Untangling Business Processes through the Kanban Lens

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Co-author of: *Essential Kanban Condensed*

Business processes involve multiple parties, complex interactions, loops, conditional paths, parallel paths…

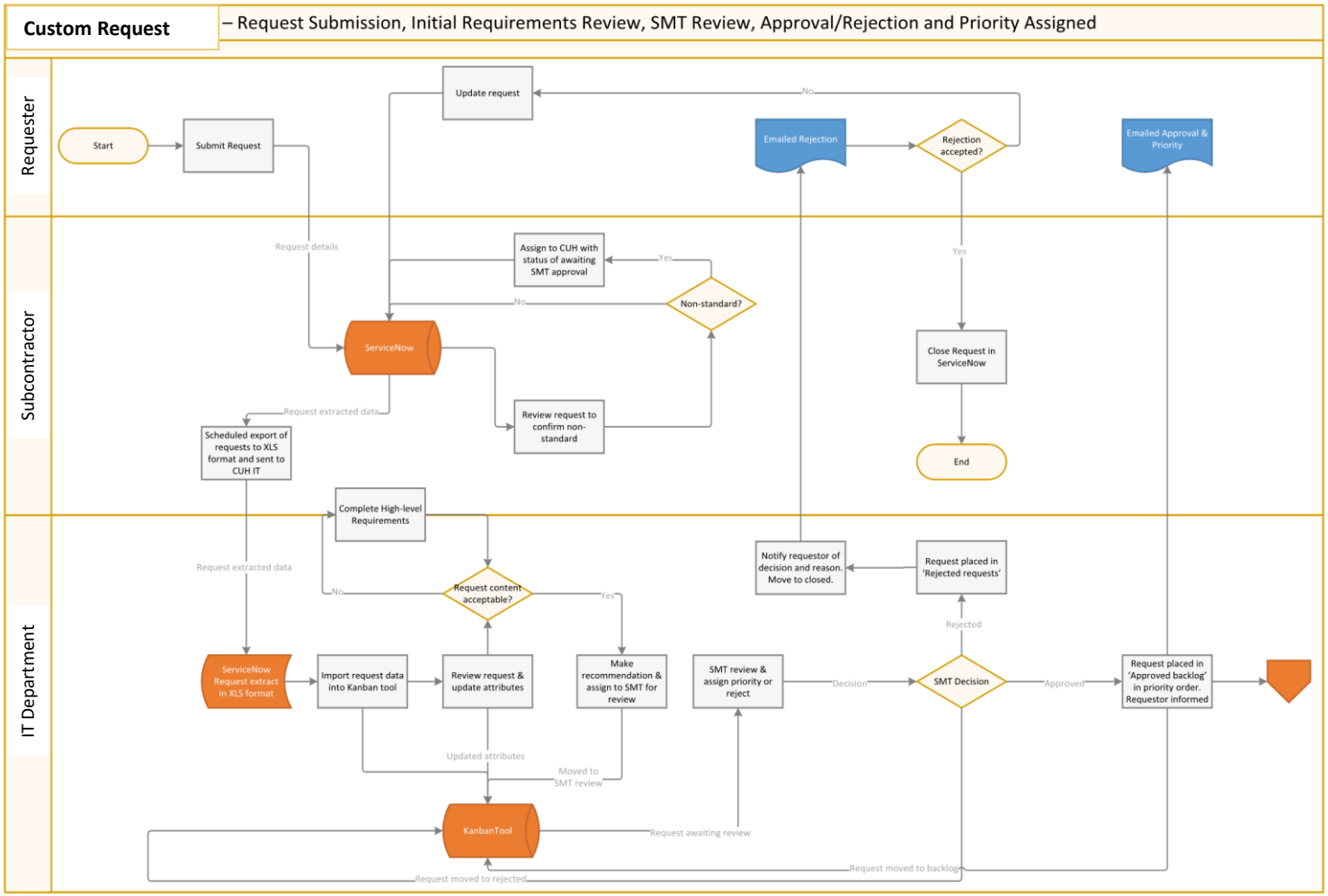
In Kanban, work flows from *need* to *needs met*!

An NHS hospital…

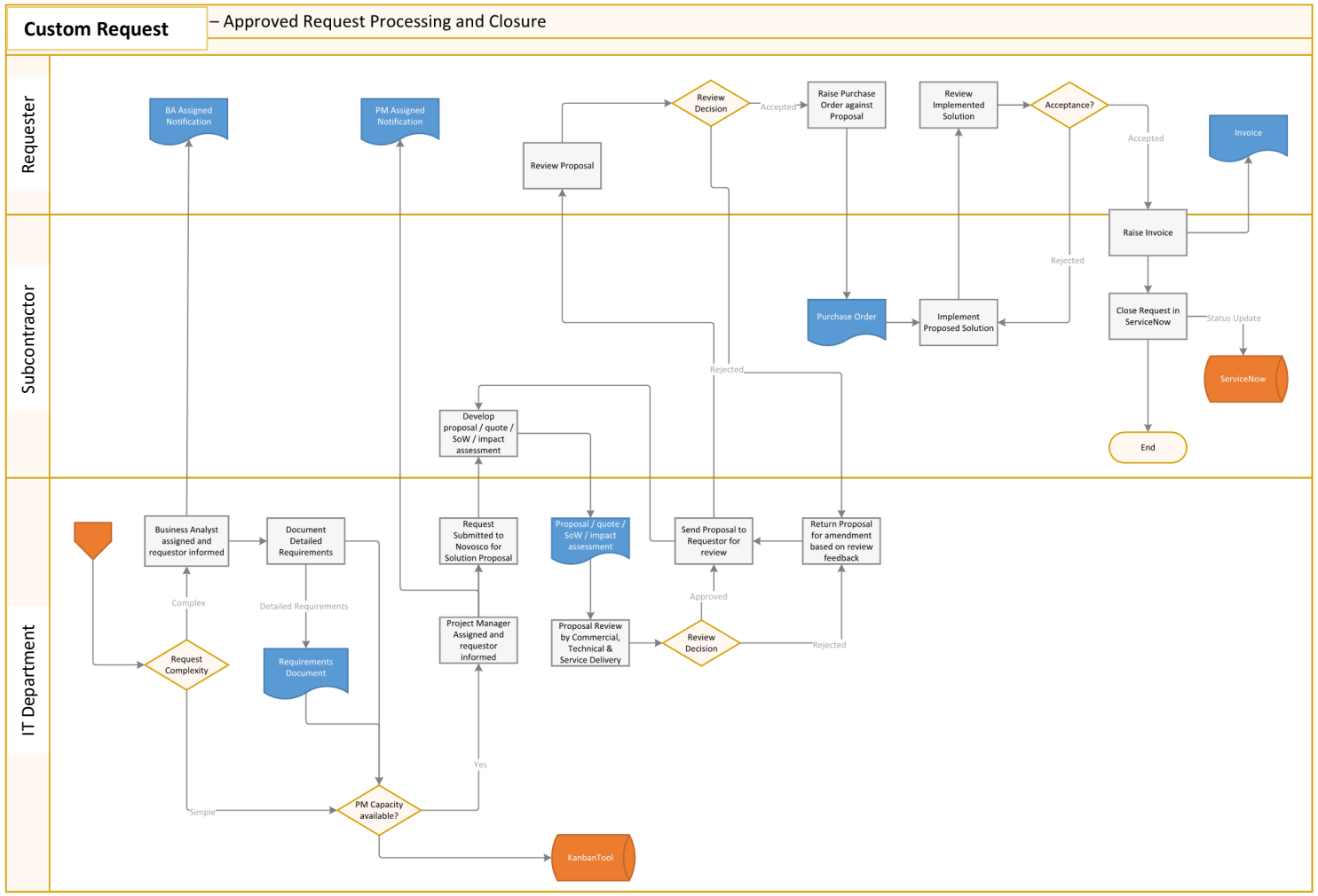
- IT requests from users
  - (“standard” or “**custom**”)
- Who’s responsible for delivery?
  - IT Department
  - Delivery subcontractor
  - Customer authority
  - Finance authority

Custom Request Process…

- *Fixed price* contractual model
- Dominated by hand-offs
- Multiple sign-offs by
  - Requester
  - Customer Authority
  - IT Department
  - Finance



