



Maximize the power of Kanban with  
**MindManager**

**MindManager**<sup>®</sup>

## Introduction

Kanban is an increasingly popular method designed to boost efficiency. The goal of the Kanban Board is to make workflows visible, i.e. to visualize them. Kanban Boards allow you to track numerous work steps – which often run in parallel – and to see which process is currently in which stage. A key advantage of using boards is that they allow you detect potential bottlenecks, so you can eliminate them in the early stages of production and control scheduling and costs.

The roots of Kanban stretch back to the 1960s, when Toyota sought to ensure that its assembly lines had the appropriate numbers of components at the appropriate times. The solution was to use visual cues to trigger specific actions: in Japanese, “kan” means visual, while “ban” means card. Affixed to each bin of components was a card listing specific information. As the bin travelled from manufacturer to warehouse to assembly line, the card cued employees to take appropriate action, such as ordering the next bin. When this approach proved to be an effective way to identify inefficiencies and bottlenecks, the company began to apply Kanban to production processes more broadly, such as by matching the amount of work in progress to a team’s capacity.

Other industries soon followed suit, adapting Kanban to their particular challenges and using boards with small cards to include additional information. Today, agile project management teams of all types use Kanban boards to improve workflows. It’s our hope that this eBook will help you and your agile team to do so too.

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## The Kanban Advantage with MindManager

The Kanban method belongs to Lean Management and there is a simple explanation for the effectiveness of this method: processes can be grasped at a glance. The Kanban Board ensures transparency and displays all relevant information on the current status quo. All employees can see what is happening and at which point. In addition, the Kanban Board helps recognize process durations so that forecasts are accurate. An additional welcome benefit of process visualization is that meetings, often a time-consuming drain on teams, can be made much more efficient.

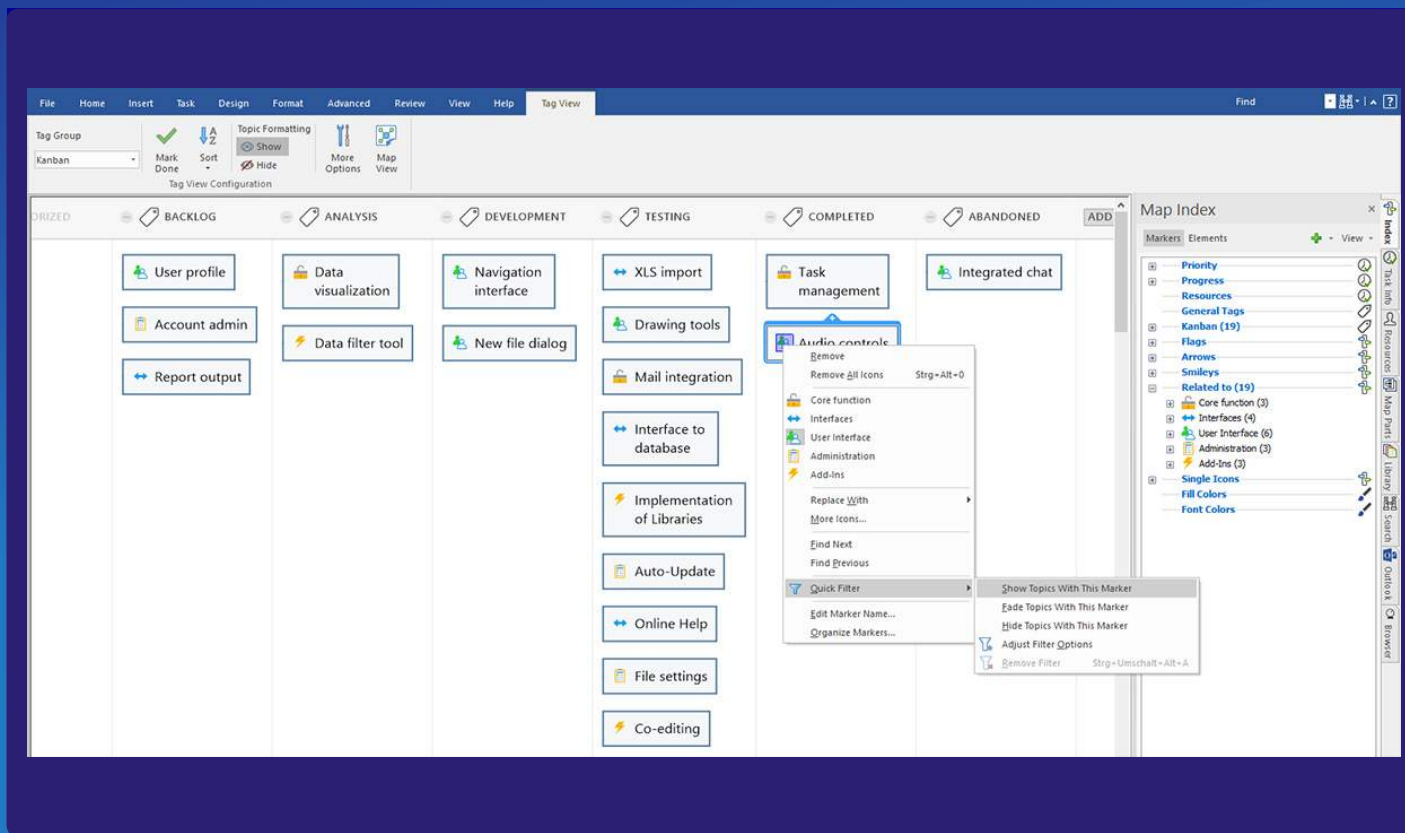
When applied to production processes or in projects, Kanban Boards list key information about particular tasks, such as responsibilities and how long it should take to complete. The boards show each task as a card, allowing any employee to track progress at a glance and adjust their actions accordingly.

