



Kanban as the Communication Backbone

Enabling Flow and Collaboration Across Organizational Frontlines

Stonne, May 16th 1940

Captain Pierre Billotte

- Char B1 bis "Eure"
- 32 tons of steel, 60mm armor
- Armed with 75mm howitzer and 47mm gun

He enters the village alone:

And attacks two German columns



The Battle

13

German tanks destroyed

140

Hits – no penetration

Technical superiority in perfection

The Shock

Six weeks later, France capitulated

France had:

- More tanks than Germany
- Better tanks
- Stronger armor

The Invisible Factor

"Les liaisons, les reconnaissances sont nulles."

"Communications, reconnaissance: null."

— War diary 49e BCC, Stonne 1940

French tanks and their command were blind

Billotte's Isolation

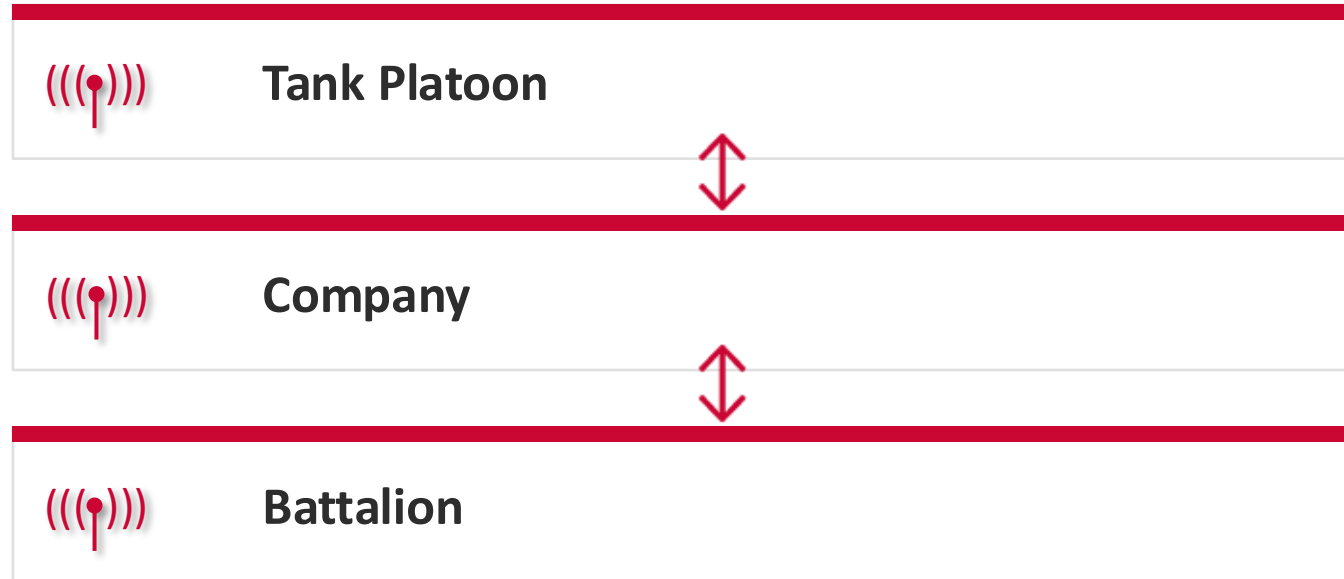
Billotte could NOT:

- X Coordinate other tanks
- X Request reinforcements
- X Receive updates
- X Communicate with infantry

blind and deaf

German Side – The Contrast

Every tank had a radio



Real-time coordination • Commanders see the battlefield • Units adapt together

FuG 5

The Radio

French Tanks

**Only 1 in 5
command tanks
had radios**

German Tanks

**EVERY tank
had a radio**

Real-time coordination

The Decisive Difference in 1940

NOT armor • NOT firepower • NOT numbers • NOT courage

COMMUNICATION

And today?