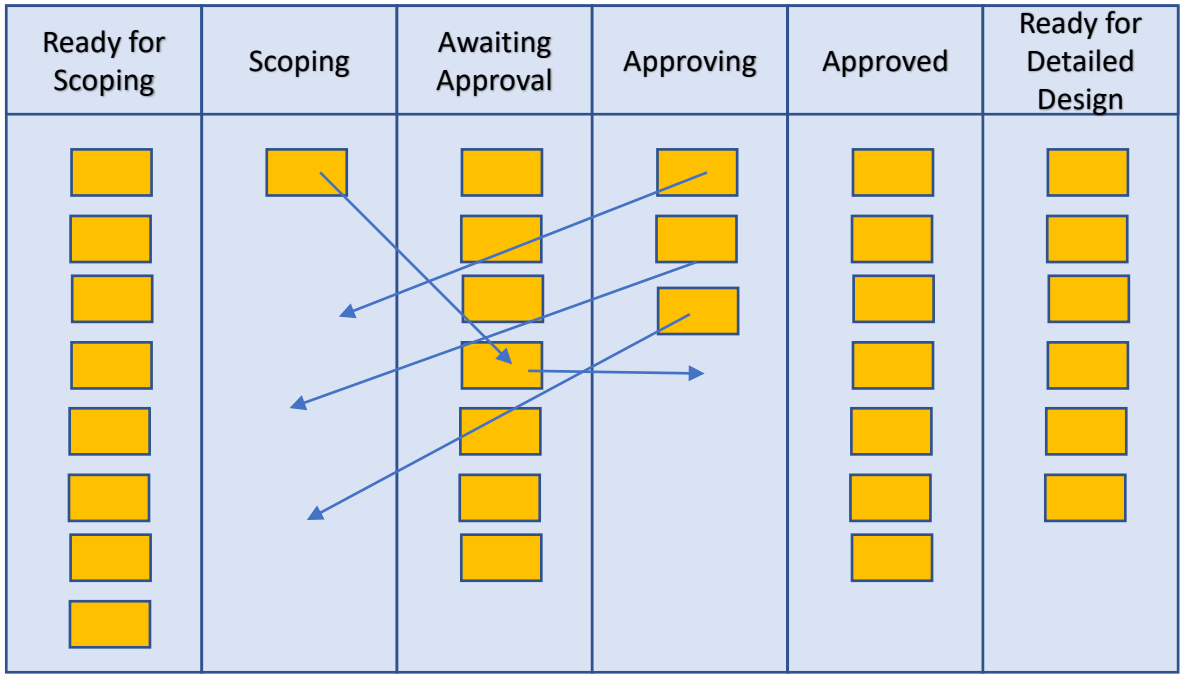
Custom Request submission



Processing and Closure

First pitfall to avoid…

Direct translation of complex processes into Kanban systems



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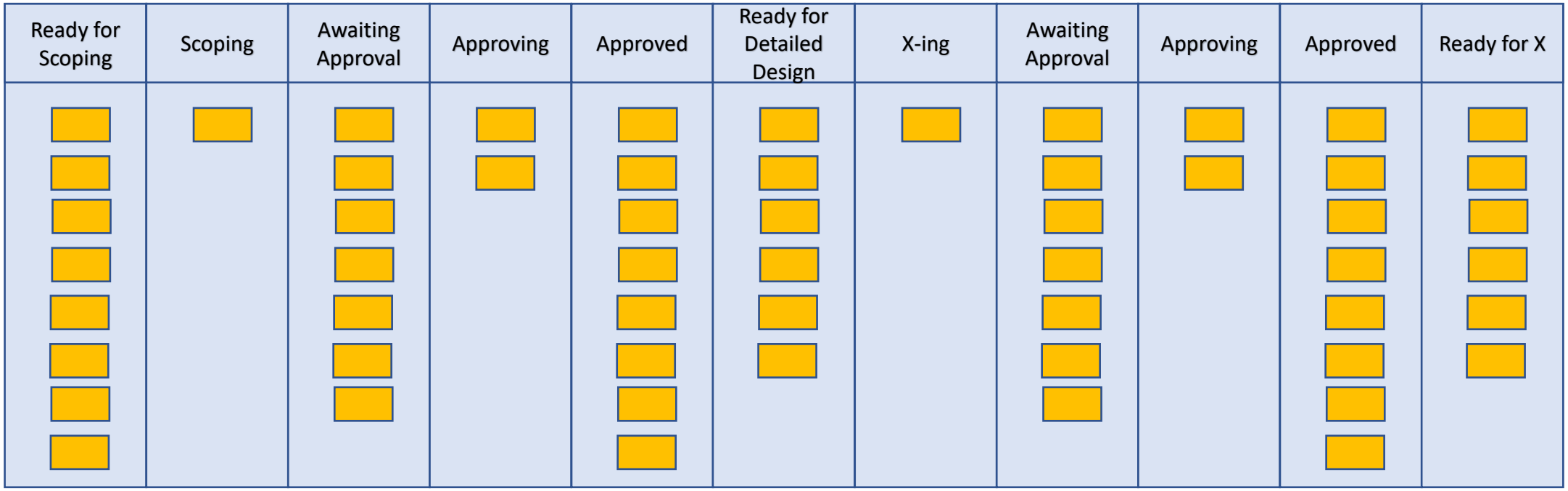

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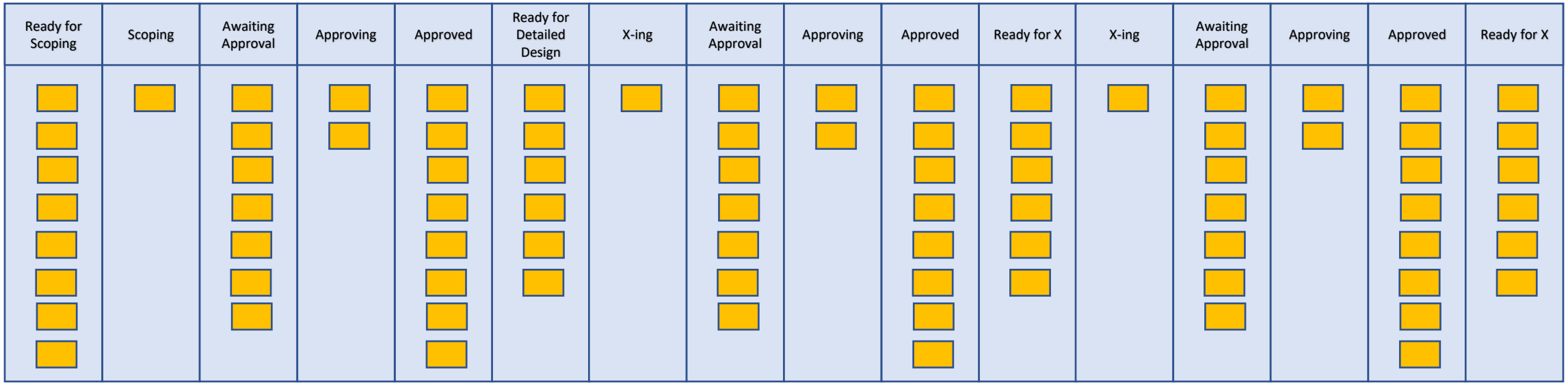

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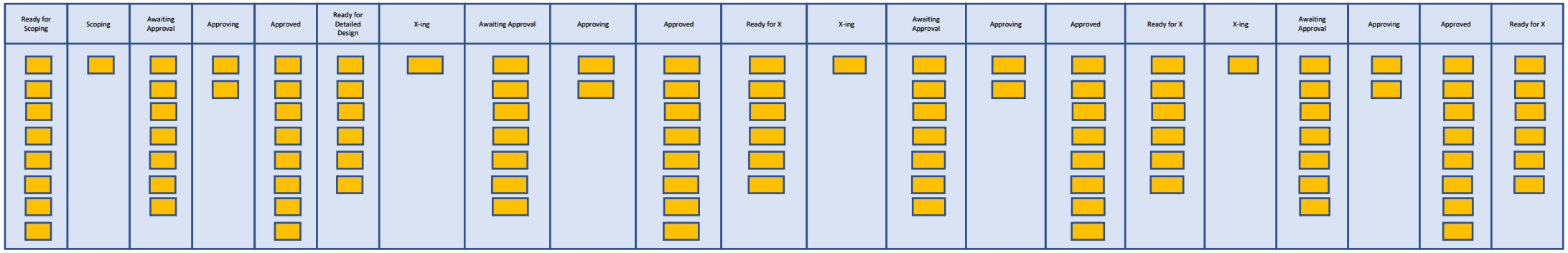

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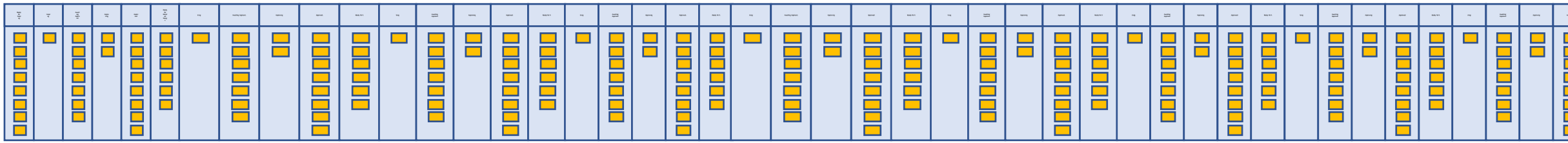


Instead use the
“Kanban Lens”

The Kanban Lens

… a way to *see*

- See work as flow
- See workflow as knowledge discovery steps
- See knowledge work as a service
- See organizations as networks of services