Among the many new features in MindManager 2019 for Windows is a Kanban template: a specialized column-based view based on the workflow logic of Kanban boards. The Kanban template's default setting features three columns, titled To Do, Doing and Done. Customizing the template to your team's particular needs is a breeze ... change titles, assign background colors, and add columns.

Using Kanban Boards in MindManager, users can instantly access, present and update key data about a project or task. The result? Greater planning flexibility, and faster output and improved efficiency throughout the production or development cycle.

# Quickly Identify Bottlenecks

The following example map shows common Kanban phases of the IT industry: Backlog, Analysis, Development, Testing, Completed, and Abandoned. Here, we see how a “bottleneck” for this IT team has become immediately apparent in the Test phase.

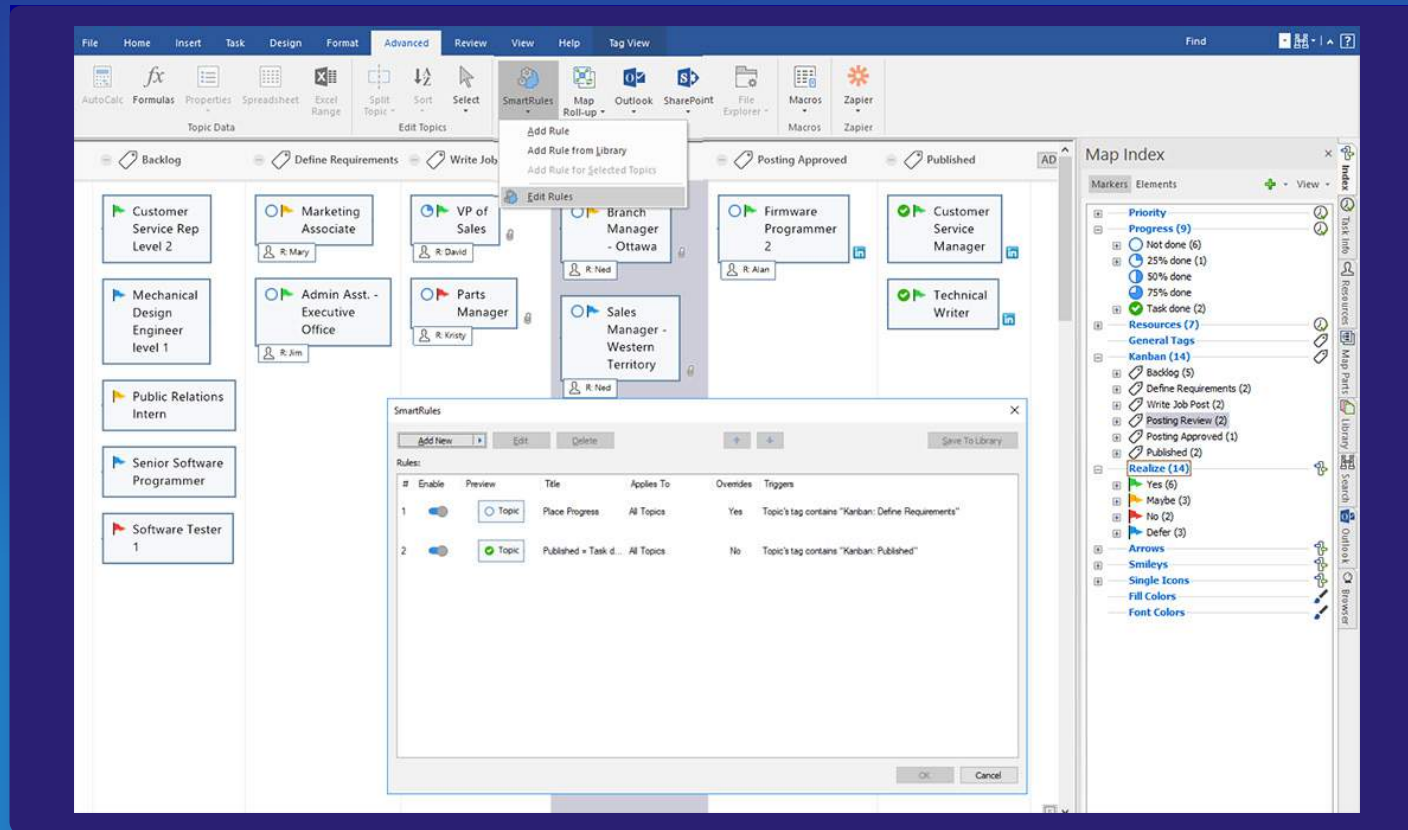


A *free copy* of this example map is available for your immediate download.

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# Apply Kanban to Repeatable Processes

In the example below, a recruiting agency is using a Kanban Board to track their tasks on a variety of open positions.



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## Drive Productivity with SmartRules™

SmartRules™ is perhaps the most powerful innovation in MindManager's most recent release; it represents the next generation of conditional formatting. Previous types of conditional formatting enabled you to change the look of a topic – e.g. fill color or font color. Now you can automatically trigger changes in actual data elements, reducing repetitive tasks and transforming maps from simply representing processes and workflows, to driving and accelerating them.

