

Applying Professional Kanban

A ProKanban.org Course | PMI Talent Triangle Alignment Case

Executive Summary

ProKanban.org's Applying Professional Kanban (APK) course is the complete, foundational program for learning and applying The Kanban Guide (kanbanguide.com) in professional practice. The Kanban Guide defines Kanban as a strategy for optimizing the flow of value through a process that uses a visual, pull-based system — and APK teaches practitioners how to design, operate, and improve such a system in any organizational context. APK develops meaningful professional competency across all three areas of the PMI Talent Triangle: Ways of Working, Power Skills, and Business Acumen.

About the Course

APK teaches the four essential properties of a Kanban system as defined in The Kanban Guide: defining the workflow, visualizing the workflow, actively managing items in the workflow, and improving the workflow. Students learn to create a Definition of Workflow (DoW) — the explicit documentation of how work enters, progresses through, and exits a system — and to use Work Item Types, WIP limits, and Service Level Expectations (SLEs) to manage flow with discipline and transparency. APK also covers the Kanban cadences that enable continuous feedback and adaptation at the team and organizational level.

WAYS OF WORKING | Formerly: Technical Project Management

PMI defines Ways of Working as mastery of multiple delivery approaches so practitioners apply the right technique at the right time. APK teaches the Kanban system as defined in The Kanban Guide — a flexible, empirically grounded delivery approach that overlays existing workflows without requiring wholesale process replacement.

Why APK Is a Ways of Working Course

The Kanban Guide's approach is deliberately method-agnostic: a Kanban system can be applied on top of Scrum, alongside a waterfall plan, or within a hybrid delivery environment. APK does not replace existing ways of working — it layers empirical flow management on top of them. This is precisely the kind of adaptive, context-sensitive delivery practice that PMI prizes in the Ways of Working domain.

What APK Teaches (The Kanban Guide Framework)	PMI Talent Triangle Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete applied mastery of The Kanban Guide's flow-based delivery
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The four properties of a Kanban system: defining the workflow, visualizing the workflow, actively managing items, and continuously improving the workflow — as defined in The Kanban Guide • Creating a Definition of Workflow (DoW): explicitly documenting workflow states, WIP limits, Work Item Types, commitment and delivery points, and flow policies • Service Level Expectations (SLEs): establishing and monitoring probabilistic delivery commitments using Cycle Time data — a practice unique to The Kanban Guide framework • Kanban cadences: the Replenishment Meeting, Daily Kanban Meeting, Kanban Meeting, Service Delivery Review, Operations Review, and Risk Review — structured feedback loops grounded in flow data • Active flow management: using the four flow metrics (WIP, Cycle Time, Throughput, Work Item Age) to identify and respond to problems in the workflow in real time 	<p>system — a modern agile Way of Working recognized across industries globally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoW practice teaches practitioners to make delivery policies explicit — a critical skill for operating consistently across teams and contexts • SLEs bridge empirical data and delivery commitments — enabling practitioners to apply the right approach for different Work Item Types and risk profiles • Kanban cadences model an iterative, evidence-driven feedback cycle directly aligned with PMI's agile competency requirements • Method-agnostic design means APK graduates can apply flow management in any delivery context — the definition of Ways of Working versatility
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The Bigger Picture

The Kanban Guide's core principle — that a Kanban system must be defined, visualized, actively managed, and continuously improved — applies in any organizational context without requiring teams to abandon their existing structures. APK graduates can apply this framework to any team, any workflow, any delivery method. That versatility is rare. For PMI, it is the definition of multi-method professional excellence.

POWER SKILLS | Formerly: Leadership

PMI defines Power Skills as the interpersonal capabilities — collaborative leadership, communication, innovative mindset, for-purpose orientation, and empathy — that allow professionals to maintain influence with diverse stakeholders. The Kanban Guide embeds these capabilities into its practices through transparency, shared policy ownership, and evidence-based team engagement.

Why APK Is a Power Skills Course

The Kanban Guide requires that workflow policies be made explicit in the Definition of Workflow — and that all team members understand and contribute to those policies. This is a leadership practice: it transforms informal, unspoken team norms into shared, visible agreements that reduce conflict and build trust. APK teaches practitioners how to facilitate this transformation, which is fundamentally a Power Skill.

What APK Teaches	PMI Talent Triangle Mapping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How creating a shared Definition of Workflow builds team alignment — transforming implicit assumptions about how work should flow into explicit, agreed-upon policies • How Kanban cadences create structured, psychologically safe spaces for team communication: the Daily Kanban Meeting surfaces blockers without blame; the Service Delivery Review creates honest customer-facing accountability • How SLEs enable practitioners to make honest, data-backed delivery commitments to stakeholders — building credibility without overpromising • How WIP limits protect teams from overburden — requiring practitioners to advocate for sustainable capacity using the language of flow data • How visualization of the workflow creates shared situational awareness — enabling genuine collaboration because everyone sees the same reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative leadership: the DoW is co-created and owned by the whole team, not prescribed by a manager — driving shared accountability through participation • Communication: explicit workflow policies, visible WIP limits, and SLE commitments transform implicit team dynamics into clear, shared, observable language • Innovative mindset: applying The Kanban Guide's empirical flow management practices represents a genuinely novel approach to team leadership and delivery • Empathy: WIP limits and flow data enable evidence-based conversations about team capacity — protecting people from the hidden cost of organizational overload • For-purpose orientation: Kanban cadences keep teams focused on customer value and delivery outcomes rather than process compliance or activity metrics

