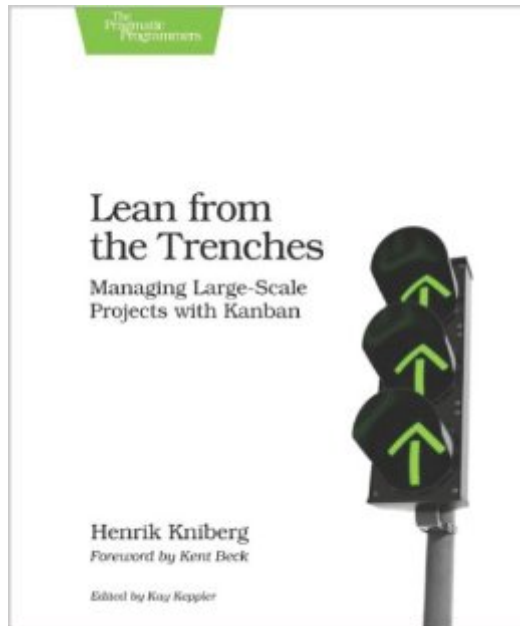# Lean From The Trenches: Managing Large-Scale Projects With Kanban

Synopsis

You know the Agile and Lean development buzzwords, you've read the books. But when systems need a serious overhaul, you need to see how it works in real life, with real situations and people. Lean from the Trenches is all about actual practice. Every key point is illustrated with a photo or diagram, and anecdotes bring you inside the project as you discover why and how one organization modernized its workplace in record time.Lean from the Trenches is all about actual practice.Find out how the Swedish police combined XP, Scrum, and Kanban in a 60-person project. From start to finish, you'll see how to deliver a successful product using Lean principles. We start with an organization in desperate need of a new way of doing things and finish with a group of sixty, all working in sync to develop a scalable, complex system. You'll walk through the project step by step, from customer engagement, to the daily "cocktail party," version control, bug tracking, and release. In this honest look at what works--and what doesn't--you'll find out how to:Make quality everyone's business, not just the testers.Keep everyone moving in the same direction without micromanagement.Use simple and powerful metrics to aid in planning and process improvement.Balance between low-level feature focus and high-level system focus.You'll be ready to jump into the trenches and streamline your own development process.

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Customer Reviews

I once heard the author speak at Oredev about his papers as an occasional brain-dump, kind of emptying short term memory so that he could learn new things, and this book is a great example of that. Without dogma, buzzwords or marketing, Henrik Kniberg notes lessons learned from a uniquely interesting project, where lean software delivery principles were applied to a large scale public sector effort with great success. I particularly love that there is no preaching, the author does not claim that what worked for them works universally, but tells a great story with deep insights and lets readers make their own conclusions.I read the book in one go, without putting it down, during a five hour flight. The first part is the case study of the delivery of the Digital Investigation System for the Swedish Police Authority. The second part is a deeper dive into the techniques and tools used to set up and run the delivery process. The book is for experienced practitioners and newbies alike. People new to Kanban and Lean software delivery will benefit from a real-world warts-and-all case study, with a pretty good example of how things were set up. Examples of process metrics, bug handling, setting up a Kanban board across teams and handling technical stories will be particularly interesting to people who had some prior knowledge but haven't seen the techniques work at large. Part II will probably help newbies make a lot more sense out of Part I, so if you are completely new to the topic it might be worth reading the second part first.

Writing a book on software project management methodologies is not something to be taken lightly. One runs the risk of not satisfying anyone while trying to cater to the wishes of everyone. Even though the title and cover pages are 100% buzzword compliant, which is a warning sign by itself, Henrik Kniberg seems to have achieved a satisfying result in his book 'Lean from the Trenches: Managing Large-Scale Projects with Kanban'.The good partsThe book is short. In 150 pages you cannot go into details and start theoretizing, and this is good because Kniberg promises to do one thing well and he delivers it: A case study of a 60-person software development team who used a mixture of Kanban, Agile (Scrum) and XP methodologies.His explanations are generally clear and his definitons are sharp enough for practical purposes. He does not preach and never takes a 'here is the absolute truth, use it as it is' approach. He tells the his team's story and does not hide the parts that are still evolving.The chapter 'Agile and Lean in a Nutshell' is one of the best chapters. In

only 10 pages, this chapter succeeds to provide the reader with the essence of those methodologies. The subsection 'One Day in Kanban Land' is a very nice example of using simple visualizations and storytelling to explain a concept in very concrete terms.The core ideas such as 'why WIP (Work In Progress) should be limited', 'how to reduce the test automation backlog', and 'cause effect diagrams' are very well explained. I have also liked the chapter where the author justifies their use of physical Kanban boards and how they scaled those boards to 60 people.The bad partsThe book is short.

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