

# The TameFlow Connection Newsletter

The latest news and ideas about the *TameFlow Approach*

## TameFlow Connection 27

Hello Friends of Herbie

Here is this week's installment of the *TameFlow Connection Newsletter*.

### Re-Read Saturday: Done-Done!

[Tom Cagley](#), the host of the *Software Process and Measurement Cast*, in his weekly [Re-Read Saturday](#), the chapter by chapter review of my [Tame your Work Flow](#) book, has arrived to the end of his journey, and published his [Final Thoughts](#)! Besides revealing that some *TameFlow* ideas have contributed to his occasional sleeping issues - sorry about that, Tom! :) - he draws many interesting conclusions. But maybe the most rewarding conclusions are that he is using the ideas in practice, in addition to making him think.

Tom says: "*Flow is a very powerful concept that is foreign to many organizations [...] but rarely does anyone actually organize for flow.*" I couldn't agree more. And that's where the great competitive opportunity lies: if *your* business actually organizes for flow, you will have a great **Decisive Competitive Edge** over all your market rivals.

If you missed any of his earlier installments of Tom's Re-reads, here's a list of all of them: [Front Matter](#) - [Prolgue](#) - [Explicit Mental Models](#) - [Flow Efficiency](#), [Little's Law and Economic Impact](#) - [Flawed Mental Models](#) - [Where to Focus Improvement Efforts](#) - [Throughput Accounting and Culture](#) - [Accounting F\(r\)iction and Show Me the Money](#) - [Constraints in the Work Flow and in the Work Process](#) - [Understanding PEST Environments and Finding the Constraint in PEST Environments](#) - [Drum-Buffer-Rope Scheduling](#) - [Portfolio Prioritization and Selection in PEST Environments](#) - [Flow Efficiency, DBR, and TameFlow Kanban Boards](#) - [Outcomes, Values, and Efforts in PEST Environments](#) - [Introduction to Execution Management Signals](#) - [Introduction to Full-Kitting](#) - [Full-Kitting as Ongoing Executive Activity](#) - [Execution Management in PEST Environments](#) - [Operational Governance in PEST Environments](#) - and [Patterns to Get Started and](#)

[Epilogue](#). Reading them is like reading a summary of the book, with the additional benefit of Tom's insights and commentary.

## Understanding Systems

Domenico Lepore, who has done a lot of work bridging the works of E. Deming and E. Goldratt published this article: [Understanding Systems](#) where many of these systems thinking ideas are also put into relation to the current COVID-19 crisis. Also interesting is the conclusion of considering organizations as *networks of projects*, which resonates quite well with the *TameFlow* ideas of describing organizations as a **Pattern Network**.

Once we start thinking about organizations as a network of patterns, we will also realize that the so-called "transformations" are just a chimera, an illusion, a fabrication of wild fantasies. Organizations live in a continuum of transitions from one **Pattern Configuration** to the next one; and because we engage in a **Process of Ongoing Improvement**, there is never an end. As I wrote in the *Epilogue of Tame your Work Flow*: "*It is Never Done!*"

## Team Models

[Michael Küsters](#) has a wonderful collection of videos giving an overview of different [Team Models](#). It is worthwhile spending some time to learn about them.

## The Secret History of Kanban

[Daniel S. Vacanti](#) has recently started delivering talks about *The Secret History of Kanban and Why it Matters* - a topic that he highlighted even in the foreword he kindly wrote for [Tame your Work Flow](#). In particular, the dialogue that followed his [Keynote Talk](#) at the Agile-Lean International conference is worthwhile of attention, for two reasons.

First is that (around the 28th minute), Daniel says very kind things about myself and TameFlow - and I am of course grateful for that.

Second is a reflection on his story at Corbis, where David J. Anderson came in and started changing things with the *Theory of Constraints* in mind. That attempt failed miserably; and Daniel recounts how the team recovered by themselves, self-organizing, and organically developing what became the very first Kanban.

In that context, TOC was an absolute failure. So I don't blame Daniel for, as of today and as he states in the video, he is rather negative about TOC. It is all because that first experience was really bad.