work

workflow

knowledge work

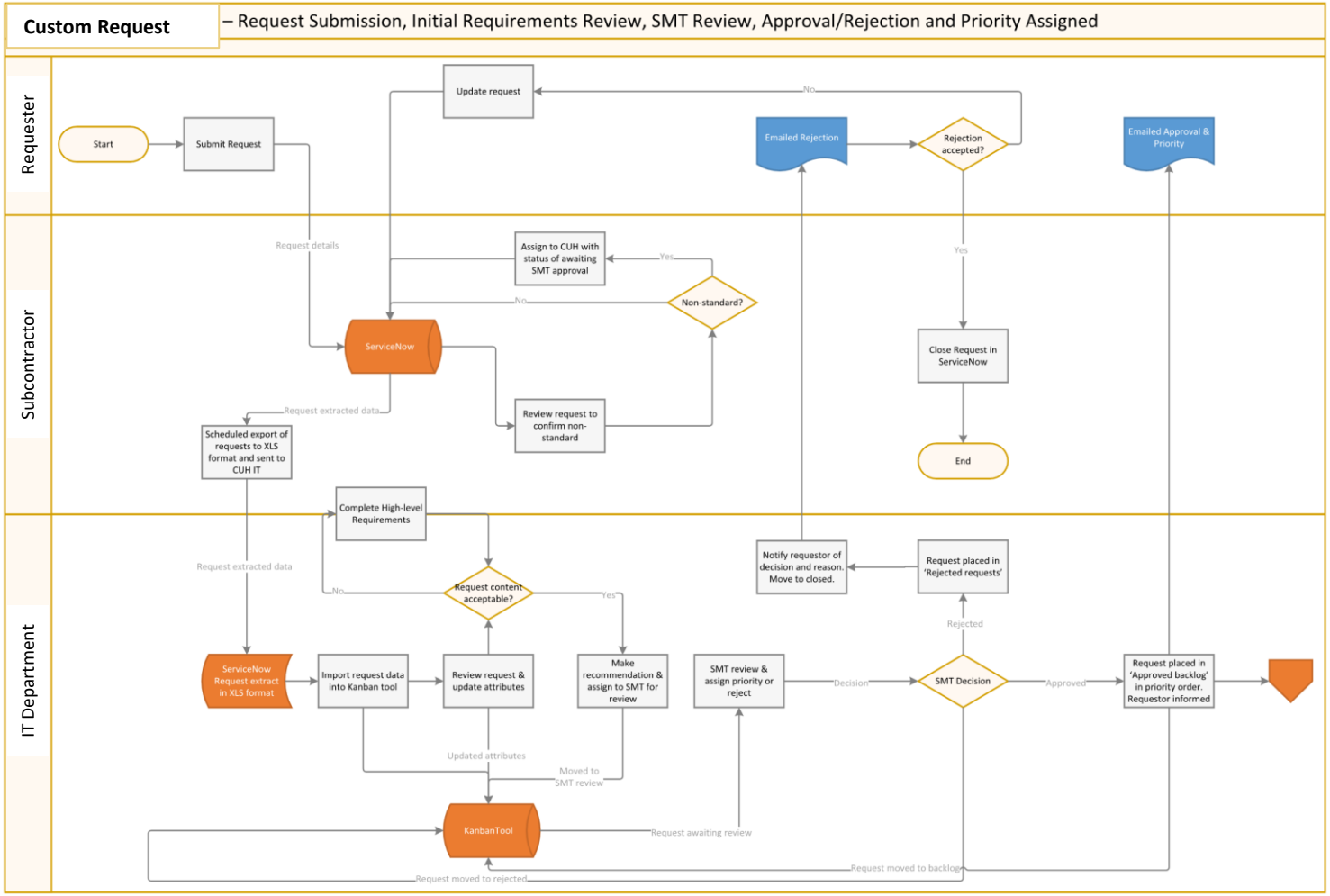
organisations

The Kanban Lens

1. See **work** as **flow** from customer need, to needs met

See **work** as **flow**

Apply “work as flow”



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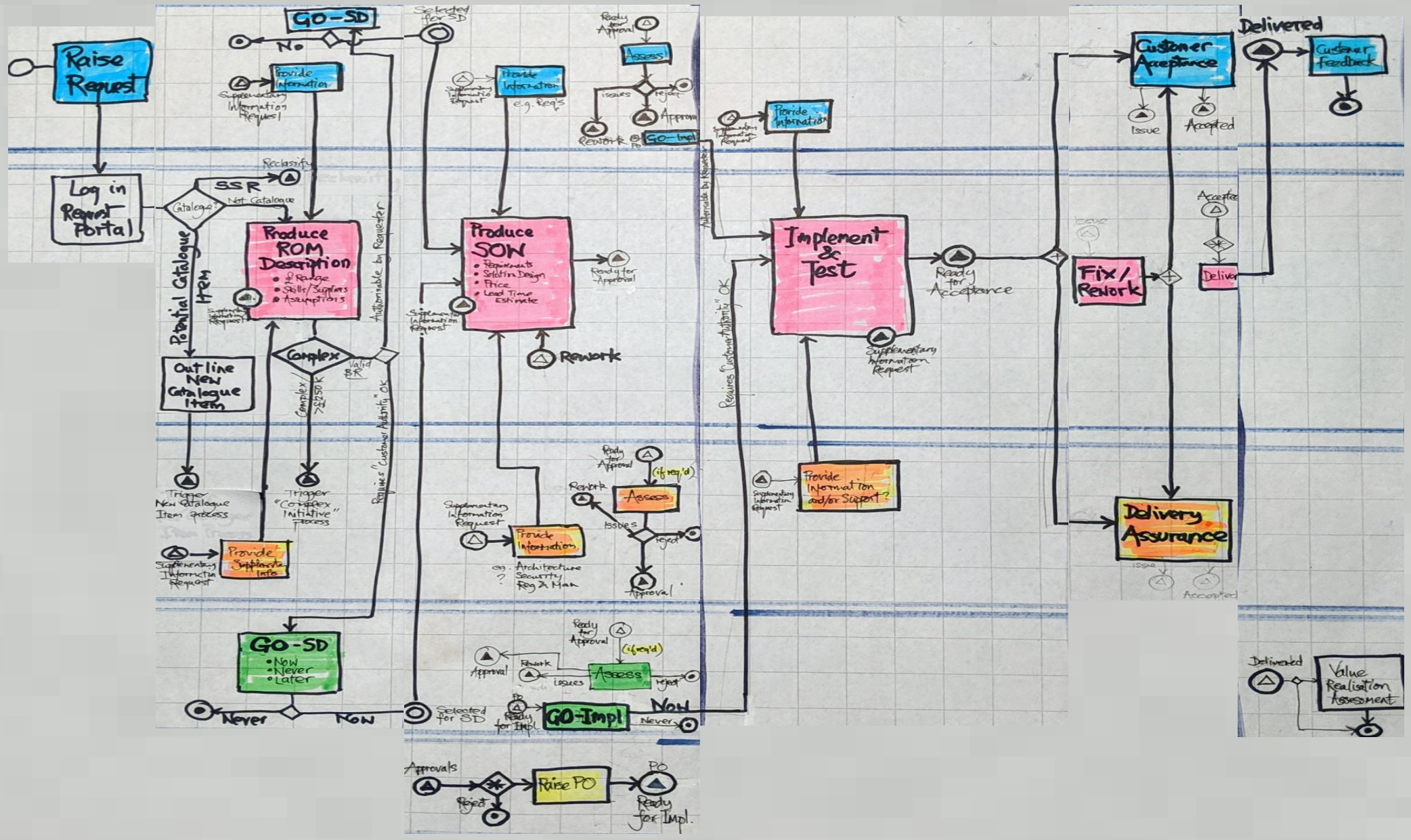
Raise Request
Log in Request Portal
Catalogue?
SSR
Reclassify
Not Catalogue
Potential Catalogue Item
Outline New Catalogue Item
Trigger New Catalogue Item process
Supplementary Information Request
Provide Supplemental Info
Produce ROM Description
Complex
Complex >$250K
Trigger "Complex" Initiative Process
Authorisable by Requestor
Requires "Customer Authority" OK
GO-SD
No
Provide Information
GO-SD
Now
Never
Never
Now
Selected for SD
Provide Information
e.g. Req's
Produce SOW
Requirements
Solution Design
Price
Lead Time Estimate
Ready for Approval
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Provide Information
e.g. Architecture Security Reg & Man
Ready for Approval
Assess
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Raise PO
PO
Ready for Impl.
Provide Information
Implement & Test
Ready for Acceptance
Supplementary Information Request
Provide Information and/or Support?
Customer Acceptance
Issue
Accepted
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Customer Feedback
Value Realisation Assessment

