

## What it is

A tool to help teams stay connected and move work forward

## What it can do

This tool can assist teams to:

- o build and maintain a sense of team-ness
- o stay energized with a sense of collective purpose
- o ensure the critical communications needed to move work forward
- o identify issues that need to be attended to and assign responsibility for resolving them

## How it works

- Schedule daily team meetings that are to last no more than 15 minutes.
- Best practice is to have them at the same time every day so that a habit is established.
- Each person speaks only once, addressing the following three questions:
  - o What did I accomplish yesterday?
  - o What will I do today?
  - o What obstacles are impeding my progress?  
(this can include requests for help)
- Follow the additional guidelines in the following pages.

On average, people at work spend 37% of their time in meetings.<sup>1</sup> But according to research, up to 50% of that time is wasted.<sup>2</sup>

A fairly recent innovation in technology companies is *stand-up meetings*. While originally developed as a process to assist the speed, coordination and flexibility needed in agile software development, stand-up meetings can be used by any team that has a high degree of interdependence. Stand-ups are especially powerful for groups that rely on rapid response and flexibility.

Stand-up meetings are held typically each and every workday. Typical features include:

- Meeting time is limited to 5-15 minutes.
- Participants are invited to actually stand up if they are willing and able. Standing helps motivate people to keep it short.
- Best practice is to treat the meeting like a huddle, with people standing physically close to each other (which tends to generate energy).
- Stand-up meetings can also be held via conference call when participants work in remote locations.
- It's considered best practice to have the meeting the same time every day.
- Meetings start exactly on time.
- Teams create their own rituals to make stand-ups attractive, fun and energizing (e.g. using Bob Marley's *Get Up, Stand Up* to call people to meetings).
- Team culture places a very high value on being on time, given the shortness of meetings. (Some organizations fine people for every minute late – the money is used to buy snacks, etc.)
- Participants traditionally report on these three questions:
  - What did I accomplish yesterday?
  - What will I do today?
  - What obstacles are impeding my progress?  
(this can include requests for help)
- Each person speaks only once
- The purposes of the stand-up meeting are:
  - To build and maintain a sense of team-ness

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<sup>1</sup> National Statistics Council, quoted in <http://e-meetings.verizonbusiness.com/global/en/meetingsinamerica/uswhitepaper.php>

<sup>2</sup> <http://psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201204/why-meetings-kill-productivity>  
<http://techradar.com/news/world-of-tech/roundup/wasted-time-in-meetings-costs-businesses-26-billion-1081238>

- o To create rather than use energy. To get the team fired up with a sense of collective purpose.
  - o To ensure the critical communications needed to move work forward.
  - o To identify issues that need to be attended to and assign responsibility for resolving them.
- Stand-up meetings are not:
  - o a time for story-telling.  
The general rule is headlines, not the whole story.
  - o a time for solving problems.  
Their purpose is to raise issues and surface ideas. Resolving problems happens elsewhere.
  - o a substitute for longer, more strategic team meetings.
- The facilitator should use the phrase “*take it offline*” liberally to keep focus and energy.
- Major issues that arise are tracked and put in the “*parking lot*” and dealt with after the stand-up meeting is over.
- After everyone has spoken, the stand-up meeting is over.
- The facilitator determines whether or not any issues in the parking lot need to be dealt with immediately. If so, those whose attendance is important stay while everyone else leaves.
- Issues in the parking lot that are not time sensitive are tasked to appropriate team members.