



Flowban

by Mike Burrows of Positive Incline Ltd, as modified by PraxisFlow
[Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#)



What is FlowBan?

Based on the FeatureBan game developed by Mike Burrows (@asplake) to illustrate the principles of Kanban.

You can find out more at agendashift.com.



What is Kanban?

Visualize work and workflow.

Limit WIP.

“You can’t measure what you can’t see.”

-- Jim Benson

“Stop starting! Start finishing!”

-- Arne Roock

Visualize work and workflow using a kanban board but also using information radiators such as cycle time scatter plots, cumulative flow diagrams, and throughput distribution charts.

By limiting work in progress, we create a pull system, i.e. we can only start a new work item when something in progress finishes.

Pull systems emphasize delivering value.

Kanban Board Setup

Finish the board

FLOWBan[®]
a portfolio kanban game

RESOURCE POOL ONE*

RESOURCE POOL TWO*

DAY:

REMEMBER TO UPDATE CHARTS!

READY

NAME

WIP LIMIT

NAME

WIP LIMIT

DELIVERED

Add day started and initial.

Mark day as done.

¹ Directions for Resource One go here

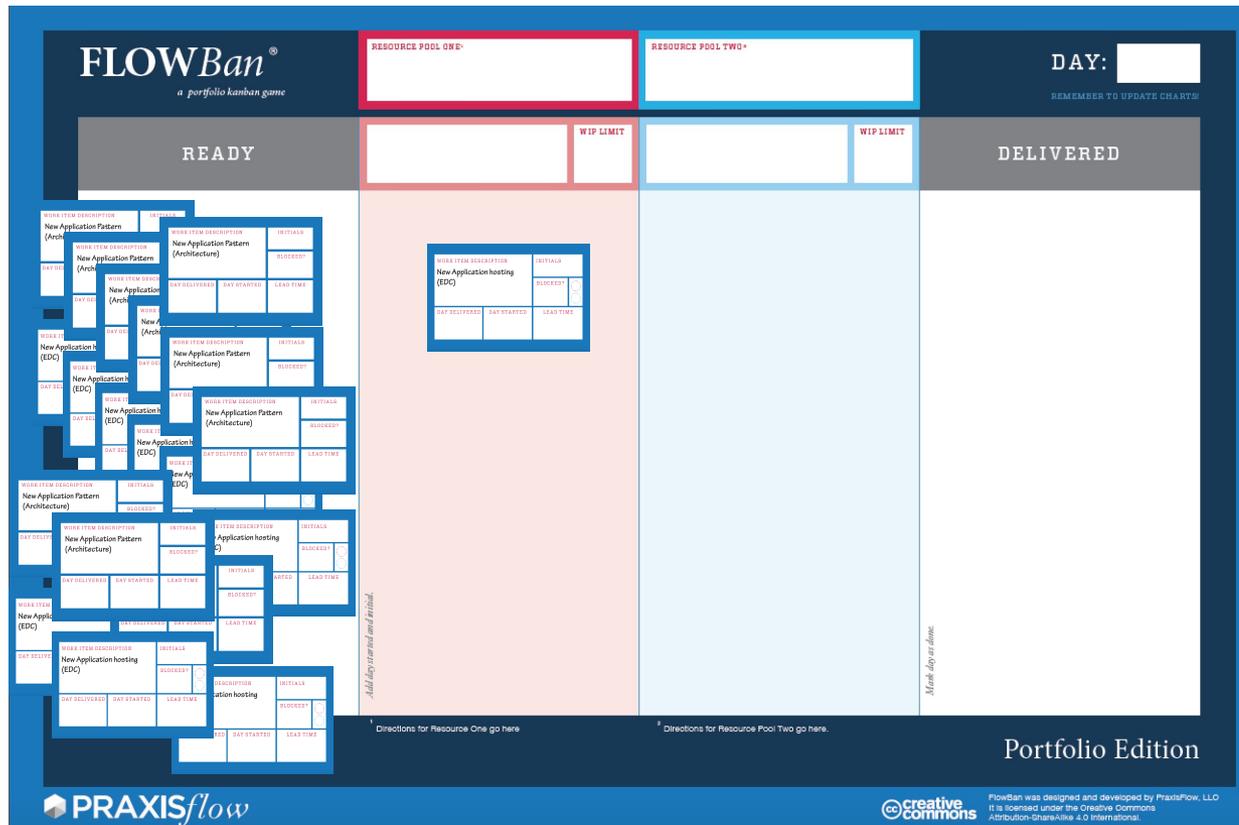
² Directions for Resource Pool Two go here.

Portfolio Edition



The Line of Commitment

Once you move a card out of Ready you have **personally** committed to completing that card.



Example Commitment

Everyone pull one card into the first Doing column, as an example.

WORK ITEM DESCRIPTION		INITIALS CS
	BLOCKED?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
DAY DELIVERED	DAY STARTED 0	LEAD TIME

Put your initials in top left

Put the day the work was started in the "Day Started" box

Game Rules

Daily Standup

At the beginning of each “day” the team will have a standup meeting.