Your organizations = France 1940

The One-Way Organization

A familiar story:

Monday

Team discovers blocker
No structured way to signal it

Friday

Leadership still thinks: 'All green'

3 Weeks later

Project crashes
Rushed fix, technical debt

The problem was visible on Monday • Leadership learned 3 weeks too late

Symptoms

Status meetings:
All 'green'

Teams at
cross-purposes

Outdated
information

Late
escalation

Emerging
silos

Communicative
blindness

Kanban is your radio

A system that makes work visible
So teams can see, signal, and coordinate

Two-way communication at scale

1. Horizontal: Team ↔ Team

What becomes possible:

Solve blockers

Team B sees Team A blocked
→ Offers solution immediately

Share capacity

Team overloaded, Team with slack
→ Work flows between teams

Prevent duplicates

Both building same feature
→ Merge efforts, one solution

Share knowledge

Team needs expertise
→ Other team's expert helps

Coordinate dependencies

Frontend ready for Backend API
→ Backend reprioritizes

Align priorities

Platform team sees what's urgent
→ Focus on high-impact work

Visibility prompts action • Teams self-organize

2. Vertical: Team ↔ Leadership

What leadership sees:

WIP Limits

6/5 items in progress

→ *Team overloaded*

Cycle Time

Average: 12 days, trending up

→ *Quality issue?*

Blockers

3 blockers older than 5 days

→ *Systemic problem*

Visibility prompts action

3. System-wide: Collective Awareness

One board

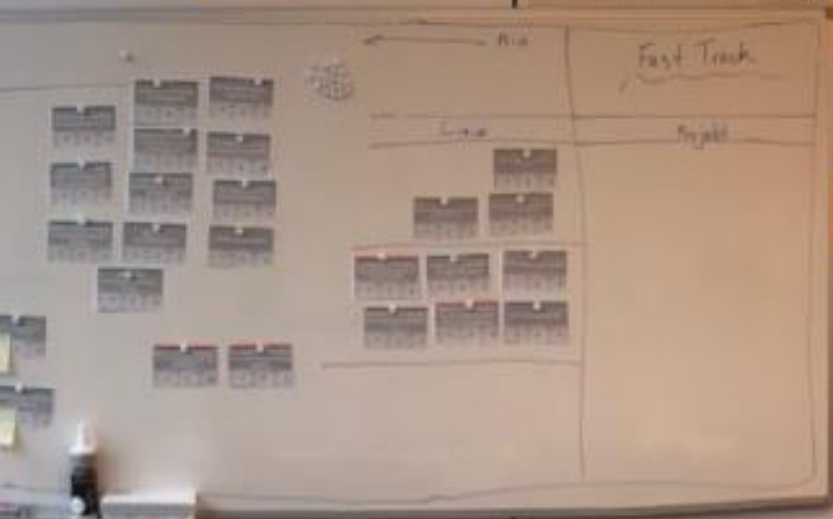
One team works better

Many boards

Organization coordinates

Visibility prompts action

Backboard



Review

Reporting



What's coming?

What's in progress?

What are teams working on?

Any problems?

Are we on time?

Changes needed?

Angebote	Projekte	Teams	Next	Umsetzung	Typetest	FAI	Serienstart	Geliefert	
	WV6 TBR U6 VTB BSO S OCL OCL Japan + Taiwan MSTE OST OST RS A2P PH 508 PH 508 PH 508 PH 508 PH 508	Tanb Kabine Custom. Kempe. SCC Solutions Test Cen. Innov.	Next Next	Umsetzung	April April April April April April April April April April April April April April April April April April	KW 16 KW 21 KW 22 KW 23 KW 28 KW 30 KW 31 KW 32 KW 37 KW 42 KW 47 KW 48 KW 49 KW 50 KW 51 KW 52 KW 53	FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI FAI	Serienstart	Geliefert

Team Capacity?

"It's not about the board.

It's about enabling the conversation."

The Point

France 1940:

Better tanks • More armor • Superior firepower

→ **Lost anyway**

Germany 1940:

Radios in every tank

→ **Won**

COMMUNICATION > CAPACITY

Your competitors don't win because of:

- X Better developers
- X Bigger budgets
- X More resources

They win because of:

- ✓ Better coordination
- ✓ Faster learning
- ✓ Less waste

**COMMUNICATION > CAPACITY
STILL TRUE IN 2026**

What Kanban makes visible

Team Health

Where is work waiting?
Are we overburdened?
Do we have slack time?

Flow & Delivery

Are we delivering on time?
Where do we need coordination?
What are the blockers?

Customer Value

Are we building the right things?
Are we fast enough?
How satisfied are customers?

Risks & Dependencies

Internal/external dependencies?
Where is missing information?
What are the risks?

METRICS

Lead time • Throughput • Flow efficiency • Queue sizes • Blockers • Errors • Missed SLAs

Do you have radios – or receivers?

Can your teams SEND and RECEIVE?

Or are they isolated like Billotte at Stonne?

Build your radio network.

Enable the conversation.

Win through communication.

*Thank you
for listening!*



it-agile

Wolfgang Wiedenroth

Let's connect

