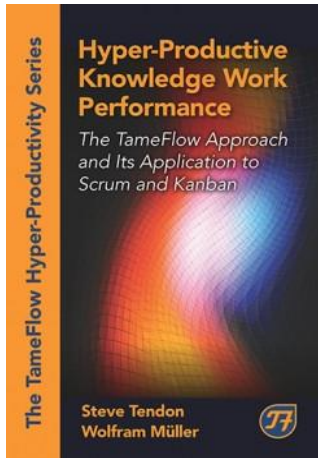


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Hyper-Productive Knowledge Work Performance – The TameFlow Approach and Its Application to Scrum and Kanban***

Author: **Steve Tendon and Wolfram Muller**

Publisher: J. Ross Publishing

List Price: \$64.95 Format: Hard cover; 296 pages

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### Introduction to the Book

The TameFlow Approach advocates hyper productivity and better management practices. On a glance, this approach provides an organizations the ability to adopting experimental practices with very little planning, incremental budgeting, quick execution and shorter feedback loops. It also provides the ability for creating business value through knowledge work for information based organizations.

In this book, Steve Tendon shares his experiences while working at a hyper-productive organization (Borland International) and shares various productivity pattern theories which can be replicated to target similar benefits. These patterns allow both top-down and bottom-up approach of communication and empower workers to share ideas in an open and trust based environment.

Wolfram Muller shares his knowledge of advanced agile project management, critical chain and constraint theory in hopes of providing the reader with ways to increase speed, throughput, reliability and agility. These concepts can increase Scrum and Kanban team productivity by addressing key challenges in the thinking process to improve the throughput and overall ROI of the project.

### Overview of Book's Structure

The book is broken down into 2 parts:

Part I covers TameFlow Principles of Hyper-Productive Knowledge Work Performance with the following chapters:

1. A case of Software Hyper-Productivity (Borland Quattro Pro for Windows) to raise the positive seen on application of this approach
2. Shapes and Patterns of Hyper-Productivity

3. The Nature of Knowledge Work
4. Management's Profound Understanding of Knowledge Work
5. Management's Responsibility and Learning Organization
6. Discovery Driven Planning
7. Budgets Considered Harmful
8. Created a Shared Vision at the Team Level
9. Critical Roles, Leadership and More
10. The Thinking Process
11. Throughput Accounting
12. Herbie and Kanban
13. The Financial Metrics Supporting Unity of Purpose and Community of Trust
14. The Kanban Method, Flow and Throughput
15. Understanding the Impact of a Constraint
16. The (Super-) Human Side of Flow

Part II covers Hyper-Productive Scrum and Kanban applications of TameFlow perspective with the following chapters:

17. Challenges of Work-State Work in Process Limits
18. TameFlow-Kanban: The Throughput Focused Kanban
19. Understanding Common Cause Variation
20. Improving While in the Flow
21. Root Cause Analysis the Theory of Constraints Way
22. In Practice with Scrum
23. Reliable Scrum and Reliable Kanban
24. From Reliable to TameFlow-Scrum
25. From Production to Projects

### **Highlights: What's New in this Book**

TameFlow Approach appears to be new and focuses on individual areas of operational, financial, information and psychological flows working together as a holistic approach to increase organizational productivity. Within each of these flows, there are guidelines which can help increase cash flow, innovation and happier teams while reducing time-to-market.

Traditional financial management has been known to cause dysfunctions at various levels. It's hard to access real forecast if bonuses and performance evaluations are tied to those carrying out the forecasts. Short-term financing aligned to light planning to maximize ROI was recommended in this book as an alternative. This is done by calculating throughput accounting practices focus on the net profit from delivering working software minus the costs to transfer ideas into working code. Utilizing the thinking process target needed changes, addressing resistance to recommended changes and identifying critical success factors were all valuable insights covered in this book to influence necessary organizational changes.

Other useful information shared in the book included benefits of improved Communication flow in flat organization. The author advocates the entire organization has to support unity of purpose and establish a community of trust

reinforced frequent communication patterns to make this happen. Hyper productive organizations seem to manage these aspects of communication well among all stakeholders. They do this by discussing different priorities and complexity across the organization to reach a deeper level of sharing to effectively address root causes of issues rather than surface side-effects.

Psychological flow are important as the teams put in place discovery driven planning approach and accepting failure as a normal part of the learning process rather than defeat. I found the author's recommendation to capture a check list of assumptions was good guidance, along with an iterative process for incorporating improvements can make this process less stressful.

### **Highlights: What I liked!**

I am a big fan of improved communication, continuous development and human organization theory. So any approach which advocates organizational approach for better organizational alignment to foster productive happy teams will definitely grab my attention.

On a more simplistic note, I really like the examples of Herbie (along with the illustrations) to help understand Work In Progress and Throughput patterns which can impact agile teams. The overall goal to foster an environment where teams are self-sustaining and manage workloads effectively is frequently mentioned, but how to get there often takes time, stability and team-building before teams become more cohesive, productive and happy.

I also like the guidance on reducing negative impacts of traditional budget management by utilizing incremental budgets for increased visibility to value added for business partners. This reduces the pressure which often distracts teams and impacts productivity and innovative thinking.

### **Shortfalls: What was Missing!**

I was initially drawn to this book because I wanted some really good examples of Kanban boards utilized to maximize information sharing across team. Unfortunately I didn't find any of these.

I struggled to get a good understanding of TameFlow Approach based on this book. I had better luck seeking other sources on the internet to understand key principles at a high level before I could follow their guidance. As a result, I would recommend other reference material before review of this book for those who are new to this topic.

### **Who might benefit from the Book**

This book shares beneficial guidelines to any leader in an organization who is seeking to improved productivity of software development projects. This includes Executives, Managers, PMOs, Scrum Teams and Business Partners. It shares very

good guidelines on how to bridge gaps in communication, processes, finances and behavioral flows in an organization and at a team level.

Agile teams may introduce performance improvements, higher throughput and more value-added capabilities if they are able to replicate these approaches in their organization. Newly formed Scrum Teams would benefit from understanding how to attack key challenges with utilization of best practices to remove some blocks and maturing processes which causes them frustrations. This will eventually lead them to more productive results and happier teams.

From the perspective of project management, lighter planning and incremental budget management is more consistent with agile project as opposed to traditional planning and budget management practices.

## **Conclusion**

I learned a great deal from reading this book and the other supplemental information I found on the internet to bridge my gap of understanding about the TameFlow Process. It is a bit challenging to fully appreciate the topics covered without some background information, but for those who are determined to find some golden nuggets to improve organizational cohesiveness when applying agile principals, it's worth the effort. The book also provides high level guidance on how to build in traditional project management activities (such as best practices on budgeting, communication and productive teams) in an agile environment.

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For more about this book, go to: <http://www.jrosspub.com/hyper-productive-knowledge-work-performance.html>

*Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published. Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact [editor@peworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@peworldjournal.net).*

## About the Reviewer



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**Nazanin Mehrooz** is a certified project manager and scrum master. Nazanin started her career as a software developer and transitioned to leading mid-size teams as a functional manager and (most currently) a senior project manager in Technology Services at BNSF. Her background includes managing a portfolio of 30+ projects with budgets exceeding 15 Million USD. Nazanin is an active volunteer for the PMI Dallas and Fort Worth Chapters.

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