- Update the Day box in the upper right corner of your board.
- Each person flips a coin.
- **After** all team members have flipped make your moves based on heads or tails rules

1 Round = 1 Day

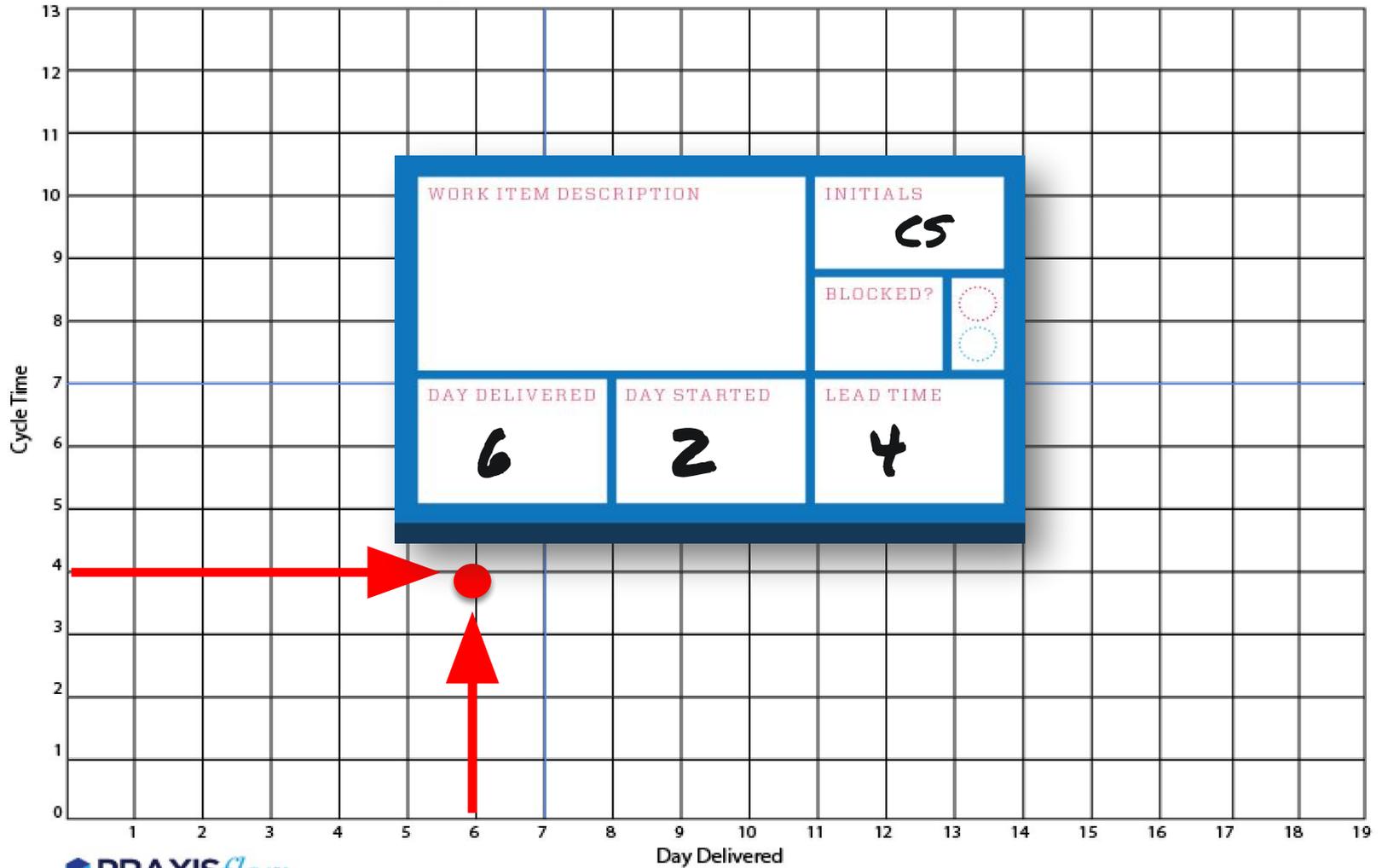


Coin Flip Rules

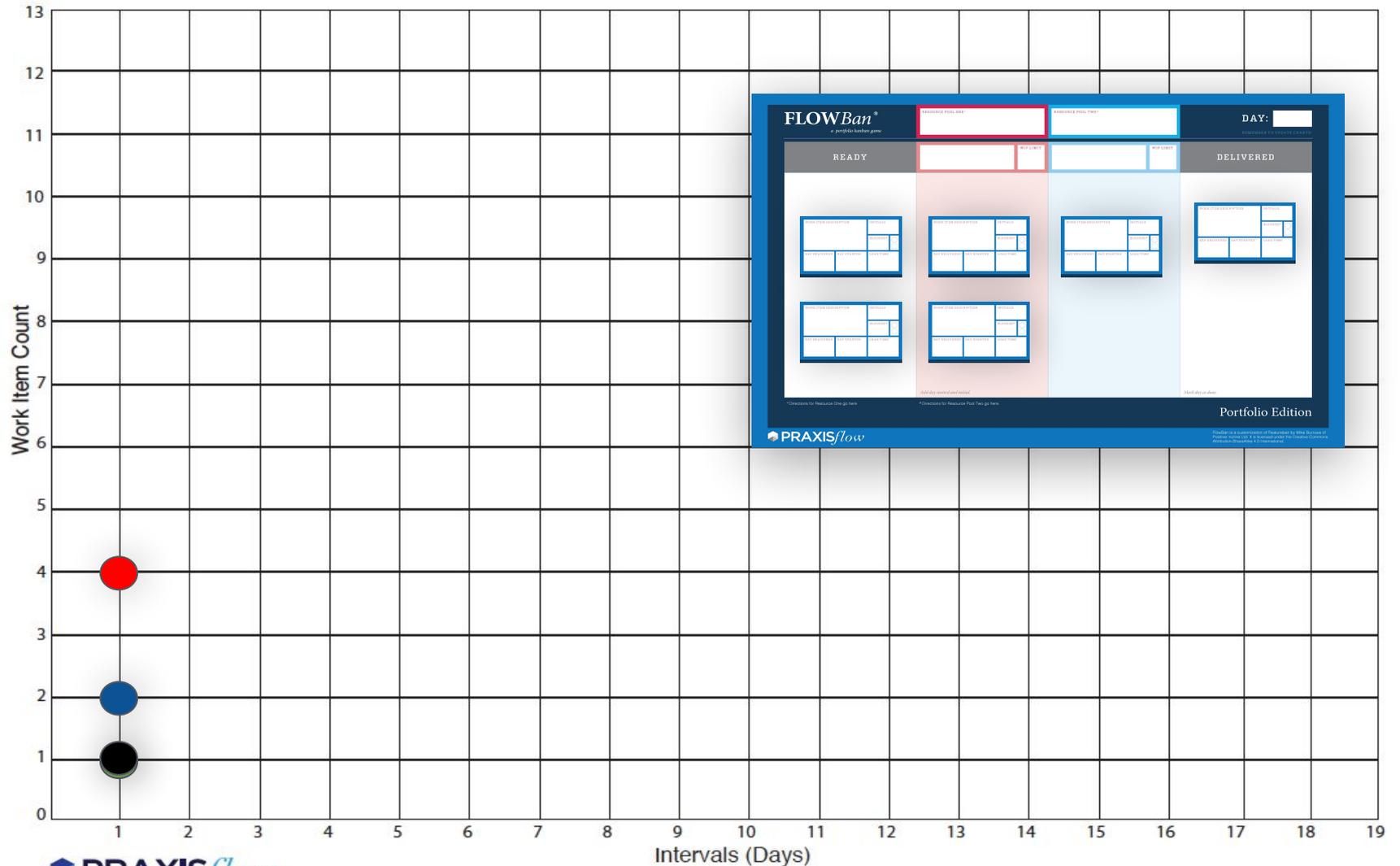
Heads	Tails
<p>Advance one of <u>your</u> unblocked features rightward</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Unblock one of <u>your</u> blocked features</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Start working on a new feature</p> <p>ELSE</p> <p>If you have no other option, pair up with someone who threw tails and move on their behalf</p>	<p>Block one of <u>your</u> unblocked features</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Start working on a new feature</p>



Cycle Time



Cumulative Flow Diagram





Game Play

Setting the Scene

Your organization has just gotten a new leader, Jane.

She would like to get a lay of the land before making any changes or improvements.

You get together as a group and decide you'll collect data for three days then reconvene.



Iteration 1 begins Day 1

Heads	Tails
<p>Advance one of <u>your</u> unblocked features rightward</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Unblock one of <u>your</u> blocked features</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Start working on a new feature</p> <p>ELSE</p> <p>If you have no other option, pair up with someone who threw tails and move on their behalf</p>	<p>Block one of <u>your</u> unblocked features</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Start working on a new feature</p>



Iteration 1 Debrief

Did you complete any work items?

Will you still be in business 6 months from now?

A year from now?

Five years from now?

Do you need to add any work items to your backlog? (Blank cards are included in the Backlog)



Iteration 2: WIP Limits

Jane is worried your organization is not keeping up with the market.

