process simple at first – you can always make your board more complex as you go. Focus on building out the vertical lanes of your process so the work flows from left to right.



## 6

### Design with filters in mind.

There are countless benefits to having all of your team's work visualized on one board, but it can also lead to information overload. When creating your board and filling out your card details, design with filters in mind. Think, "How would someone search for this?" For example, use descriptive card titles, and complete card attributes as fully as possible.

*"Filters are your friends!"*

#### PRO TIP

Standardize the way your team uses card colors to represent different work items, and make it easy for anyone to find cards on a board. For card titles, we suggest starting each title with a verb to help define the scope of the work.

## 7

### Aim for progress over perfection.

Think of your team's Kanban board design as a first draft – a jumping off point, from which you can continue to learn and evolve. A Kanban board is meant to inspire conversations about not just the work itself, but about how your team works. Remember where you started, and make sure to celebrate your progress along the way.



*"We can only go up from here!"*

#### PRO TIP

Schedule periodic meetings to review how the board is working for the team. Be sure to discuss opportunities for improvement, as well as ways in which the board is working well!

Don't let the fear of imperfect board design keep you from getting started. Remember that Kanban is about evolution, not revolution. Commit to creating a board that accurately reflects where you are now – once you have that, then commit to continuously working to make it better.

Follow the journey of a digital Kanban board in LeanKit.  
**How to Achieve Continuous Improvement**

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