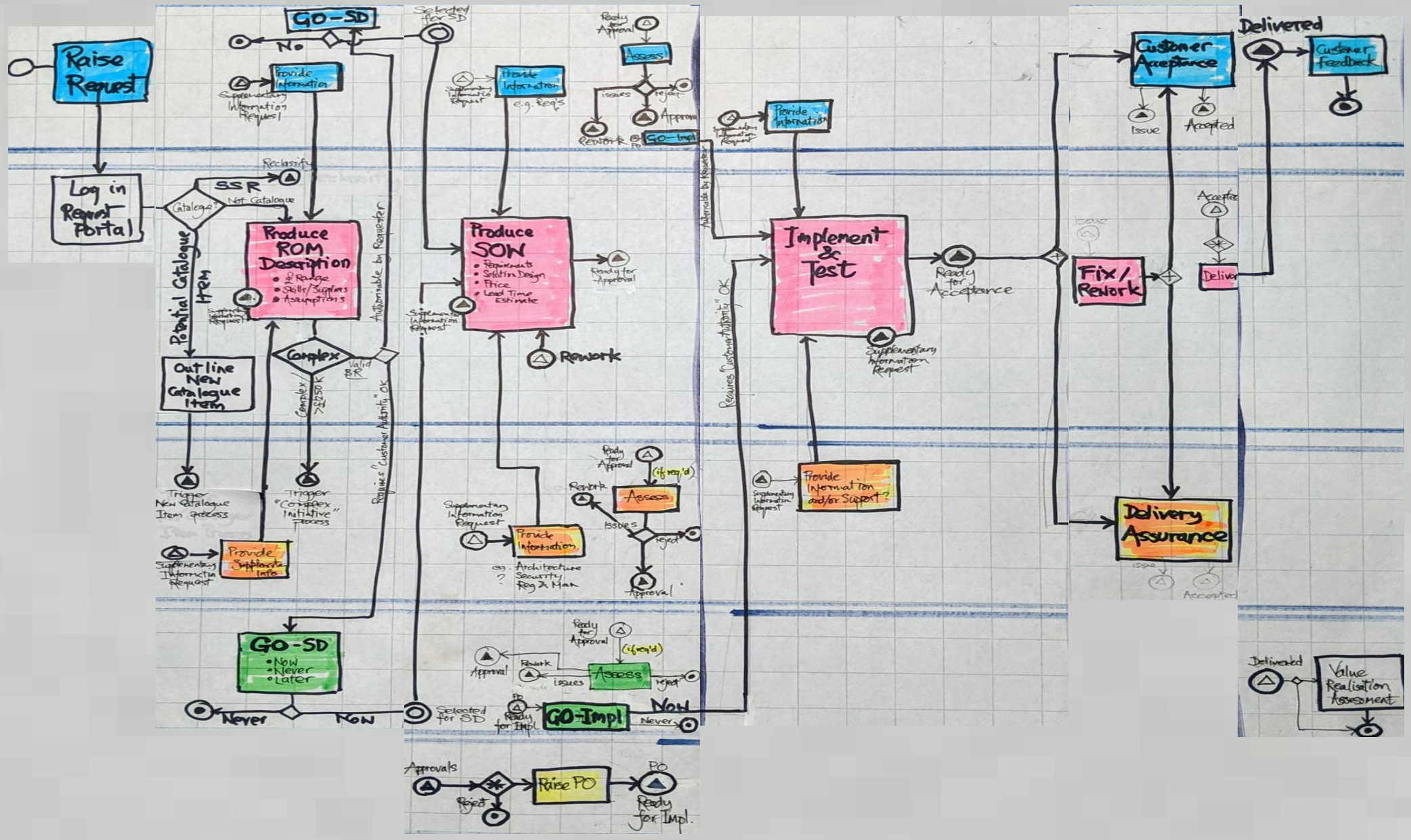
Requester

Subcontractor

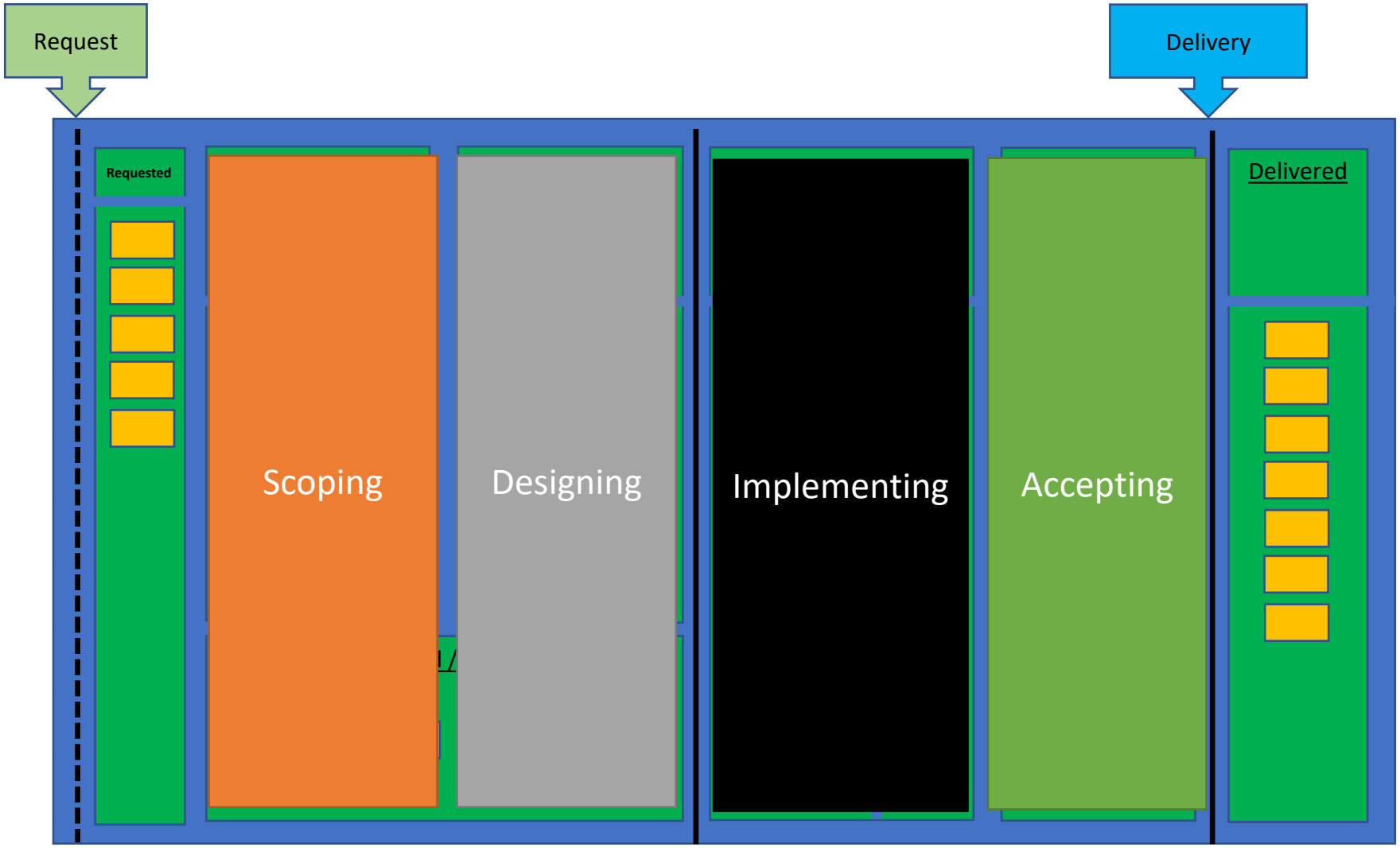
IT Department

Customer Authority

Finance Department



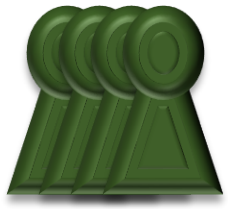
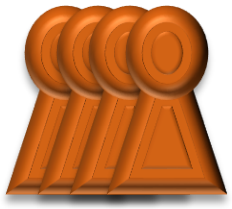
Apply “work as flow”