The Bigger Picture

Many practitioners learn to manage tasks. APK teaches practitioners to lead through transparency — by making the workflow visible, the policies explicit, and the data shared. When teams operate under a well-designed Definition of Workflow with clear SLEs and honest cadences, leaders no longer need authority to manage outcomes. They manage the system. This is the highest expression of Power Skills leadership.

BUSINESS ACUMEN | Formerly: Strategic and Business Management

PMI defines Business Acumen as understanding macro and micro organizational influences, making good decisions, and connecting project work to broader organizational strategy. The Kanban Guide frames Kanban as a service delivery system — and APK teaches practitioners to design, operate, and measure that system from a customer and organizational value perspective.

Why APK Is a Business Acumen Course

The Kanban Guide's Definition of Workflow requires practitioners to define commitment points and delivery points — the moments when the organization makes a promise to a customer and when it fulfills it. This is a business concept. APK teaches practitioners to think about their work from the customer's and organization's perspective, not just from the task-execution perspective.

What APK Teaches	PMI Talent Triangle Mapping
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How Work Item Types in the Definition of Workflow reflect different business priorities, risk profiles, and customer expectations — requiring practitioners to understand the business context of each type of work• How SLEs create customer-facing delivery commitments grounded in actual Cycle Time data — connecting team performance directly to customer experience• How Throughput and Cycle Time data reveal the business cost of workflow inefficiencies: slow Cycle Times, low Throughput, and high WIP all represent real organizational cost• How the Service Delivery Review and Operations Review cadences create structured mechanisms for aligning team delivery with business and customer expectations• How WIP limits applied at the system level reduce the organizational cost of context-switching and multitasking — a directly measurable business improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Macro/micro influences: Work Item Types and SLEs connect team-level decisions directly to customer experience and organizational service commitments• Decision-making: flow metrics from the Kanban system provide an evidence base for replenishment, prioritization, and capacity decisions under real business constraints• Big-picture alignment: cadences like the Service Delivery Review and Operations Review explicitly connect team flow performance to organizational delivery commitments• Domain knowledge: The Kanban Guide is a recognized, rigorously maintained professional framework applied across technology, professional services, operations, and product domains• Global trends: Kanban's adoption as a delivery management system continues to grow worldwide, positioning APK graduates at the forefront of modern service delivery practice

The Bigger Picture

APK graduates understand that a Kanban system is not just a team tool — it is a customer-facing service delivery mechanism with measurable performance characteristics. When practitioners design a workflow with explicit SLEs, use flow metrics to diagnose and fix delivery problems, and run cadences that connect team performance to organizational

expectations, they are operating with the kind of customer and organizational intelligence PMI associates with Business Acumen.

Summary: APK PDU Allocation Across the Talent Triangle

APK develops competencies across all three Talent Triangle areas. The following reflects a recommended PDU allocation for a 12-hour course:

Talent Triangle Area	Key Skills Developed in APK	PDU Suggested Allocation	PDU Hours to Claim
Ways of Working	Kanban system design, Definition of Workflow, WIP limits, SLEs, Kanban cadences, flow metrics application, active flow management	Primary — Kanban system design & flow management modules	8 PDU hours
Power Skills	Shared DoW facilitation, explicit policy communication, SLE-based stakeholder transparency, cadence leadership, WIP-limit advocacy, team trust through visualization	Strong Secondary — DoW co-creation & cadence facilitation modules	2 PDU hours
Business Acumen	Work Item Types as business categories, SLE customer commitments, flow metric business impact, Service Delivery Review, Throughput and Cycle Time cost analysis	Strong Secondary — Service delivery & business alignment modules	2 PDU hours

Conclusion

APK teaches the complete Kanban system as defined in The Kanban Guide — and in doing so, it develops professionals who can define workflows with clarity, lead teams through transparency, and connect delivery performance to customer and organizational value. The course is not a narrow technical training: it is a comprehensive professional development program grounded in one of the most widely adopted flow-based delivery frameworks in use today.

From the Definition of Workflow that transforms how teams communicate, to the SLEs that create honest stakeholder commitments, to the flow metrics that reveal organizational performance — APK develops all three dimensions of the PMI Talent Triangle because The Kanban Guide itself spans all three dimensions.

Recommended PDU Claim: All Three Talent Triangle Categories

Ways of Working (8 hrs) | Power Skills (2 hrs) | Business Acumen (2 hrs)

Based on The Kanban Guide (kanbanguide.com) and ProKanban.org course curriculum.