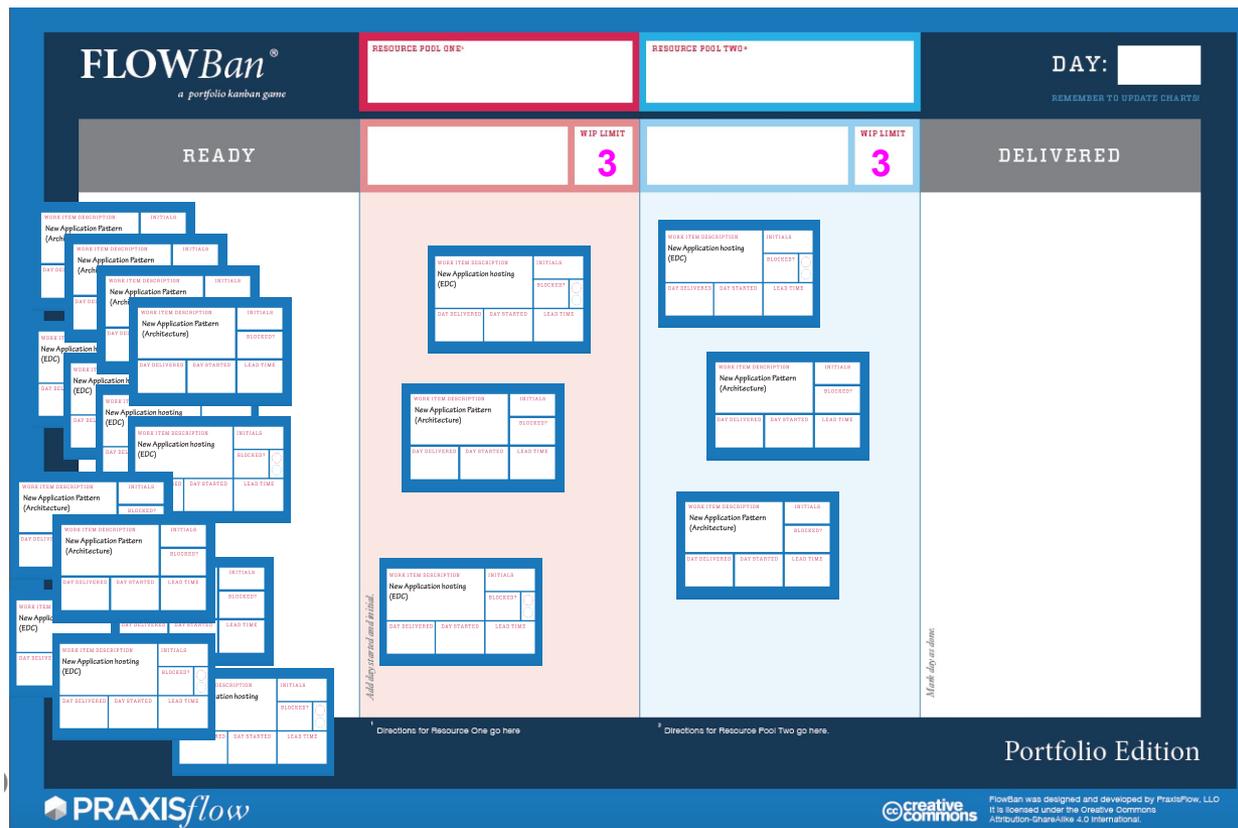
After looking at the Kanban boards and charts, she thinks we need to concentrate on finishing what's in progress before beginning new work.

She suggests limiting work in progress by limiting each doing column to 3 work items each in order to increase throughput.



Iteration 2: WIP Limits

If your team is currently exceeding WIP limits, you must resolve the limit before pulling cards.



Iteration 2 begins Day 4, runs through Day 7

Heads	Tails
<p>Advance one of <u>your</u> unblocked features rightward <i>(if WIP limits allow)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Unblock one of <u>your</u> blocked features</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Start working on a new feature <i>(if WIP limits allow)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p><i>If you have no other option, pair up with someone who threw tails and move on their behalf</i></p>	<p>Block one of <u>your</u> unblocked features</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Start working on a new feature <i>(if WIP limits allow)</i></p>