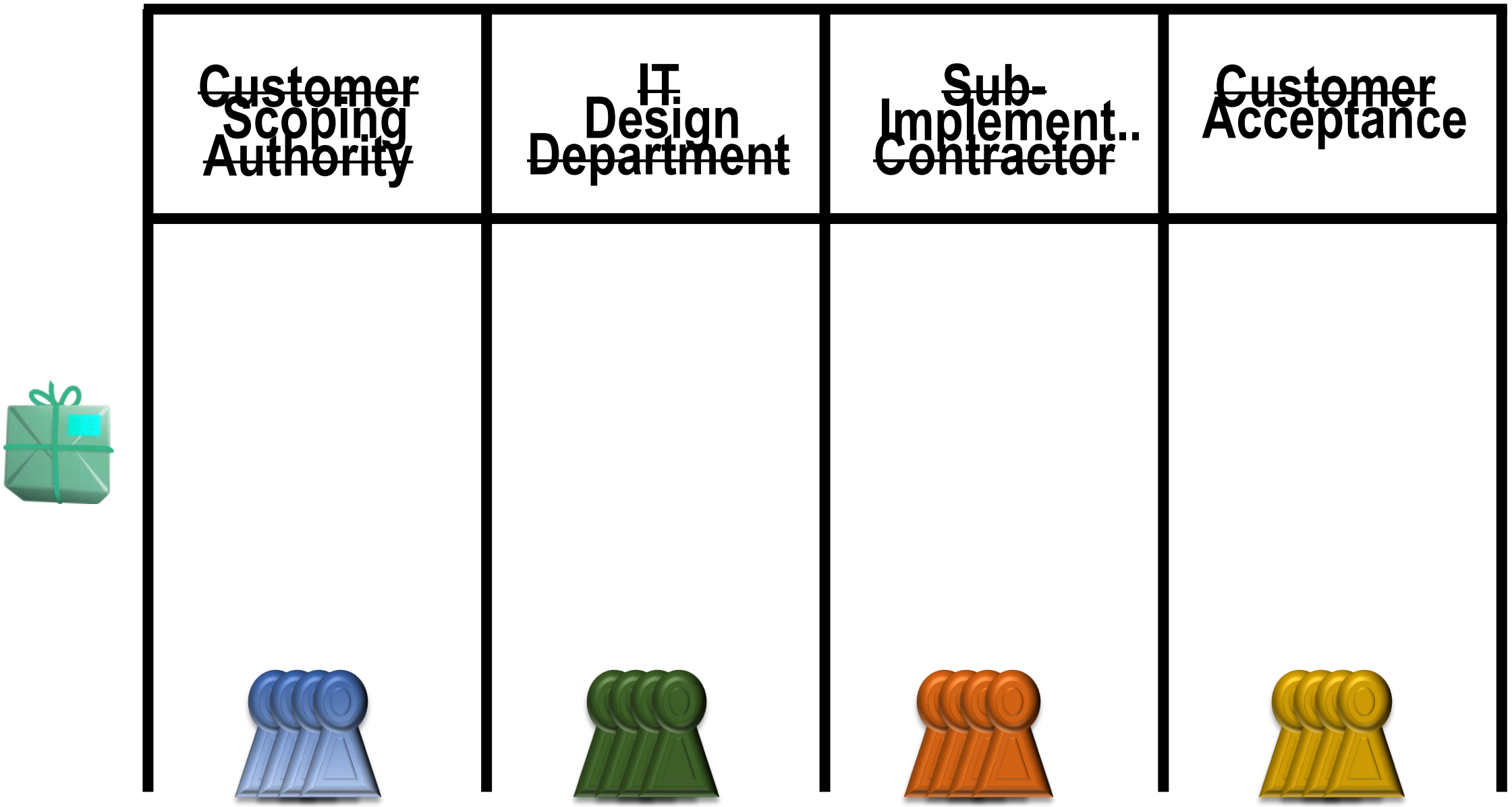
The Kanban Lens

2. See **workflow** as a sequence of **knowledge discovery** steps

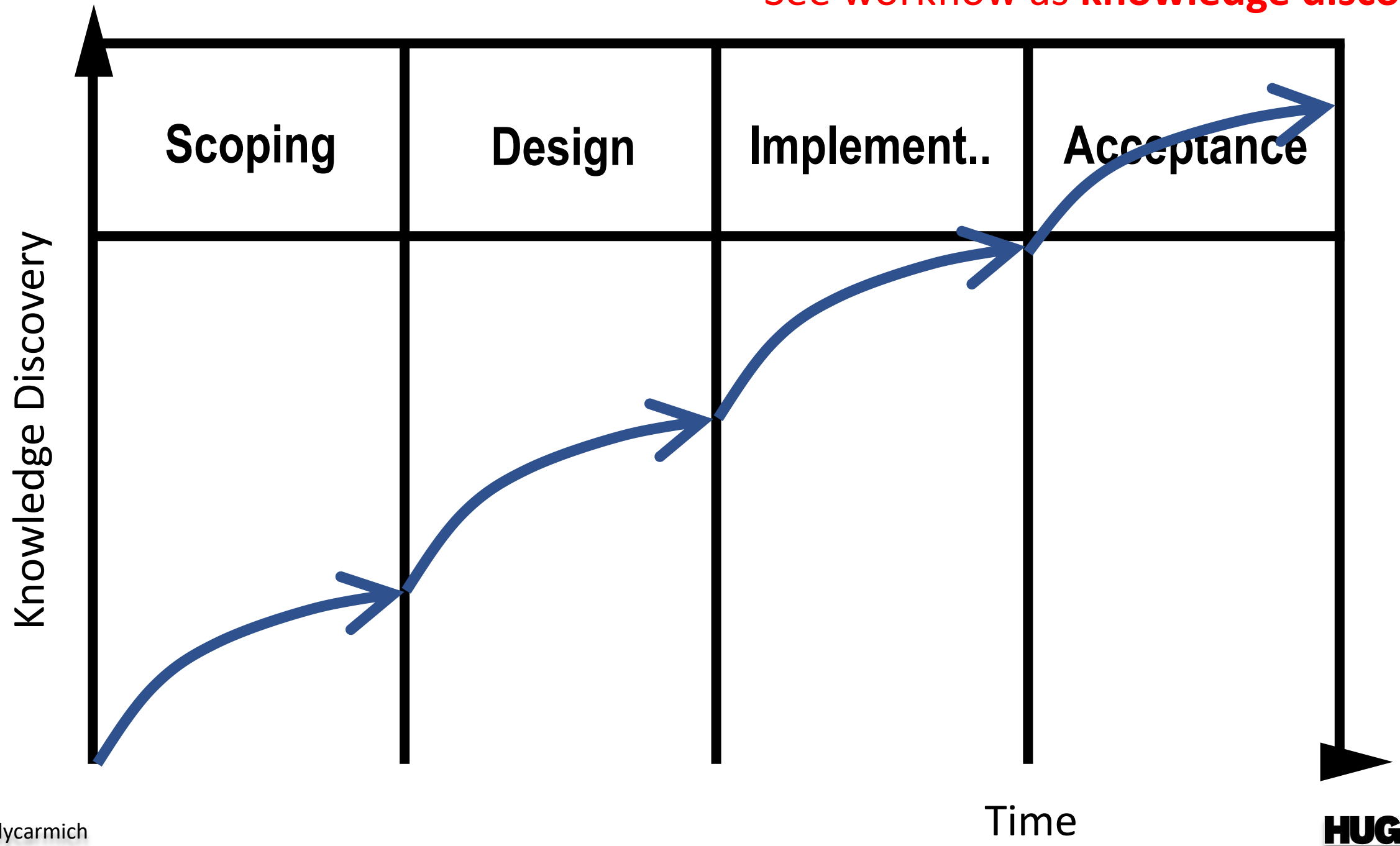
See **workflow** as knowledge discovery

Customer Authority	IT Department	Sub-Contractor	Customer
			

See **workflow** as knowledge discovery



See workflow as **knowledge discovery**



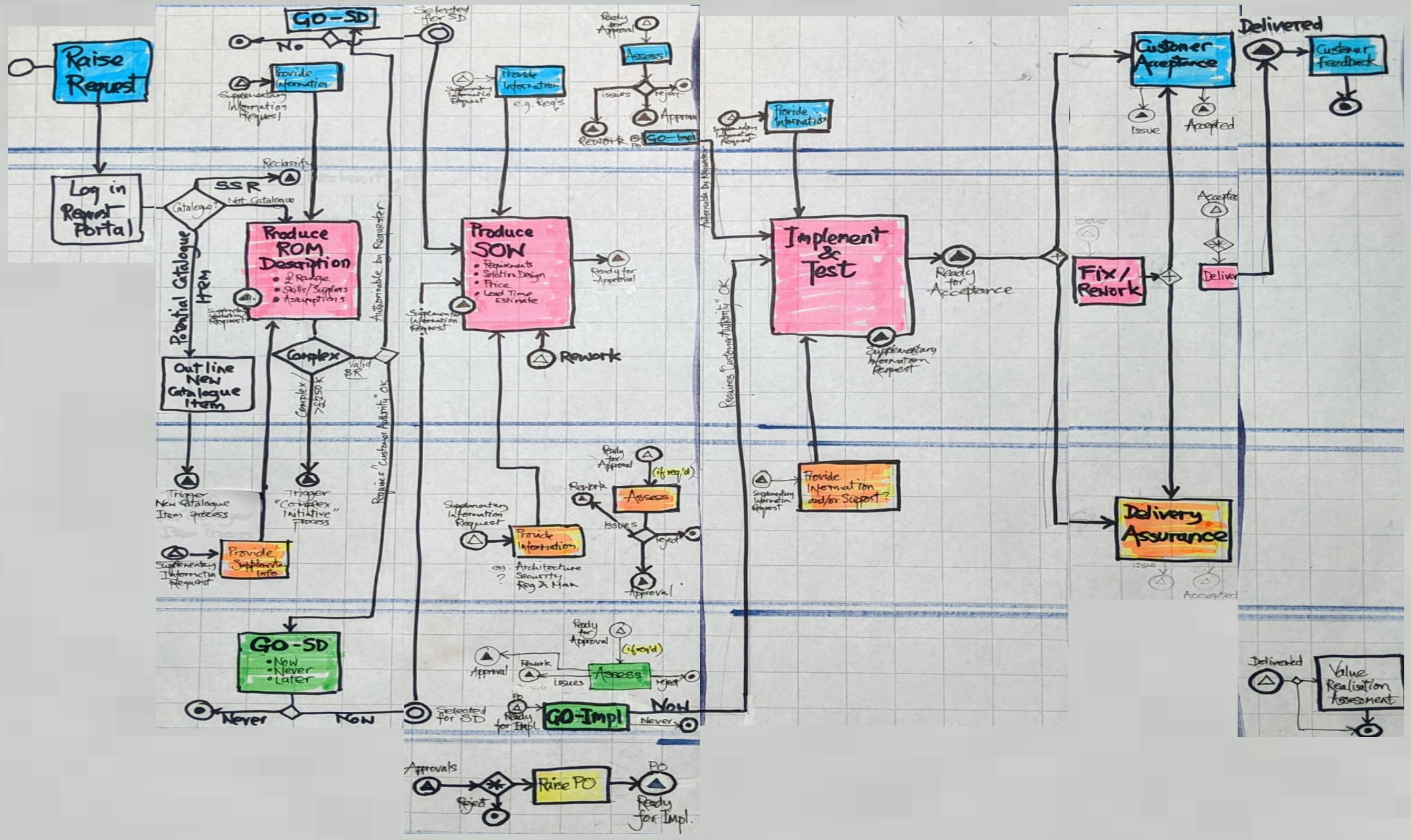
Apply "work as *sequence* of *knowledge-discovery* steps"

Sequence

- Not bouncing responsibilities
- Forward flow
- Meaningful "states"

Knowledge discovery

- How much knowledge needed to take next step?
- How does the contractual framework affect this?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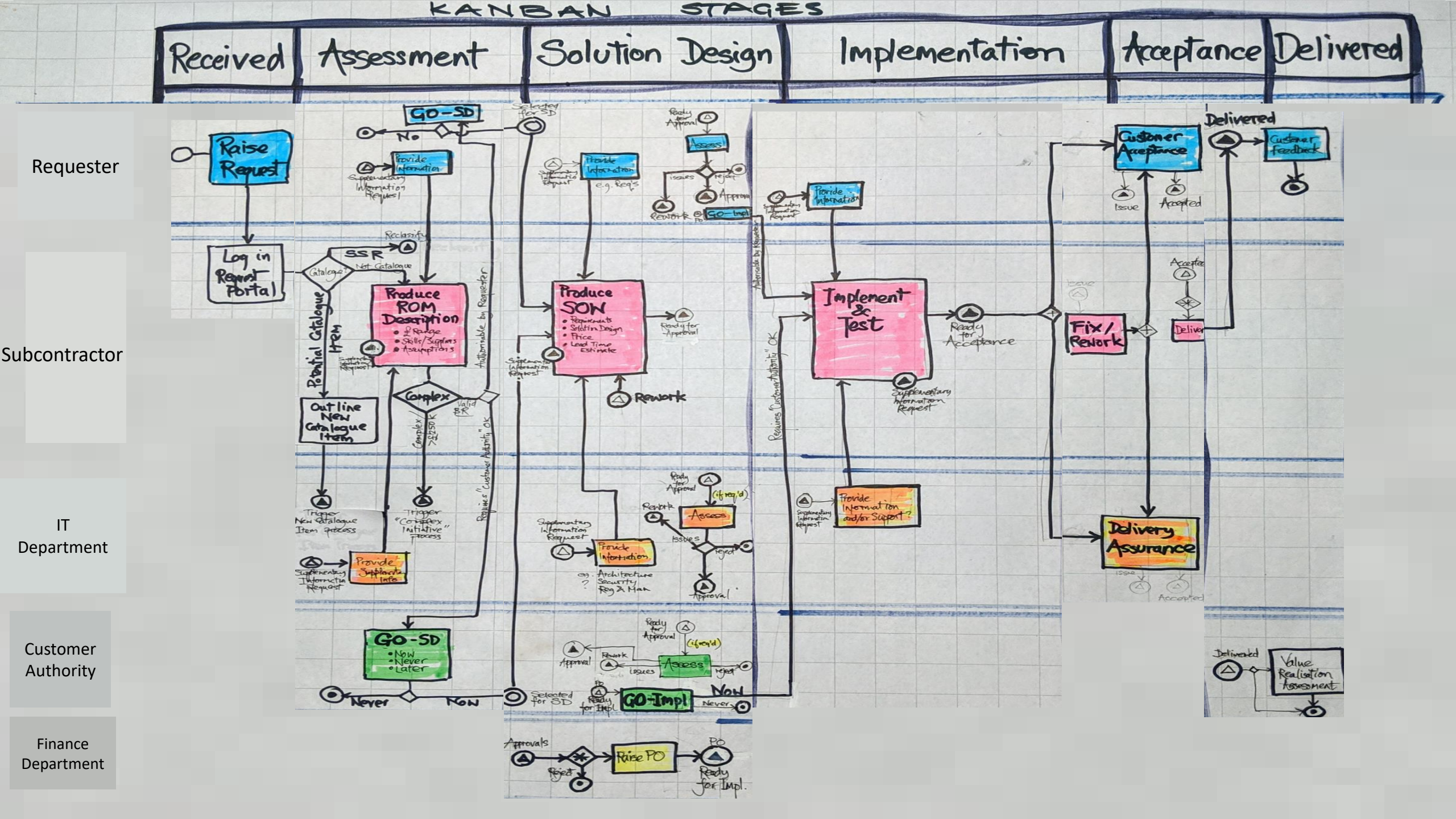
GO-SD
No
Provide Information
GO-SD
Now
Never
Never
Now
Selected for SD
Provide Information
e.g. Req's
Produce SOW
Requirements
Solution Design
Price
Lead Time Estimate
Ready for Approval
Rework
Provide Information
e.g. Architecture Security Reg & Man
Ready for Approval
Assess
Issues
Reject
Approval
Rework
Ready for Approval
Assess
Approval
Rework
Issues
Reject
Selected for SD
Ready for Impl
GO-Impl
Approvals
Reject
Raise PO
PO
Ready for Impl.
Provide Information
Implement & Test
Ready for Acceptance
Supplementary Information Request
Provide Information and/or Support?
Customer Acceptance
Issue
Accepted
Fix/Rework
Delivery Assurance
Delivered
Customer Feedback
Value Realisation Assessment