Within SmartRules™, you define triggers, which can be multiple conditions, and one or more effects, such as a change in color, tags, icons or the application of business data such as costs. Once triggered, MindManager applies the defined effects automatically. In a MindManager map, a set of SmartRules™ can be defined and multiple rules can fire simultaneously. SmartRules™ can also be enabled and disabled manually and they can be applied to individual topics, specific branches or entire maps.

SmartRules™ enables you to empower your processes and create truly interactive diagrams.



*Chuck Frey, author of The Mind Mapping Software Blog, named SmartRules the 2018 Mind Mapping Software Innovation of the Year. Frey is widely regarded as a leading expert in mind maps and visual thinking.*



## Taking Kanban Boards to the Next Level

Companies that have drastically shortened the lead times in their production with Kanban are often not aware that they can also shorten the lead times of project tasks and even entire projects by applying these same principles. Limiting the stock of started tasks and projects is at least as productive as, for example, capping the stock of parts in production.

From a visual perspective, this is ideal, because it's easy to readily identify progress on individual tasks, but also the overall status of an entire project or business process. With Kanban's columnar layout, you can track progress and identify bottlenecks at a glance.

MindManager takes Kanban boards to the next level by enabling users to add detailed information manually. Furthermore, by embedding automated cues and triggers – MindManager SmartRules™ – users can better anticipate when particular tasks must be completed or a critical amount of tasks in a certain phase has been reached. Plus, they can automate the creation of any further needed business data, such as costs. As a result, all team members gain a shared understanding of the status of individual tasks, as well as of the entire project or business process.

The shared understanding fostered by MindManager not only facilitates collaboration, but also makes it easier to integrate new team members into already-running projects with a minimum of time.



