

# Kanban Boards In Jira Software for Med-Device Documentation Team

SPK helps a renowned medical device maker to add speed, visibility, metrics, and improved communication and collaboration to their teams tasked with creating product labels and user manuals.

## The Client

A globally recognized maker of medical devices was tasked with creating a lot of highly technical, precise, and regulatory-compliant documents, specifically, 1) product labels, and 2) product instructions.

This is a surprisingly complex and technical task, which is assigned to largely non-technical people: Writers. There are 35 people on the team, and their assignments are daunting. A single product could include anywhere from one to 50 different labels. The IFU, or “instructions for use,” could be a one-page card—or a 1,000-page user guide.

The workflow included original tasking, gathering input and feedback from scores of subject matter experts or SMEs, re-writing, reviews by legal, tracking, production... and translation into more than 18 different languages.

Interestingly, this process of the non-technical people had a technical flavor to it: It was similar to the creation of software, with its development, quality assurance (QA), and production phases. Thus it was an ideal candidate for moving to a software-like development process. And so this client tapped SPK to help.

## Can-Do Kanban

The team had never used a Kanban board before, but wanted to. A Kanban board is great for small pieces of individual work (in contrast to, say, agile/

iterative software development). Picture it as a visual representation of a board with little “cards” on it, representing tasks, organized into “swimlanes” according to roles and responsibilities. As a project progresses, its card moves across the Kanban board from start to finish.

Now imagine a virtualized version of that board, and you’ll see what SPK needed to create.

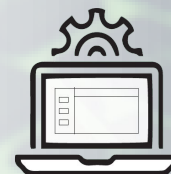
Fortunately, this medical-device maker already had a licensed Jira implementation, which is used for ticketing and requests. Our job was to create a virtual Kanban board... on Jira.

## The Solution

GSPK worked with the client to map out their existing documentation process, and update it for the new way of working. We created two new Kanban boards in Jira Software, one for the labeling projects, and the other for the technical user manuals. The new labeling board has 15 steps; the documentation board has 13.



Deliverables  
easily  
tracked



Metrics  
available, for  
the first time



Time  
Saved

SPK was able to not only adapt the steps, but also eliminate some that would no longer be needed/translate to the new system.

There were a lot of other old-school workarounds that, fortunately, were left behind as well:

- In the old way of working, the project manager or team member would rely on email for communication. Imagine trying to track lots of different SMEs' ongoing feedback that way, without letting anything slip through the cracks.
- And they would use other tools and systems as needed: OneNote. MS Teams. Word. Outlook. It was all over the map.
- It was hard enough for individual contributors to keep track of this. Their managers had virtually no visibility into the big picture or process details.

Using the existing Jira license, SPK was able to configure the new Kanban boards in just 1.5 weeks, with no special configurations or plug-in's required. It was fast and incredibly cost-effective.

## The Benefits

What once had been scattered (and hidden) across lots of different, home-grown systems is now unified, simple, and efficient. There are two Kanban boards: one for labels, one for IFUs. And a project is basically

like a "ticket" in Jira, as it moves across the board.

The benefits are manifold:

- For the first time, teams actually have metrics for the business unit.
- Team members can easily communicate project status.
- Users can easily request deliverables to the teams that can be tracked.
- SMEs can easily communicate their feedback.
- Team members and managers can run reports on items accomplished for the year for reviews.
- Managers can actively see what all team members are working on—all in one view.
- One-to-one meetings with team members are more efficient, because deliverables can be viewed and discussed directly from the Jira board.

By the way, the existing Jira environment saved this company more than time. A from-scratch Jira setup of the new boards, along with the accompanying configuration, would have cost anywhere from \$15k to \$30k. The client didn't have to spend an extra penny on Jira.

## As The Customer Put It:

“

We are so thrilled with our new Kanban boards and how much time it saves our team. Before, we couldn't keep track of where the project was, and tasks were being dropped as we all tried to manage everything in email. SPK easily set up our boards and trained us — it is so much better!

”

## Get A No-Obligation Initial Assessment

If your help desk needs help, contact SPK and Associates. We've helped others, and would love to help you, too. Reach out to us today at (888) 310-4540 or [info@spkaa.com](mailto:info@spkaa.com).



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