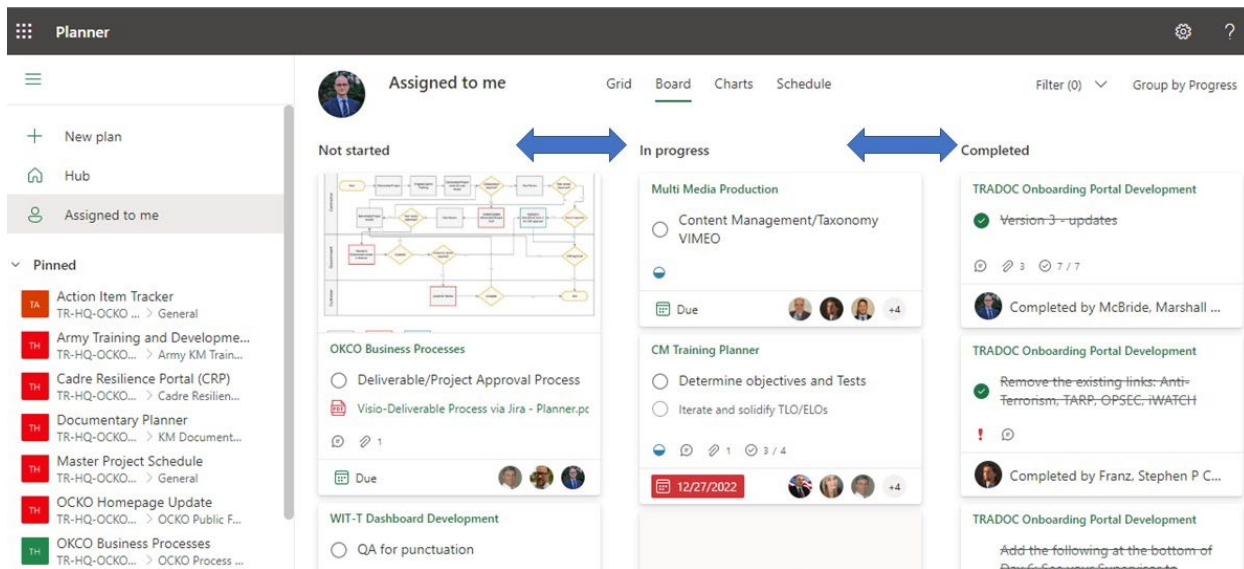


# Keeping your Projects on Track: Kanban and MS Planner

Projects large and small can quickly become overwhelming if not managed properly. This is where Kanban boards can come in handy. A Kanban board depicts project tasks or workflows visually. Fortunately, A365 includes a Kanban board capability via Microsoft Planner<sup>1</sup>, providing a simple and effective way to keep track of all the tasks that need to be completed for a project. In this article, we'll look at what Kanban boards are and how you can use them in Microsoft Planner to help keep your projects on track.

## What are Kanban Boards and how can they help you with project management?

The Kanban (meaning “billboard” or “signboard” in Japanese) solution was initially introduced by Toyota in Japan in the 1940s and utilized physical boards for visualizing possible issues and optimizing workflows.<sup>2</sup> Today we use digital boards, such as the one included with Microsoft Planner (Figure 1), which include with numerous helpful features and personalization options to maximize efficiency and automate processes. Anyone working a project might find digital Kanban boards useful. Tracking projects such as a new SharePoint tool under development or to managing a complex recruiting initiative, are a couple of examples where Kanban boarding will likely be useful.



A Kanban Board in Microsoft Planner

Figure 1

The Kanban board in Microsoft Planner (Figure 1) is a digital project management tool that depicts tasks visually as a series of cards, or tiles, which can be moved through various stages of work, called buckets, from start to completion, as depicted by blue arrows in the figure above. Each card can contain start and due dates, communicate to assigned team members, track status, and more. Kanban boards can help you better manage and keep track of what work has been, and what still needs to be done. They offer an easy way to organize and customize your

tasks so teams can stay productive and on the same page throughout the duration of the project, which helps you manage your project more efficiently, focuses your team, and makes sure all tasks are completed on time.

## How to set up a Kanban Board in Microsoft Planner

Getting started with a Kanban board in Microsoft Planner is easy: just click “+new plan” to start. Every plan starts with one bucket, called “To do.” Consider this bucket a backlog of tasks waiting for action. To create additional buckets, click “Add new bucket” and give it a name. At a minimum, consider at least two additional buckets, named “In-progress” and “Complete”, but you can create more or customize as needed. Next, +Add task will create a new task card in the bucket directly below. Give each new task a name, due date, and assignee(s) to start. Later, you can return to any task and populate it with additional details, including labels, task priority, attachments, comments and more. When you are ready to start a task, simply drag the task card from the To-do bucket into your In-Progress bucket. Repeat these steps once the task is complete to move the card to the complete bucket. After setting up a simple Kanban view in Microsoft Planner, you will be able to quickly see which tasks are not started, currently in progress, and already completed.