## One Kanban Board, Multiple Perspectives

While Kanban's process tracking logic is invaluable, it can still be useful to represent a task, project, or business process in other ways, such as a Gantt chart, list of priorities, or a work breakdown structure. MindManager supports these requirements with an amazing variety of views and customization options.

In Icon View, as example, tasks can be grouped by priority or progress. This same set of tasks could also be displayed in a Gantt chart or in the Schedule View. When brainstorming a new project and planning a new task, many users prefer Map View. This unique capability to provide multiple perspectives of the same dataset allows for all team members gain the understanding they need to boost efficiency.

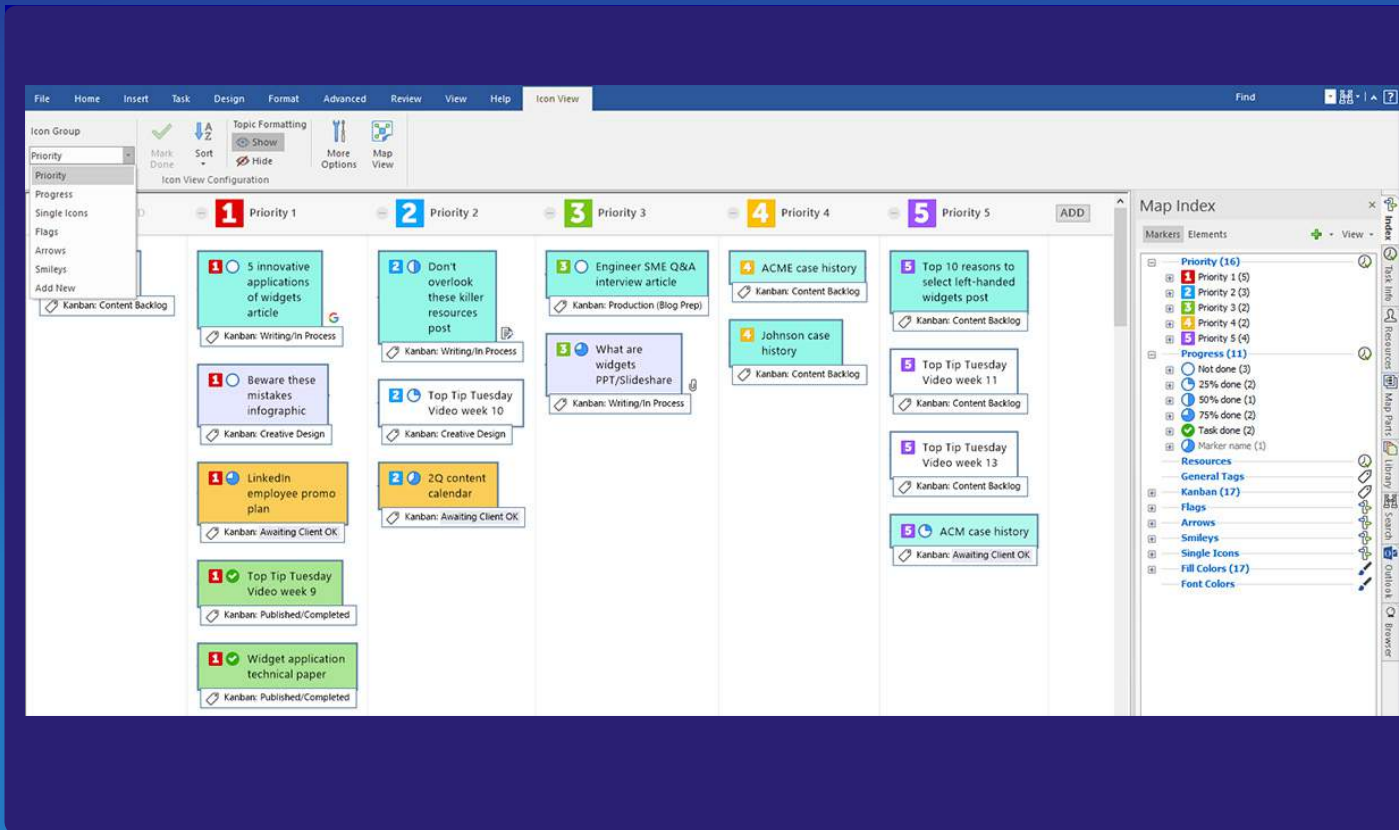
MindManager features an expanded inventory of shapes, icons and many more visualization capabilities that can direct attention and foster understanding. **Just consider that with MindManager, you can:**

- Easily convert an existing process or workflow into a Kanban Board.
- Instantly identify backlogs, bottlenecks and resource issues.
- Amend a task with data-rich content such as hyperlinks, attachments, tags, resources, due dates, notes and icons.
- Use filters to hide or display particular information.
- Change view to gain a new perspective on the project.