But here we must reflect that that first experience was led by someone who obviously did not really understand the Theory of Constraints – to the point that the Kanban Method was born as a countermeasure to an alleged failure of TOC; the Kanban Method was born, out of the failure to understand and properly apply TOC.

The morale here is: if you want to learn how to use TOC, learn from someone who understands it – or you will be burnt and miss out on the advantages it can bring.

As always in this kind of discourse, I must reiterate that TOC is simple; really simple; even simplistic in principle; but much more difficult to apply in practice. So how can we get there?

This is when I relate to the **Core Practice No. 6** of the Kanban Method: *"Improve collaboratively, evolve experimentally, using models and the scientific method.* Or, if we are in the Scrum camp relate to the *"Inspect & Adapt"* mantra and the grounding in *"empiricism"*

If these practitioners are so keen on experimentation, the **Scientific Method, Inspection & Adaptation, Empiricism**, then why do they not really practice what they preach? Why don't they dare to take the best Kanban, the best Scrum, and apply the ideas of TameFlow and run it as – you know! – an "experiment?"

Measure your before and after findings? Did they improve? Then what is holding you back? And if things should not improve, then as a TameFlow practitioner we would still be happy to learn and adopt whatever learning is emerging.

The preaching allegiance to experimentation, the Scientific Method, inspection & adaptation, empiricism and so forth does not mix well with the refusal to run validating experiments. It is an exercise in incoherence.

And the morale here is: if you are grounding your approach on frameworks and/or principles, then you are incapable of truly adopting a scientific approach – which instead is at the foundation of the *TameFlow Approach*. So with Scrum you will have the axiom of running timeboxes; and that just cannot be questioned. With the Kanban Method, you will have the precept of applying Column WIP limits; and that cannot be questioned either. If experiments invalidate the strongly held beliefs, these movements would have some of their founding constructs crumble away. So, maybe, that's why they don't want to run them!

## Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the following upcoming events.

## November 23rd-24th, 2020

I will have a talk at the **Critical Chain Project Management Virtual Conference 2020** organized by the TOCICO. The conference will be targeted at *traditional* project managers that might only have a summary understanding of CCPM and are trying to "uncover better ways" to do their job. Naturally, one such better way will be via the *TameFlow Approach*. For more information, see the new conference website: [Critical Chain 2020](#).

**November 24th, 2020 at 15:00 CET:** my talk on **Breakthroughs in managing knowledge-work**. I will touch on the history of the *TameFlow Approach*, how to use *Flow Time Distributions*, *Ageing Charts*, *MOVEs*, *Little's Law*, *Fever Charts* and *Bubble Fever Charts*. All in just 30 minutes, which will then be followed by an interactive Q&A session. The presentation is geared particularly to "conventional" project managers to whom I will introduce the more "agile" (Haha!) ways afforded by the *TameFlow Approach*.

## December 3rd, 2020 at 20:00 CET

We will have the first ever **Campfire Panel Discussion** event on the *Campfire Talks with Herbie 30*. The panel will be moderated by our very own [Mark Jørgensen Chaudhry](#) a.k.a "Question Mark" because when he is around, no question will be left unasked! The topic will be: **Ready now for building the future-proof organization**. We will explore the future of organizations, touching on themes like: resilience, sustainability, diversity, social responsibility, power structures, hierarchies, networks, complexity, etc. and who knows how many other lines of thought will be developed. In addition to myself, the panel will include these great professionals:

- [Niels Pflaeging](#), a leadership philosopher, management exorcist, speaker, author, advisor. Founder at BetaCodex Network. Thanks to Niels: the idea of this panel was developed with his input!
- [Pamela Dukes OLY](#), an enterprise agile coach & trainer, and a Hall of Fame Olympic athlete who is focused on helping teams through servant leadership and self-reliance strategies;
- [Ritu Ward, FACHE](#), a Healthcare executive with success delivering quality, growth, and strategy while leading high performing teams;
- and last, but not least, [Nigel Thurlow](#), former Chief of Agile of Toyota and the co-creator of The Flow System.

To make sure you don't miss this or any forthcoming *Campfire Talks with Herbie* events, subscribe to the [Campfire Events Notification List](#), and you will receive the broadcast links ahead of the event.

That's it for this time.

Have a great week!

Steve

P.S.

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