

Daily Standup Ceremony

Keeping a team synchronized, focused, and in flow.

Purpose

The purpose of the Daily Standup is to inspect progress toward the team's goal and adapt as necessary the approach to in-progress and planned work to achieve the goal.

The Daily Standup focuses the team on how work is progressing, identifying impediments to flow and raising awareness if special steps need to be taken to restore flow.

Making progress visible and explicitly stating the day's tasks also provides motivation. People seem to get more work accomplished when they clearly identify and publicly declare their daily goals.

Preparation

The team collectively agrees on the start time of the Daily Standup. Observers know not to talk, ask questions, or intervene until after the Daily Standup is complete.

Participants (roles)

Anyone on the team responsible for work items participates. Anyone without work items may quietly observe.

Pattern

Open—Any team member actively working a task can start the Daily Standup.

Execute—One at a time each team member reports on the progress of their work. A common structure is to have participants answer three mandatory questions, and one optional (parking lot) question:

1. What work items have I worked on and completed since the last Daily Standup on this project?
2. What work items will I work on before the next Daily Standup on this project?
3. Do I have any blocked items, impediments, or obstacles?
4. Optional: What do I need to talk about after the Daily Standup (Parking Lot)?

The team may choose different questions or a different form.

The person speaking may update their work items on the Kanban board (if one is being used) while reporting their daily progress. If they have hours remaining on a work item (or task) they may also update the estimated number of hours remaining, up or down. If their work items on the Kanban Board are already up to date, they may simply point at the

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board.

Close—After each team member has spoken once, the meeting is over.

Product

An updated Kanban board potentially with new blocked items and a list of parking lot items for further discussion after the Daily Standup.

Tips

The Daily Standup occurs at the same time each day.

The Daily Standup is frequently only 7 or 8 minutes long.

The Daily Standup is never over 15 minutes long.

The team members are reporting on their state of flow to each other, not to a manager or facilitator.

Every person attending should listen for ways they can help others improve flow.

One person talks at a time answering the three questions and speaking for less than one minute.

Each person talks only once.

If more than 15 minutes elapse, any team member may declare the meeting over.

The Daily Standup belongs to the team. It is a meeting for team members. The Daily Standup is not a status meeting for those outside the team although they may observe quietly because it is often an excellent source of status information.

The team is responsible for facilitating Daily Standup without help from managers, Scrum Masters, Agile coaches, or other people with fancy titles.

Team members stand during the Daily Standup (stand in front of a physical or digital Kanban board).

The team publicly displays any blockages, impediments, obstacles, and parking lot items.

Impediments include anything that is slowing progress toward the team goals. Sample impediments include:

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- Not having access to an essential system
- Not getting necessary input from a stakeholder
- Not being able to reproduce a defect
- Not knowing which stakeholder to call for more information
- Hardware broken or down
- A worker having too many other tasks
- Waiting for another work item to complete

Signs of impediments include:

- Work item age getting long and threatening the Service Level Agreement
- Work in Progress overflowing Kanban Work In Progress (WIP) Limits
- Items not smoothly flowing through the Kanban board

Do not try to assign ownership of resolving obstacles during the Daily Standup, reserve that for after the meeting.

A talking token is helpful in focusing a Daily Standup in live in-person meetings. Only the person holding the talking token speaks.

Putting the talking token down (after each person has had one chance to hold it) signals the end of the Daily Standup.

Impediments older than one day signify a problem the entire team may work to address.

Seek to resolve any impediments within 24 to 48 hours. Preferably before the next Daily Standup.

Capture and radiate key metrics during the Daily Standup including:

- Work In Progress
- Work Item Age
- Throughput
- Cycle Time

Keep tasks less than one day to observe flow (or lack thereof).