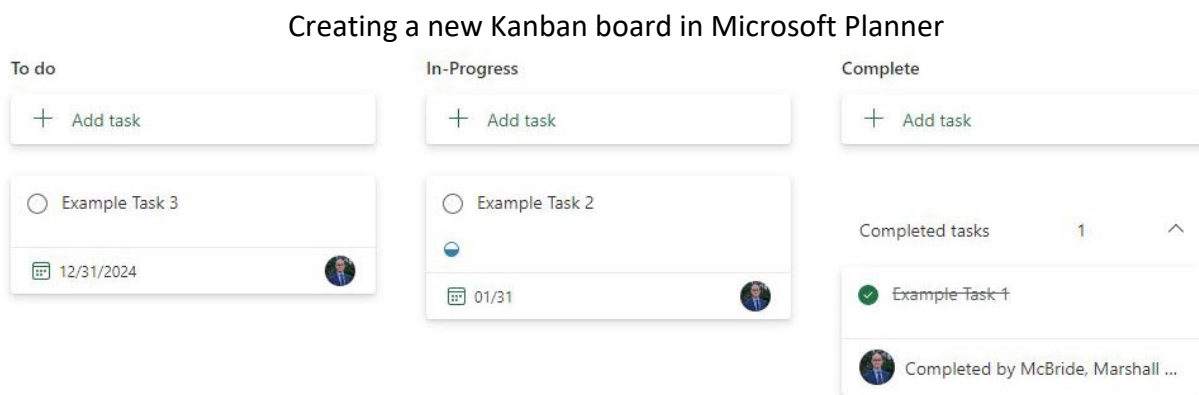


Figure 2

### Tips on using Kanban Boards effectively.

A Microsoft Planner Kanban board is a great way to visualize and organize project tasks, ensuring your project stays on track and progresses smoothly. To get the most out of your Kanban board, it's important to visit and update your task cards regularly and move tasks between buckets as required to keep your team informed on new requirements and task status. After all, the information communicated via the Kanban board is only as fresh as its most recent update and stale information is of little use to your team. Additionally, consider using the Checklist feature within each task card to track subtasks. This can help break down larger tasks into smaller components and make progress easier to track. Finally, include resources such as reference documents or links to relevant websites as “attachments” to give team members quick access to required content. By following these tips, your team will be able to use the Kanban board effectively, keeping everyone engaged and moving the project toward completion.

## How Kanban boards can help you stay organized and on track

Ultimately, Kanban boards focus on boosting efficiency by helping team members spend less time searching for guidance or content; rather, each task is right there, along with links to content, as required. As a result, the Kanban board has the potential to significantly enhance team productivity. To further enhance collaboration, team members can review progress collectively during scheduled meetings and discuss assigned tasks, address barriers and review completed work. This will lead to better communication and collaboration between team members, decrease frustration, and increase productivity overall by enabling everyone to focus on their part of the larger project. In short, Microsoft Planner's Kanban board can help your organization streamline workflows and manage projects more effectively.

## Why you should try a Microsoft Planner Kanban board

Utilizing a Microsoft Planner Kanban board for your next project can be a great way to stay on schedule and maximize collaboration with your team. Using this tool, communication and information will be centralized, allowing you and your team to easily stay up to date on assigned tasks and progress. Because all the necessary information is easily accessible, it provides an efficient workflow management system that can save time and energy when managing your project. With a Microsoft Planner Kanban Board, you will have what you need all in one place, rather than checking in with each team member individually to assign tasks and check status.

In summary, Kanban boards are great project management tools to help organize projects. They have been used across many industries to boost productivity and efficiency. A basic setup in MS Planner requires very little effort and provides an effective way to stay organized and on track. Furthermore, the use of visuals makes it easier than ever to understand where each task stands in a project's lifecycle. Using Kanban boards will help users meet deadlines, stay on budget, and manage time more efficiently. If you're looking for an effective way to manage your next project, look no further — create a new plan in MS Planner today and discover how Kanban boards can make it easier to manage your deadlines and achieve success!

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### Notes

1. MS Planner on A365, <https://tasks.osi.apps.mil/armyeitaas.onmicrosoft.us/en-US/Home/Planner/> Microsoft 365 Team, "How to use a Kanban solution to manage your team tasks", Microsoft.com, April 8, 2021, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/business-insights-ideas/resources/how-to-use-a-kanban-solution-to-manage-your-team-tasks>



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