KANBAN STAGES
Received
Assessment
Solution Design
Implementation
Acceptance
Delivered
Requester
Subcontractor
IT Department
Customer Authority
Finance Department
Raise Request
Log in Request Portal
GO-SD
No
Provide Information
Supplementary Information Request
Reclassify
SSR
Catalogue?
Not Catalogue
Potential Catalogue Item
Produce ROM Description
Range
Skills/Suppliers
Assumptions
Authorisable by Requester
Complex
Valid BR
Complex >£250K
Requires "Customer Authority" OK
Outline New Catalogue Item
Trigger New Catalogue Item process
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Provide Supplierto Info
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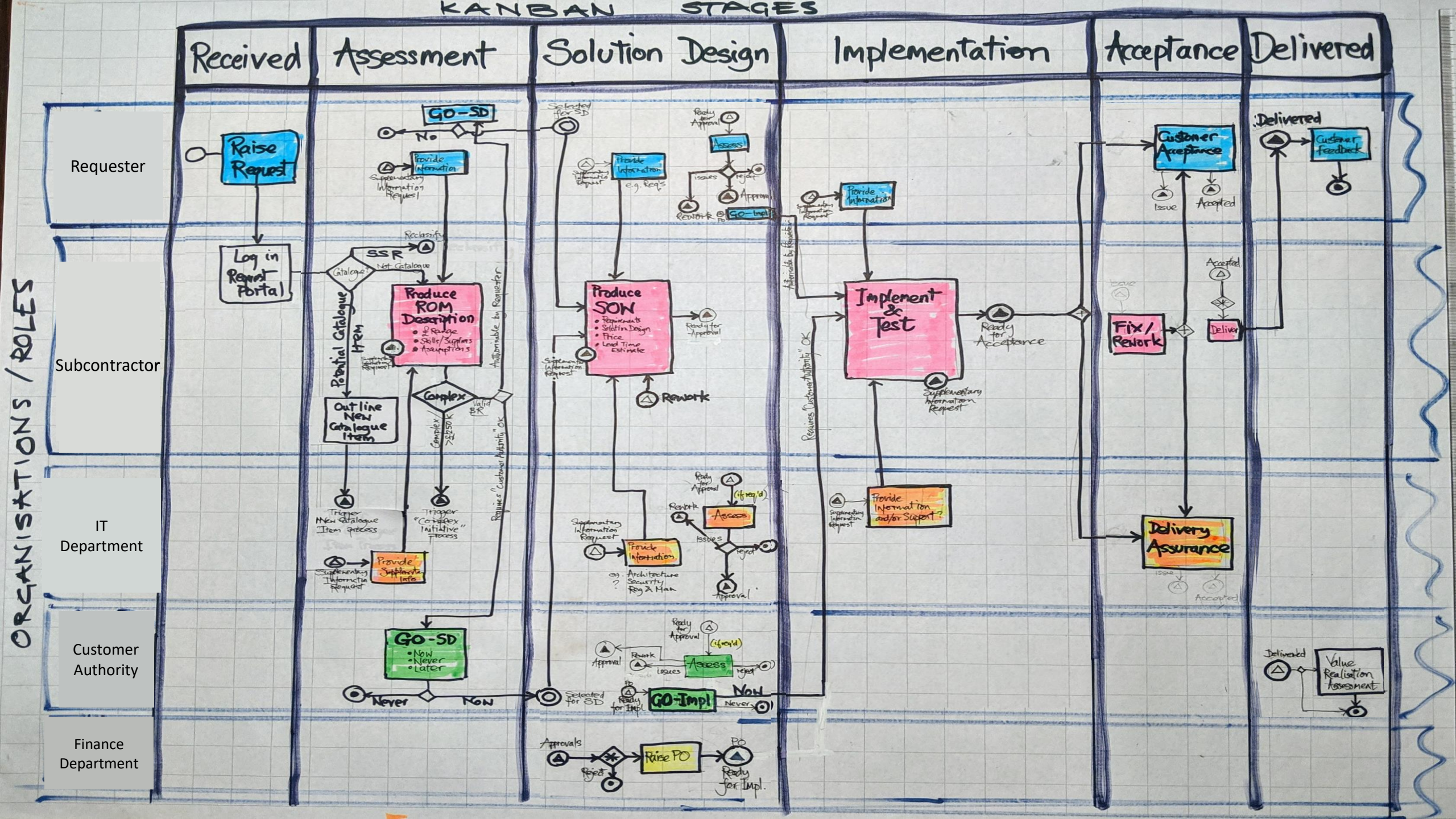
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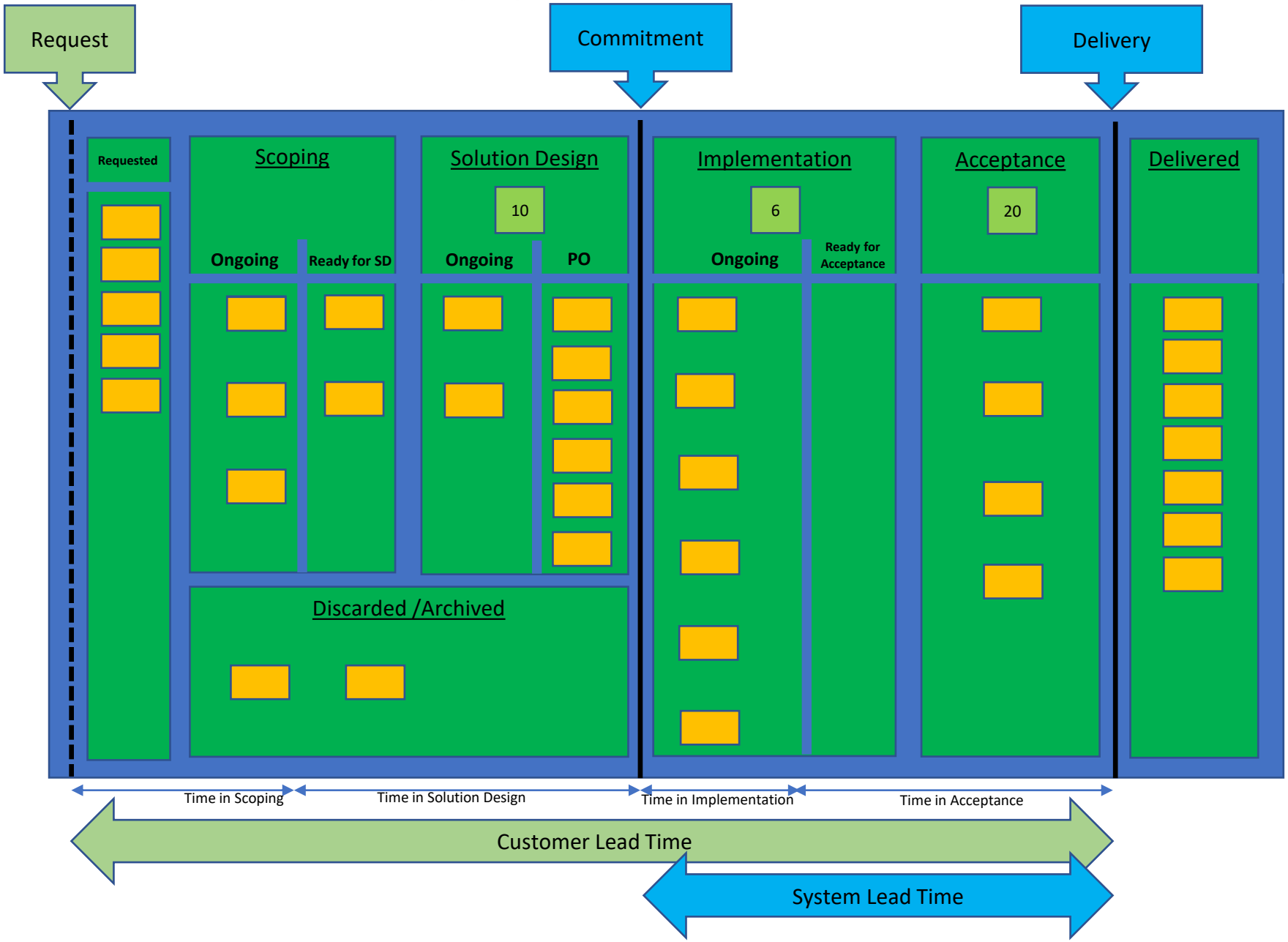
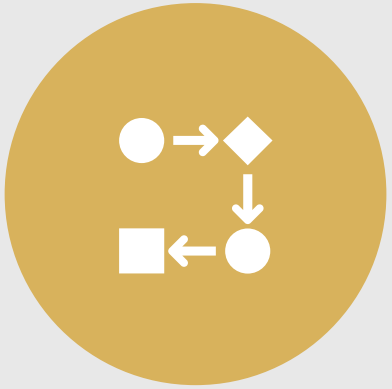
Apply “work as flow”



