

The Fifteen Laws

More doesn't make more. Flow makes more.

Each statement corresponds to a chapter. Read in sequence, they form the complete argument: from more doesn't make more, to attention is the universal constraint.

- 1 Adding more balls at the entrance does not necessarily increase what comes out.
- 2 The result of any system is produced by the flow that crosses its elements, not only by the elements individually.
- 3 Most of the time lost in any system is not in the work, but in the waiting between the work.
- 4 Every chain has a constraint that governs the performance of the entire system.
- 5 Local efficiency can rise while the global result gets worse; being busy is not the same as delivering.
- 6 Excess work released into the system creates queues, raises WIP, and stretches lead time, without increasing delivery.
- 7 The first step to recover a congested system is to limit the release of work, not to accelerate it.
- 8 A system's performance does not come from every resource running free, but from all of them marching to the constraint's beat.
- 9 Well-placed buffers make flow reliable even in the face of the unexpected, and they also show where to act.
- 10 A system's capacity is not the sum of local capacities; it is set by the element with the least capacity for flow.
- 11 Throughput, Inventory, and Operating Expense reveal the true economics of flow, and the constraint decides the priority.
- 12 The quality of a system's results is limited by the quality of the decisions made about its constraints.
- 13 Multitasking wastes the constraint's capacity in context-switching: the more simultaneous tasks, the less flow the system generates.
- 14 Technology amplifies the existing system; it accelerates movement, but does not replace discernment about what deserves to be accelerated.
- 15 In the abundance of information, attention has become the universal constraint.