# Immediately See Your Priorities

With the click of a mouse, you can switch from Tag View to Icon View, as shown in this example. Busy project managers are fans of this capability!

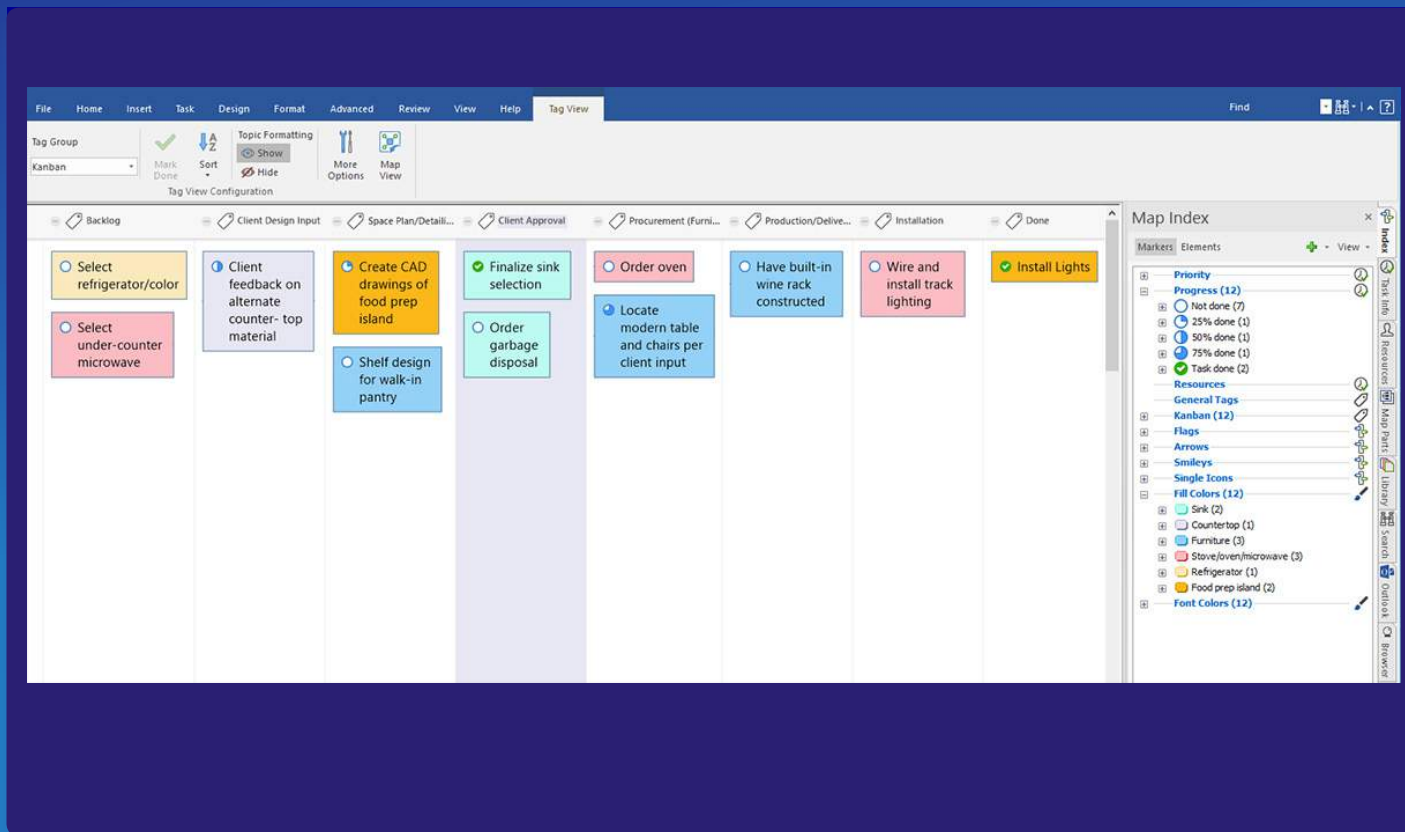


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# Attach Meaning with Colors & Icons

In the example below, an interior designer is using a Kanban Board to represent different elements of the project with colors while also using Icon View to track progress.