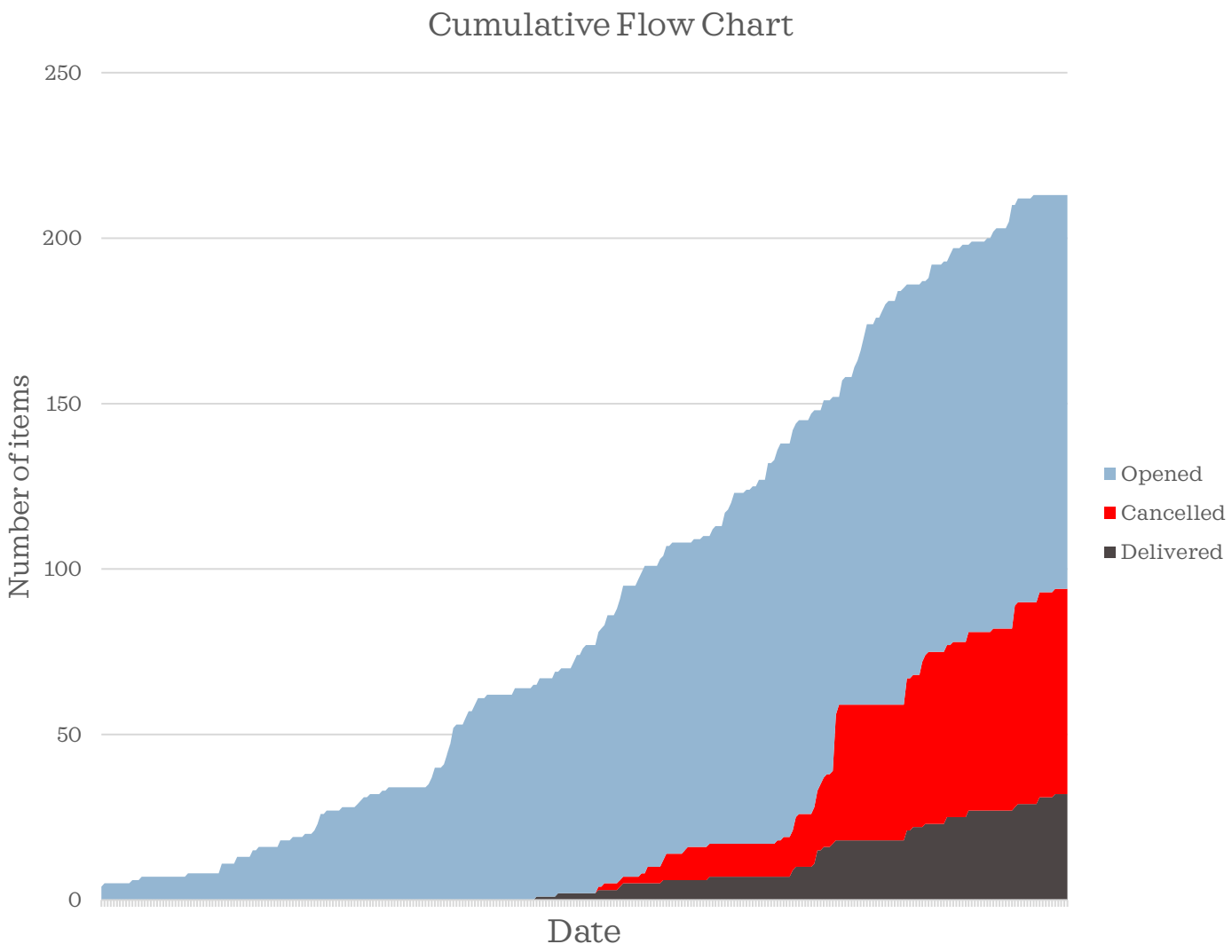
Where to focus?

DATA

WHICH METRICS MATTER?



WHERE IS THE BOTTLENECK?