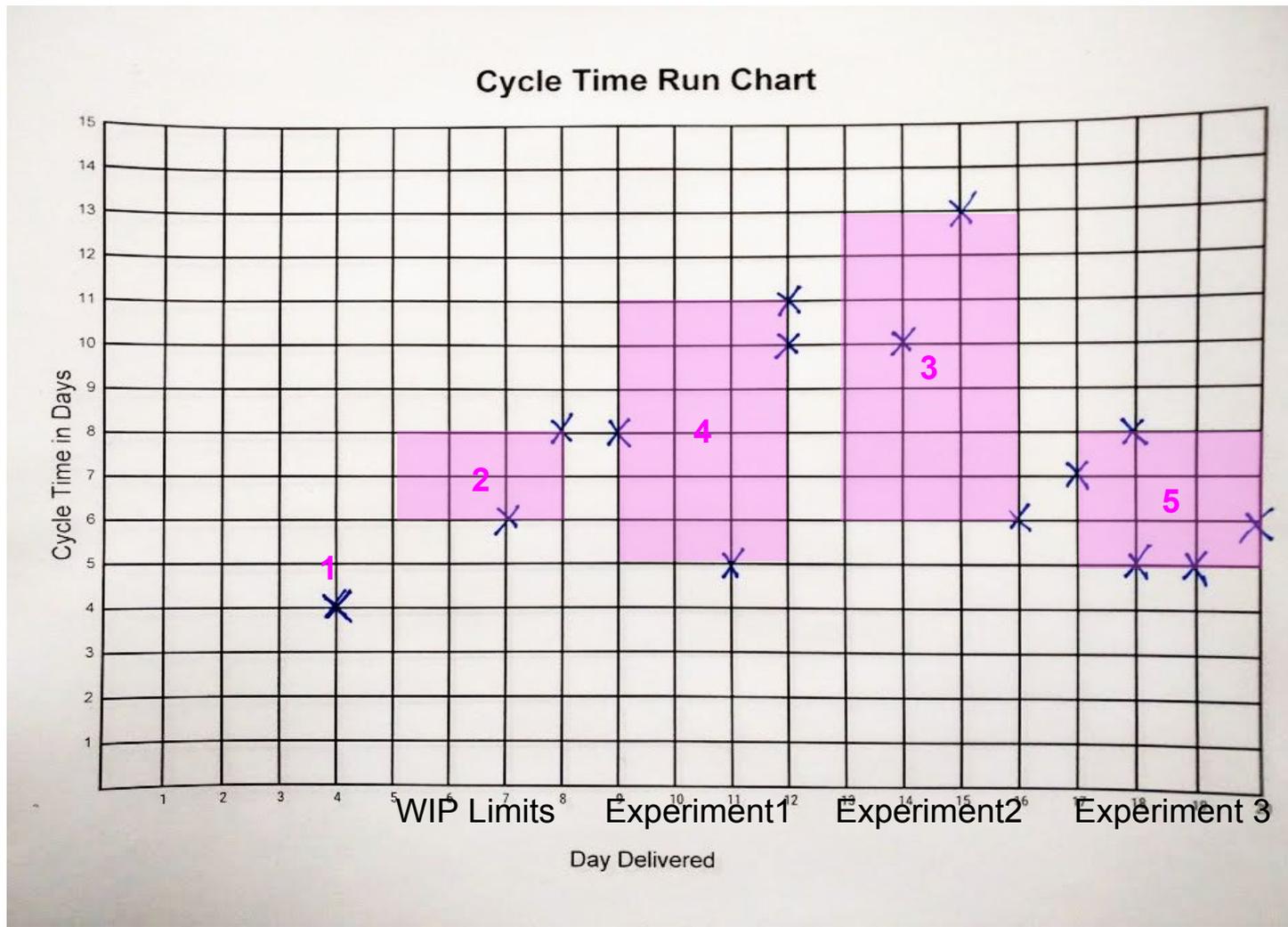
Iteration 2 Debrief

Did you complete anything? How long will your team be in business based on what you've finished?

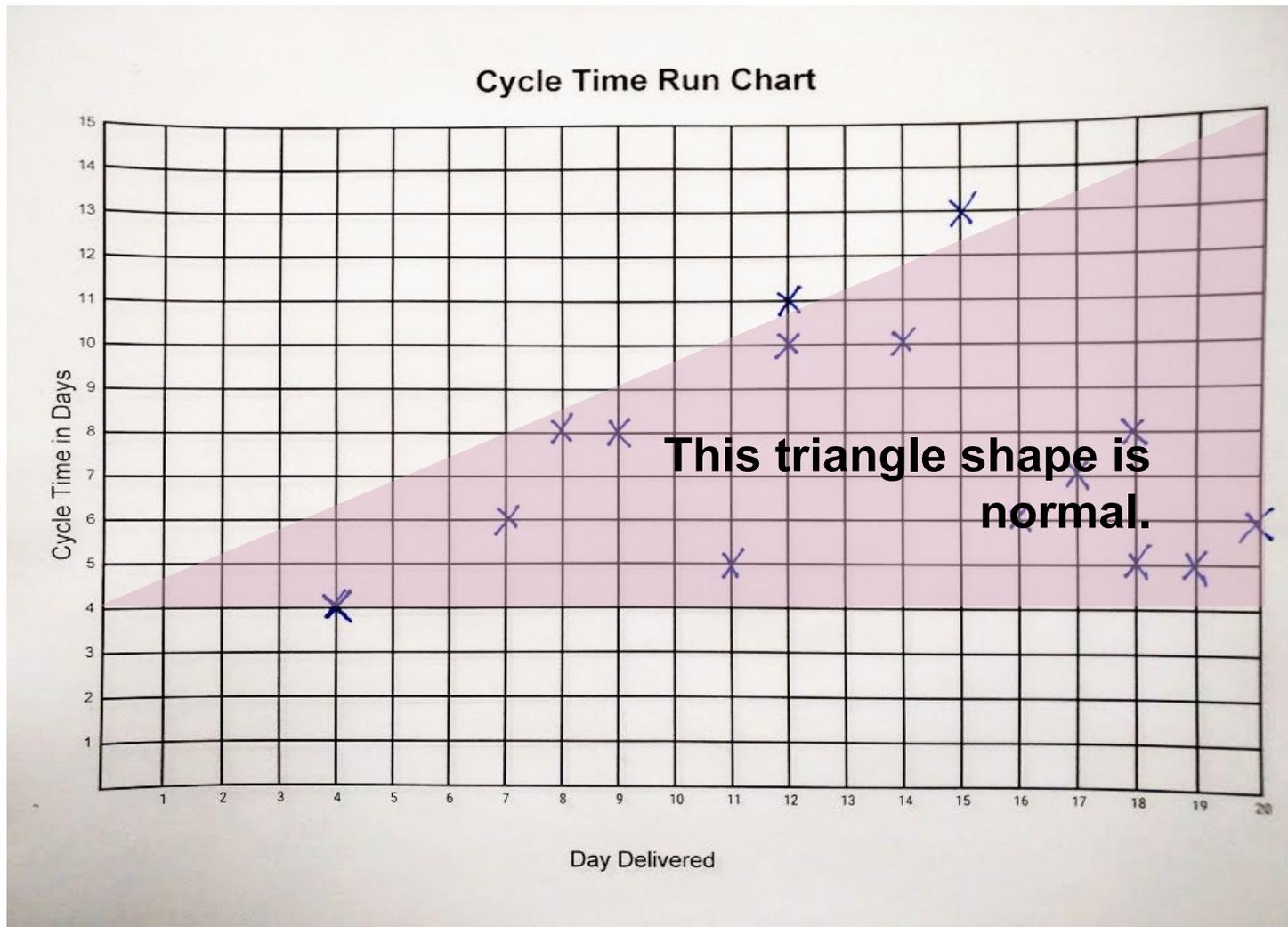
What impact did the WIP limits have? Did throughput increase, as Jane predicted?