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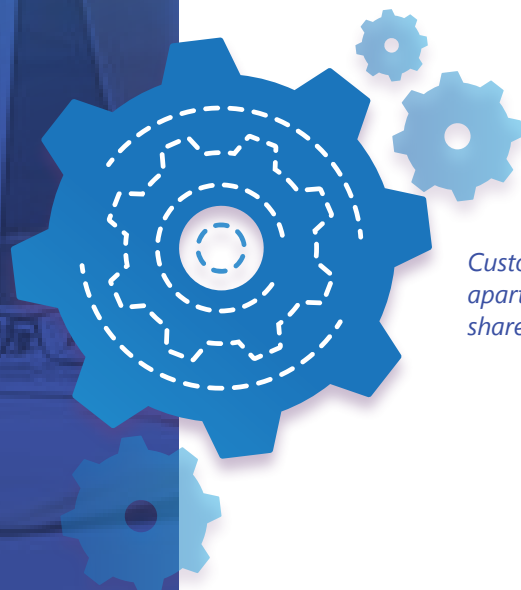


## Communicate Metadata at a Glance

The ability to quickly communicate key information through visual cues is central to Kanban.

MindManager 2019 for Windows features an expanded inventory of shapes, icons and many more visualization capabilities that can direct attention and establish team understanding in ways that words never could. Users can create their own Kanban Boards and add required information in a variety of ways. Combined with the ability to filter, switch to other Views and embed links to other media, these visual cues make it easy to present complex, layered data.

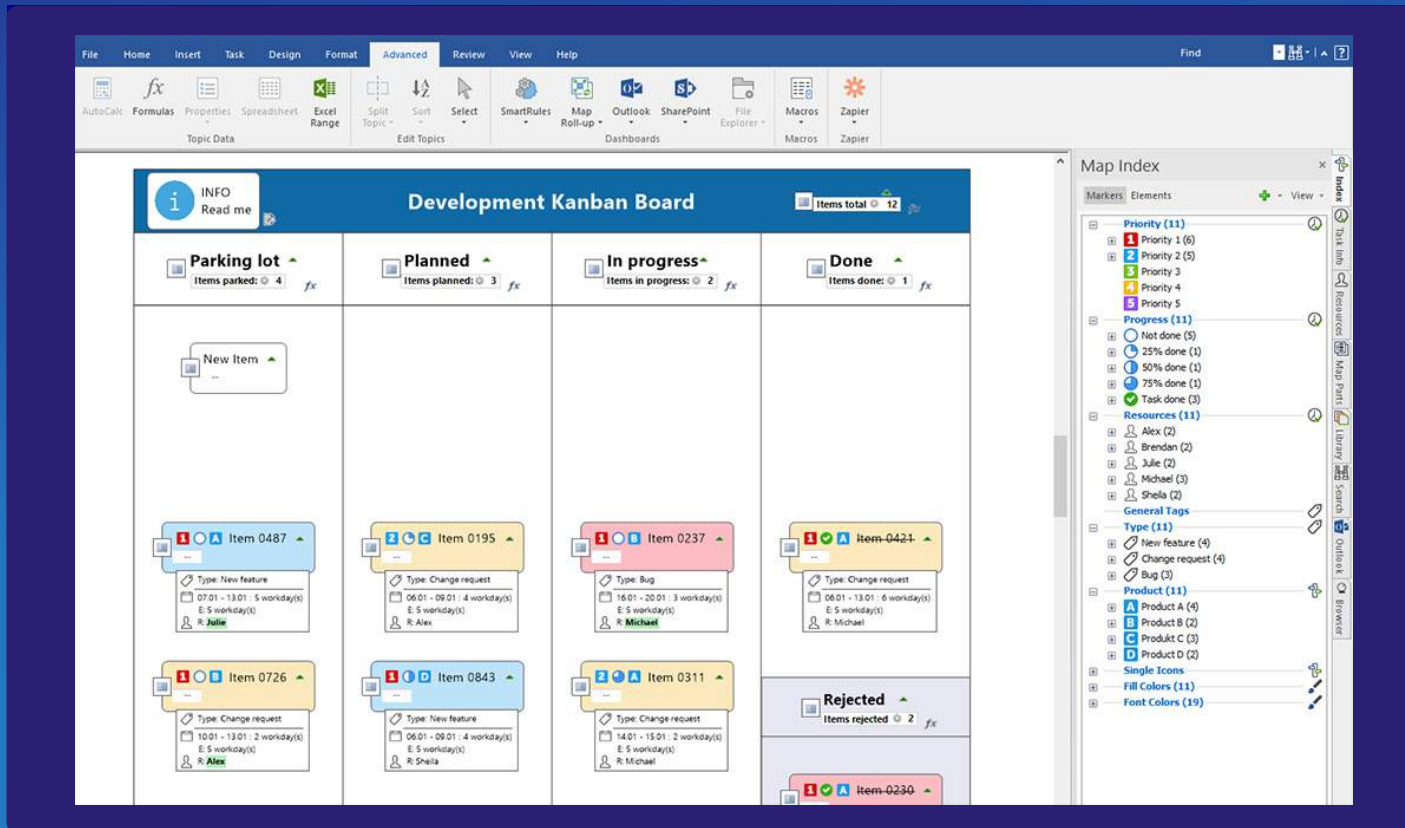
Further, MindManager makes it possible to add business data and calculations to topics, tasks, and cards. This can be used to define and calculate costs, work with dropdown lists and even automate the task in each phase to show the Work in Progress. Used in combination with Smart Rules, these capabilities make it possible to highlight critical or at-risk areas automatically.