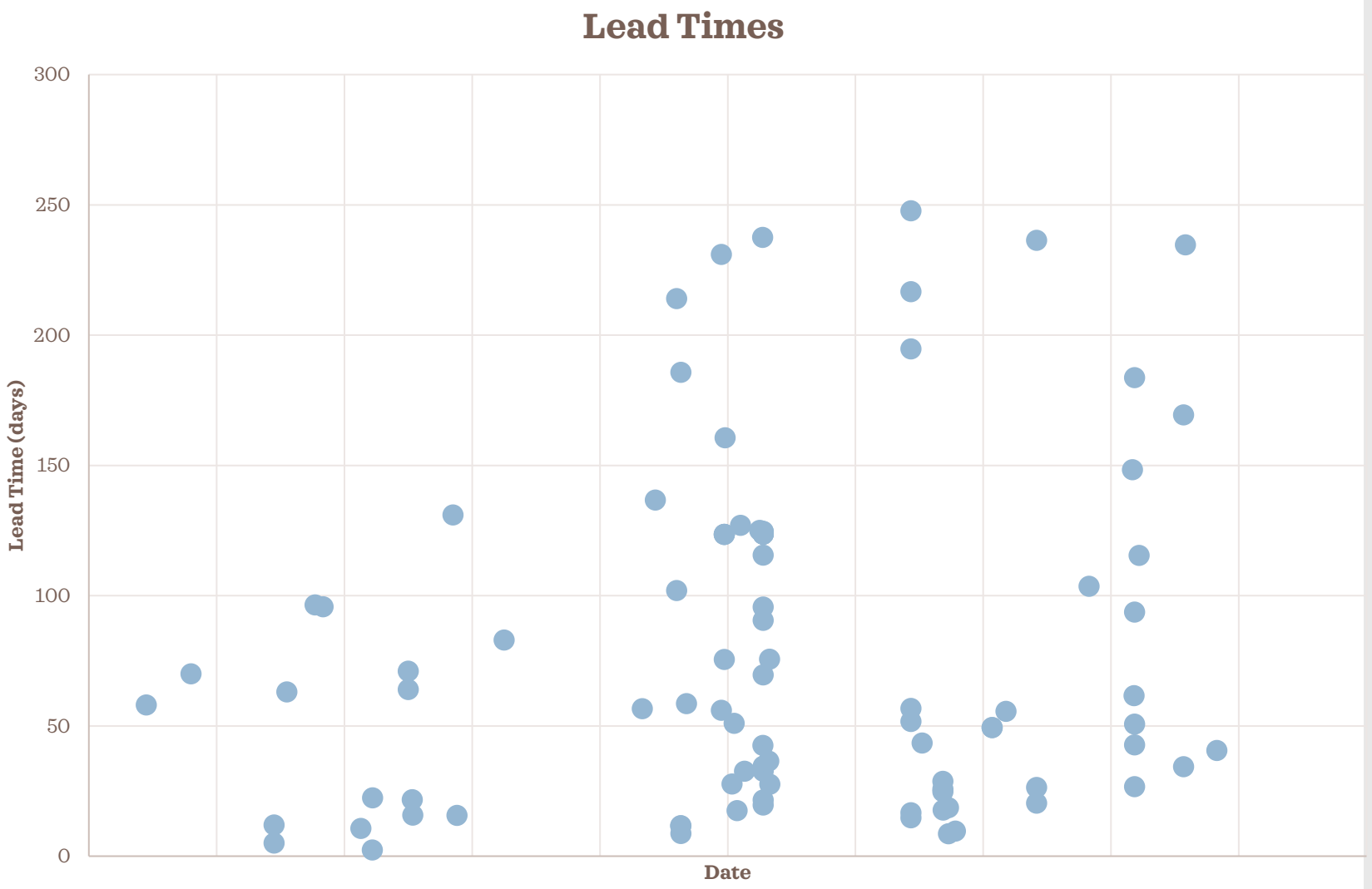


Cumulative Flow Chart

213 Custom Requests

62 Cancelled

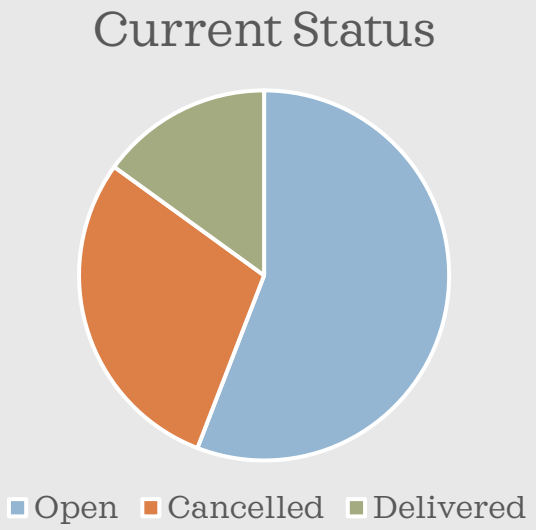
32 Delivered

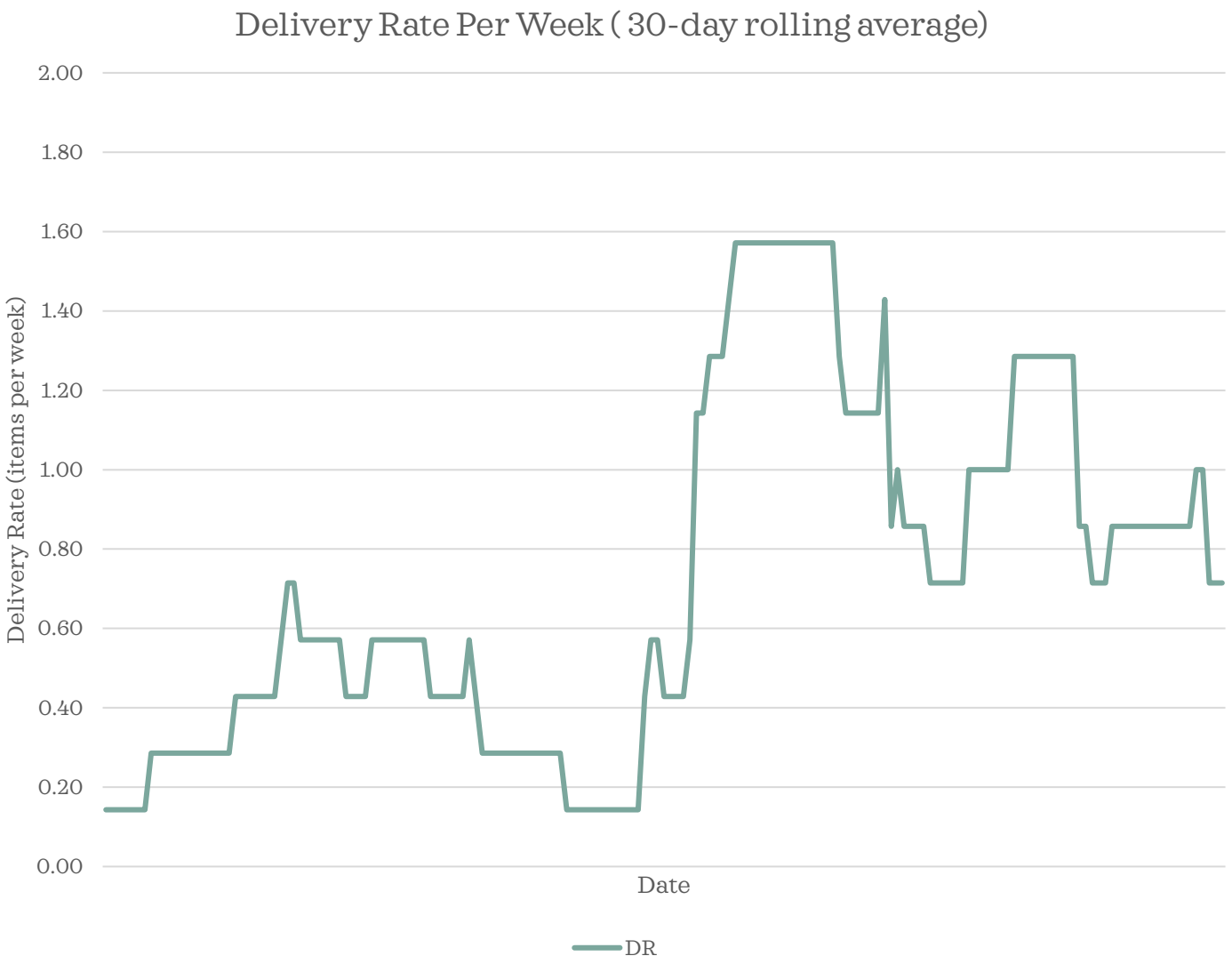


Lead Times

Average Lead Time: 79 days

Average age of WIP: 196 days

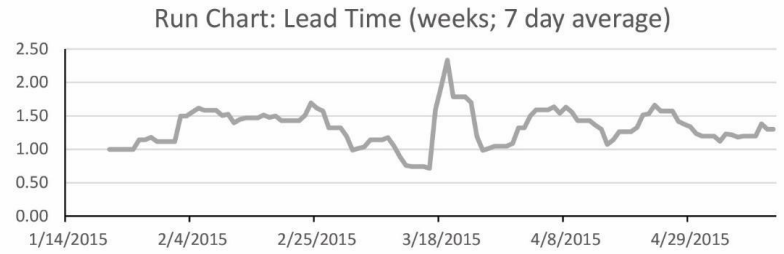


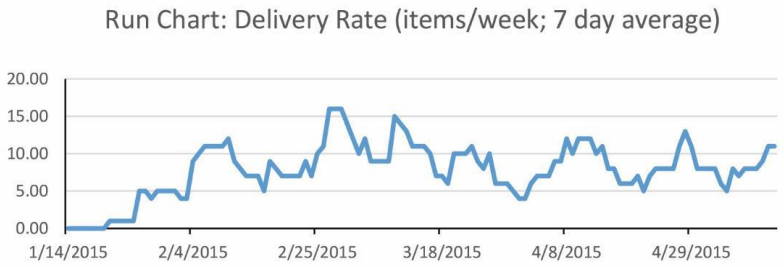


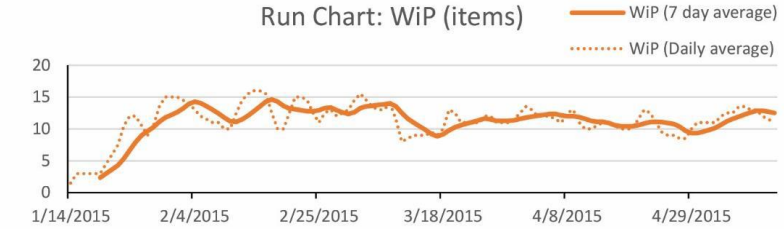
Delivery Rate

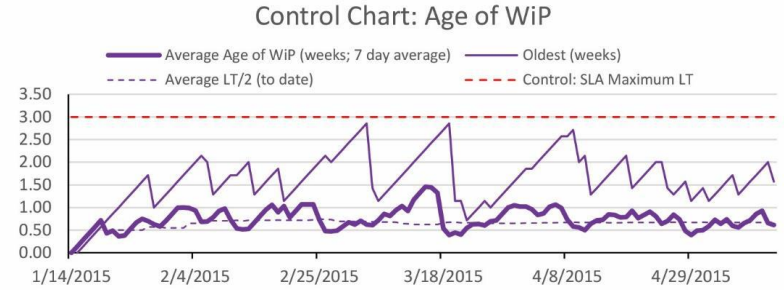
Average: 1.26 per week

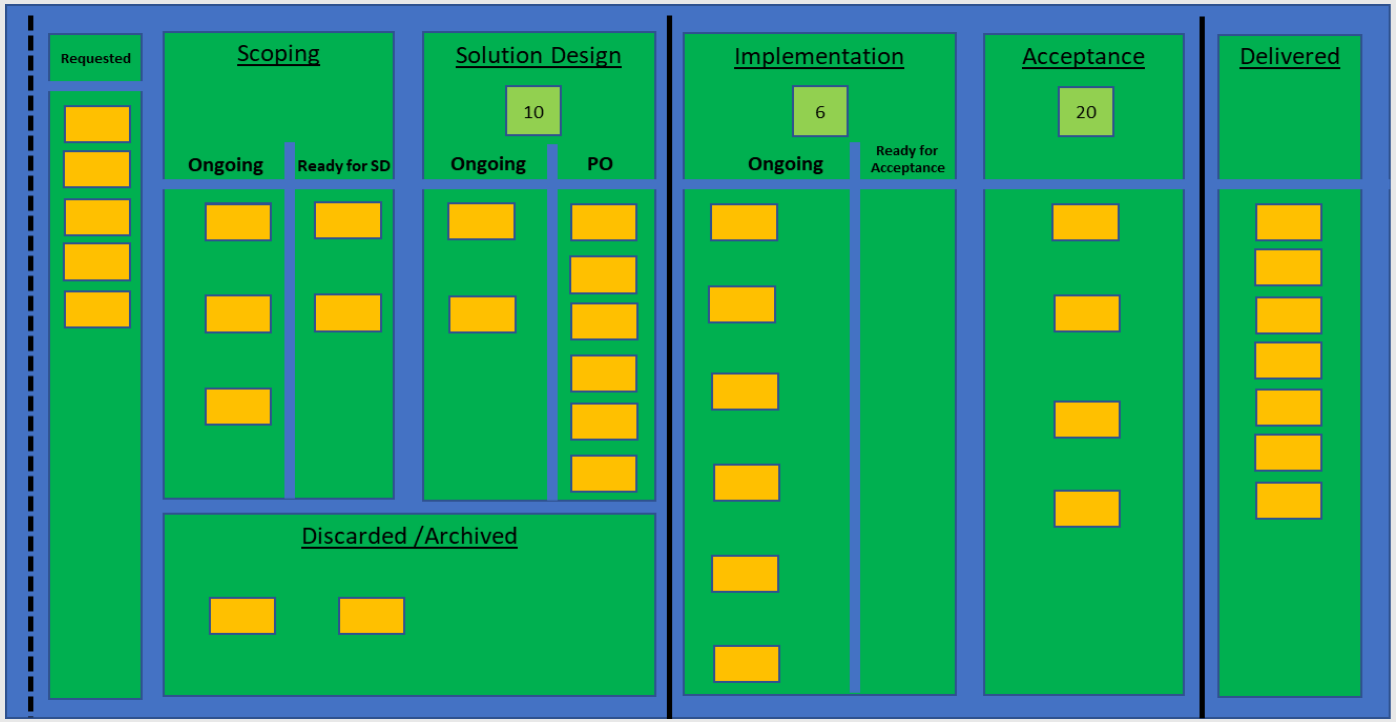
RUN CHARTS REVEAL SYSTEM BEHAVIOUR











Dominant activities:

- Scoping
- Defining
- Designing
- Implementing

Questions...

Bottleneck?
Commitment Point?

How will the system evolve?

Key milestones:

- Requested
- Scoping started
- Scoped
- (Defined)
- Designed
- Ordered
- Delivered
- Accepted

References & Credits

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Look at work through the Kanban Lens

1. See **work** as **flow** (from customer need, to needs met)
2. See **workflow** as a sequence of **knowledge discovery** steps
3. See **knowledge work** as a **service**
4. See your **organization** as a **network of services**