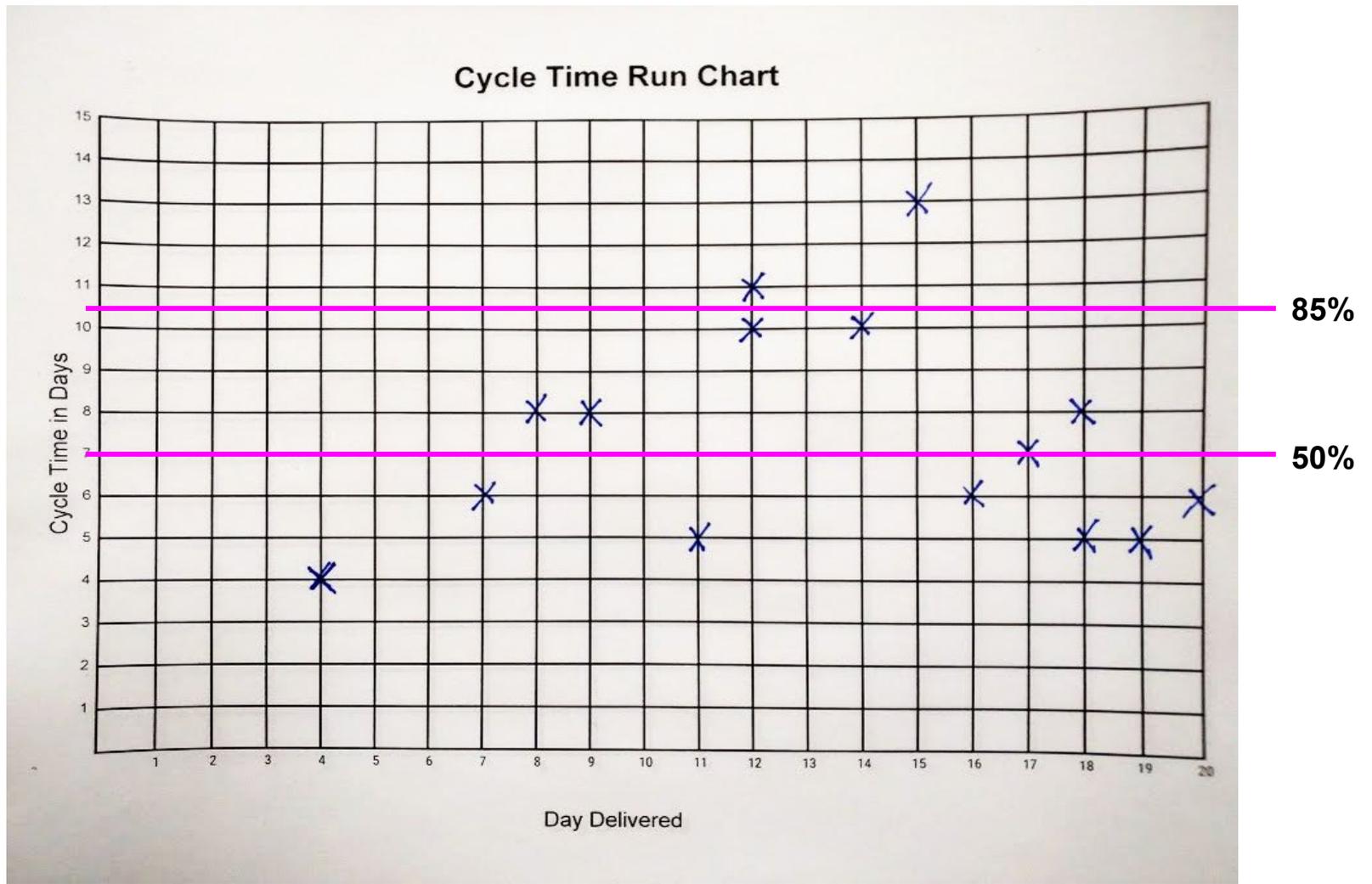
Metrics



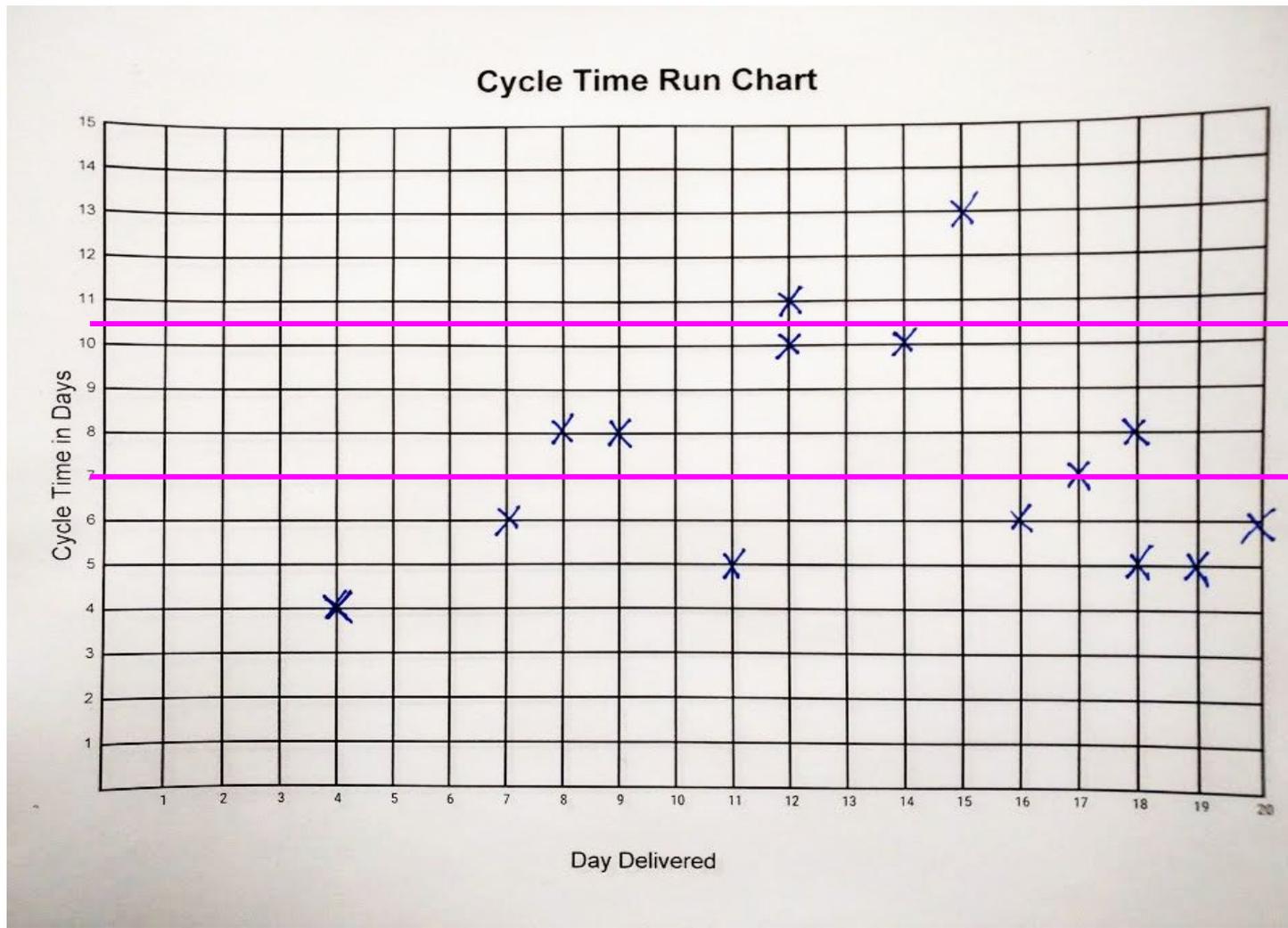
Metrics



Metrics



Metrics



Good for
establishing
SLAs
85%

50%
Good for
estimating e.g.
CCPM



Metrics

Little's Law

$$L = \lambda W$$

average # of items in a system

=

average arrival rate

*

average time spent in the system

average time spent in the system

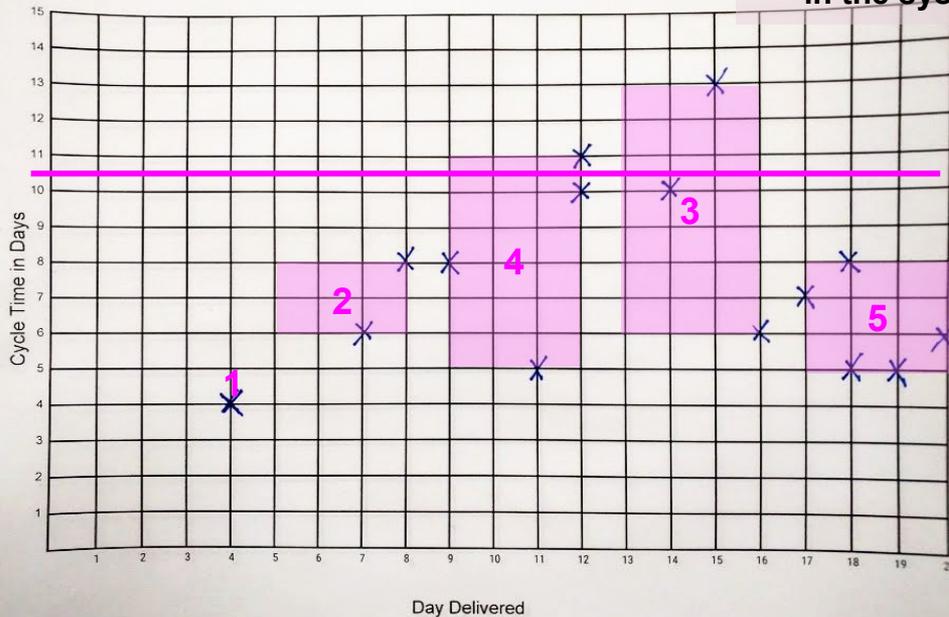
=

average # of items in a system

/

average throughput

Cycle Time Run Chart

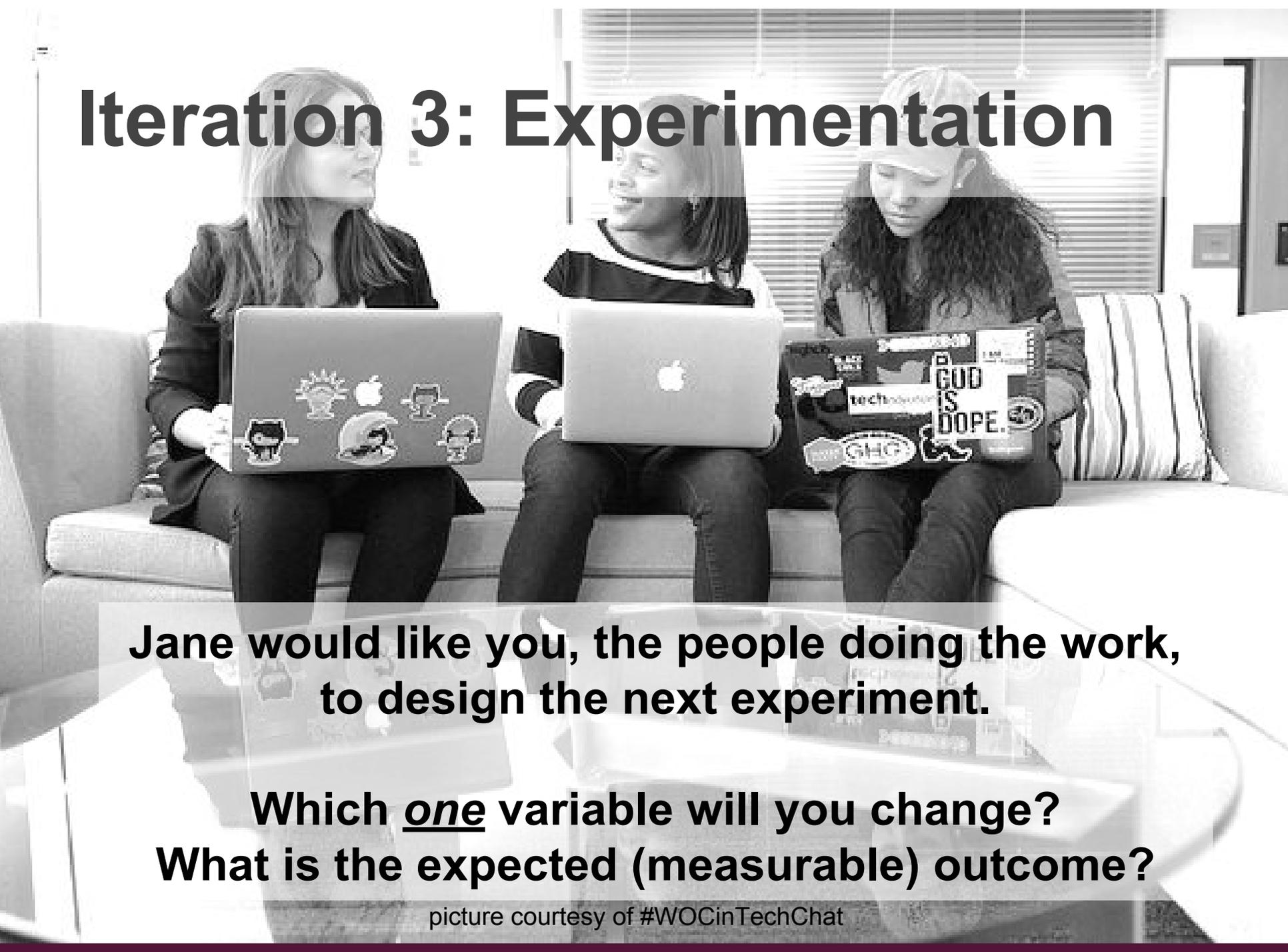


85%

If we artificially break this relationship between the averages (arrival rate, population of the system, and departure rate), we can expect increased variability.



Iteration 3: Experimentation

A black and white photograph of three women sitting on a light-colored sofa in a modern office or lounge setting. They are all looking at their laptops. The woman on the left has a laptop with several stickers, including one of a sun and one of a character. The woman in the middle has a plain silver laptop. The woman on the right has a laptop with a sticker that says 'GOD IS DOPE.' and another that says 'GHG'. The background shows a window with blinds and a door.

Jane would like you, the people doing the work, to design the next experiment.

**Which one variable will you change?
What is the expected (measurable) outcome?**

picture courtesy of #WOCinTechChat

Iteration 3 Debrief

What was outcome of experiment? Was it what you expected?

If it failed, what is your recovery strategy?

If it succeeded, what is your amplification strategy?

Did you gain any ancillary insights?



Game Debrief

The structure of this game is the (roughly) the structure of an OpsFlow implementation:

Start with where you are now (map flow of work, understand what's in progress)

Implement WIP limits to drive out unnecessary variability

Establish directional goals (strategic intent)

Give teams the freedom to **conduct safe to fail experiments** aligned with the strategic intent

