
WIP is about Time

Work-In-Process (WIP) is the quantity of product, information, or services accumulating between successive steps in a process.

Each unit of WIP waits between process steps until the next step in the process is ready to start performing its work on that product, information or service. The amount of time it takes to complete the work at a particular step is called cycle time. By taking the cycle time of a step and multiply it by the quantity of WIP accumulated just before that process step, you can calculate the total time represented by the WIP.

This accumulated time, in the form of WIP, acts as a buffer to absorb the variability in cycle times between subsequent process steps. This buffer time is critical in preventing normal variation from disrupting your process flow.

$$\text{WIP} = \text{Buffer Time}$$

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