*Customization and flexibility are what set MindManager apart: the ability to create data-rich maps that foster a shared understanding and drive efficiency.*

# Simplify Complexity with Visualization

Combine the use of MindManager's SmartRules™ and featuring capabilities with its Tag-, Icon- and Gantt Chart View and you can see the all information related to task lists, project plans, flowcharts and other diagrams. Plus, any edits will be dynamically applied -- save time and igniting productivity. Many Kanban enthusiasts appreciate the ability to create highly customized boards, as shown in the example here.



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## MindManager + Kanban = The Ultimate Project Management Tool

Harness the power of Kanban to improve project management with MindManager 2019.

Collaborate in projects and optimize process flows. Make complex or inter-related tasks easier to understand by inserting links to other media or documents directly into Kanban boards. MindManager's customized views enable users to find what they need, to recognize the essentials, to focus on pertinent information and improve the speed and effectiveness of decision-making.

### **Enjoy being able to:**

- Identify bottlenecks and improve workflow.
- Modify your Kanban Board as workflow evolves.
- Anticipate and schedule tasks more efficiently.
- View your work and processes from multiple perspectives, including as a Gantt chart.
- Foster collaboration and shared understanding, particularly among team members who work remotely.

## Additional Resources

### MindManager resources:

- [📄 7 Reasons to Use Kanban Principles for your 2019 Planning](#)  
[blog post]
- [📄 How to Manage Your Next Project Using Kanban Boards](#)  
[high level webinar]
- [📄 Managing your projects and tasks with MindManager and Kanban](#)  
[deep dive webinar]

### Other helpful resources:

- [📄 What is Kanban?](#)  
[video by Online PM Courses]
- [📄 How Kanban Works in Project Management](#)  
[blog post by The Balance Careers]



## Ready to Take Your Project Management to the Next Level?

MindManager software enables individuals, teams, and enterprises to apply the principles of Kanban to projects and business processes.

Create dynamic, visual, data-rich diagrams (and Kanban boards) that tell cohesive stories and inspire teamwork. With MindManager, team members get a clearer understanding of projects and processes, and of their roles and responsibilities. Millions of people around the world use MindManager to brainstorm ideas, plan and execute projects, communicate knowledge, and drive positive, profitable business results.

# MindManager®

Empower your team with maps that harness the power of Kanban.

Start your free 30-day, full-feature trial today.

[www.mindjet.com/myfreetrial](http://www.mindjet.com/myfreetrial)