

Retrospective

Quick View:

- Last meeting of sprint; used to review the sprint and determine how to improve
- 1 hour long for a 2 week sprint
- **Scrum team only**, no non-members

Tips:

- Have a consistent time and place
- Mix individual work with group discussion to ensure all view points
- Pick a measurable goal to achieve before the next Retro
- Review goals set from last Retro and ensure improvement is happening

What Is A Retrospective?

Lean has a concept called Kaizen, which is the Japanese word for improvement. The limiting factor in the productivity of most teams is not their utilization, but their process. Kaizen, or Scrum's Retrospective ensures the team spend some time in each iteration to figure out how to improve. By doing a little in each sprint and setting & achieving goals, compound payback is achieved over time.

A Retrospective should only include direct members of the scrum team. The meeting is intentionally private so that outside influences don't change the flavour of the conversation.

The meeting is facilitated by the team's Scrum Master. This is important! Change often only comes through tough conversations and the Scrum Master helps to ensure that all discussions remain constructive. There are a large variety of techniques to use in a Retrospective and it is good practice to change which process is used occasionally so that the team stays engaged.

It is key that all members get a voice in the conversation. Most Retrospectives tend to blend time spent by individuals with group work. By having individuals make notes to themselves and then the group discussing topics afterwards, we make sure that each voice gets heard rather than just the loudest. A common practice is to vote on topics surfaced from the individual work for further discussion.

Conversation should focus on things the team has within their control to improve. Items outside of this scope can be put on an Impediments Backlog for the Scrum Master to escalate to the organization. Typical conversations are around team interactions, processes, and tools. Anything that went particularly well or badly in the sprint should be highlighted. The team can review sprint statistics to help centre the conversation around facts.

Finish a Retrospective by committing to 1-2 goals that can be achieved by the end of the next sprint. These should be measurable goals within the team's purview to change. The goal should have acceptance criteria so there is no argument over whether it was achieved. At the beginning of the next Retrospective it should be highlighted whether the goals were achieved.

It is natural to focus on the things that were negative in a sprint. The negative things are often those that are easiest to identify and have the most obvious solutions. Don't forget the that focus is on improvement, goals such as "Improve all automated testing coverage to 80%" aren't about what went wrong but what the team wants to change. Finally, take time to acknowledge good works. Use a "Thank-you Wall" or an "Appreciation Ceremony" to finish on a positive note.