

Tell Me A Story Ceremony

Capturing with respect the ideas and input of others about a topic, product, or project.

Purpose

To capture enough information on a Story Card so the team can have an intelligent conversation in the future about the idea captured on the Story Card.

Preparation

A standard format for the Story Card is agreed to in advance. The standard format describes the minimal amount of information to be captured when recording input and ideas. The format is acceptable and understood to everyone on the team who will be a Story Writer.

Participants (roles)

Story Writer, Story Teller

Pattern

Open—A Story Teller mentions they have an idea, feature, or request for a product or project. The Story Writer says “Let me write this idea down now so we can remember it for future conversations.”

Execute—The Story Writer grabs a blank Story Card and asks the Story Teller a series of questions to capture a “good enough” description of the idea, feature, or request. The description is “good enough” if both parties can remember what the idea, feature, or request was when reading the Story Card later.

The Story Teller answers the questions to describe the idea, feature, or request. The discussion may lead to the creation of multiple Story Cards.

Close—The Story Writer says “Is there anything else you would like me to write down for this story?” The Story Teller says “No.” The Story Writer makes it clear what they will do with the Story Card, and when, so the Story Teller knows their idea is being followed up and respected.

Product

A story captured on a Story Card in a location for future review.

Tell Me A Story Ceremony

Tips

A Story Card is better as a physical object, a 3x5 or 5x8 index card for example.

A common format for a Story Card includes: Title, Story Description, Date, Story Teller Initials, Story Writer Initials, and Tracking Number.

A common format for a Story Description is: As a (user), I want (a feature), so that (benefit).

Capture enough information on the Story Card so that the Story Teller can remember and more fully describe the idea at a future date.

The *Tell Me A Story Ceremony* is executed with key stakeholders any time they propose and idea.

The name “Story” comes from the idea of saying to someone with an idea for a feature to “Tell me a story about how this will be used in the future.” The idea is the person is not just providing an idea or a feature but a narrative about what the idea means and how it provides value.

The *Tell Me a Story Ceremony* is even more effective when there is a regularly scheduled *Story Prioritization Ceremony* where all new stories are reviewed to be potentially discussed, scheduled, or retired. Then the Story Teller can be told something like “We review all new stories every Monday at 10am during our *Story Prioritization Ceremony*. It usually runs 45 minutes and you are welcome to attend.” This lets the Story Teller know they and their ideas are tracked, evaluated, and treated with respect.

Attach a sketch or simple drawing to the Story Card if that helps make the idea more clear.