

Fenwick Casework — “Wall”

Architectural casework · nine on the floor · Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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ALSO IN THE ROOM	Aurelio Sant, finishing · Bram Kettleby, detailing
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1 · The decision

In one sentence, what decision does this dashboard exist to get made?

Which stage is the constraint this week, and what we refuse to start because of it.

Who opens it, and when?

All nine of us, stood in front of it at ten to seven, and then me every time a card moves. It is projected on the shop wall. It is not a report anybody reads sitting down.

How does that decision get made today, without it?

A magnetic board with the job numbers on it. It shows where things are, which is the one thing I can already tell by walking the floor. What it cannot tell me is how much work is standing in each column.

Is there a rule the decision follows? Write it out, in the order it applies.

1. Every card carries the hours still owed to it in the stage it is sitting in. 2. A stage's queue is those hours added up. 3. Its capacity is the hours it actually has in a week — not the hours somebody is paid for. 4. Queue divided by capacity is how many weeks deep it is. 5. The deepest stage is the constraint. 6. Nothing starts upstream that would add to it.

Should the dashboard apply that rule, or only display it?

Apply it. And it has to be allowed to move. We spent a year saying Bench was the bottleneck because Bench always has the most cards, and it was never Bench — Bench has four benches and it clears what you give it. It was the spray booth, and the booth has one man and it stands empty half the week while things cure.

So the card count is not enough on its own?

Five small cards and five big ones are the same count and they are not the same week. Four rooms of science bench tops is one card. That is the whole reason the old board lied to us.

How should a card's age be judged?

Against what actually shipped, not against a target. Nobody here ever agreed that detailing takes five days. Five days is what last quarter averaged, and half of everything took longer than that by definition. Show me where a card sits against every card that left that stage and let me decide if it is odd.

Anything you specifically do not want on it?

No figure for any person, anywhere, ever. Days in stage belongs to the work. The minute it belongs to whoever was at that bench, cards get scanned through early and I lose the numbers. And no colour-coded traffic lights — it is projected next to a window and by four in the afternoon half the colours on that wall are a guess.

What has to be on it that boards like this usually leave off?

The work we have sold and are deliberately not starting. Limits that never cost anything are decoration. If the wall says no to something, I want the thing it said no to written down with my name on the reason.

Where does the data come from, and how fresh does it need to be?

The travellers get scanned at each stage. It needs to be right at ten to seven and it needs to say what time it was right at.

2 · Screens requested

SCREEN	WHAT IT IS FOR	WHAT IT MUST SHOW
The wall	Every live job, in the stage it is actually sitting in.	Five columns with a card limit and committed hours against capacity on each, cards carrying days in stage, hours left, due date and any block — plus the sold work being held off the board.
Ageing	Cards by days in stage, oldest first, against the stage median.	Days in stage, the stage median, where the card falls against every card that shipped from that stage this quarter, and what the blocked ones are waiting on.
Committed hours	Hours promised against hours the stage actually has.	Weeks of queue per stage over eight weeks, against a full week, with the constraint marked and the figures printed.

3 · Figures, and the comparison each one carries

FIGURE	MUST APPEAR AGAINST
Cards in a stage	The stage's work-in-progress limit
Committed hours	The hours that stage has in a week
Weeks deep	One full week, and the same figure eight weeks ago
Days in stage	The stage median and the spread of everything that shipped this quarter
Hours held off the wall	Hours already standing on it

No figure appears on this dashboard without the comparison beside it. A number with nothing to compare it against is not information, and the component that renders these will not accept one.

4 • What this must not do

- 1. No figure attributed to any individual, on any screen.
- 2. No traffic lights. Status carries a word or it does not carry.
- 3. No nominated bottleneck. It is derived or it is not trusted.
- 4. No card count without the hours beside it.
- 5. Nothing hidden behind a scroll that changes what we start today.

Treated as binding rather than as a preference. Every item above is checked again before the tool is handed over.

CONFIRMATION

The answers above are mine and may be used to build the tool described. Fenwick Casework is a fictional business profile supplied for demonstration and testing; every figure appearing in the delivered dashboard is sample data.

SIGNED — ILSE VANDERMEER

DATE