

Employee Engagement | Huddles



What is it?

- Short (less than 15 minutes), recurring time held at program or team level
- Part of the culture and daily/weekly routine
- An essential part of the daily Lean practice
- Routine stand up team engagement

Why do it?

Promote cross collaboration, builds trust, promote transparency, fosters problem solving and learning. Great way to identify problems and rally team support. Opens communications and then when challenges surface, solutions are explored, resources are offered, improvements are made, and collaborative opportunities are identified.

Video (3.5 min)--- relationship oriented daily huddle:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSOFHnilnxQ>

Video (10 min)--- how not to do a huddle, how to set ground rules and then modeling good huddle: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_R9wQY4G5I

Video (3 min) - using data reporting in a huddle (Everett Clinic): <https://youtu.be/dJrORZEiXpo>

Process to start Huddles:

Initially ~ show 10 minute Huddle video (link above) for your first huddle

- Schedule the huddle as a recurring meeting and begin.
- Try to hold your huddle as early in the work day but not the start of the workday. The team should choose the time that makes sense based on schedule and work demands.
- Visit other huddles for inspiration and learning.
- Try it out and learn. The huddle will organically develop.
- Give it some time and expect evolution not revolution.

Teams learn to huddle by initially using these questions. Each employee briefly answers:

1. What did I do yesterday?
2. What am I planning to do today and tomorrow?
3. What roadblocks am I running into?

Long-term ~ Once a team establishes the pattern of the huddle, usually after a couple weeks, they should shift and design the huddle time based on the problem(s) they need to solve. Often for work teams this has to do with progress to team goals, managing the workload and real-time problem solving. Some teams set goals at the beginning of the week and report progress to the goals. Teams also track key measures on visual boards. May also use idea boards are used to generate, assign and track improvements. The value of the huddle is driven by the team's creativity, curiosity and engagement. The huddle will be as valuable as the team makes it to be.

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What do managers do to make the huddle successful?

- Managers let employees lead the huddle, but they prompt good huddle engagement with questions, suggestions and the encouragement to experiment.
- Managers go last in reporting.
- Listen and watch.
- Ask questions.
- Verbally comment on successes and recognize progress.
- Live the values of Lean and of the Organization.
- Practice Lean Leadership competencies.
- Whenever possible coach the team in problem solving, rather than providing the solution. (“What do you think should be done?” “What are some options?”)
- Make it safe to share ideas and suggestions.
- Do not punish mistakes, make it safe to fail and share mistakes. Help people to learn and move on.
- Encourage employees to use your strategic plans, maps and other tools to identify metrics to track in the huddle.
- Let employees set up the visual tracking board.
- Ask questions to engage employees in critically thinking about metrics. (“What is this telling us?” “What are we trying to achieve?” “Given this trend, what do you think we should do?” “What else do we need to know?” “How can we get that information?”)

Keys to Success:

- Start on time.
- Be concise when you take your turn.
- Use visual management boards to support the huddle discussion.
- Be transparent.
- Employees run the meeting.
- Managers and supervisors report out last.
- Regularly invite process partners to attend. Guests are welcome.
- If you work from home, call in and participate fully.
- If you are on leave or away, check on what you missed.
- If your colleague was away, catch them up on what they missed.
- Try not to schedule over the huddle but honor the commitment to your team.
- Do NOT call in if you are on the road and driving. Safety first!
- Have fun!

Other useful links on Huddles:

- [It's Not Just Standing Up: Patterns for Daily Standup Meetings](http://martinfowler.com/articles/itsNotJustStandingUp.html)
<http://martinfowler.com/articles/itsNotJustStandingUp.html>
- [Why a Daily Start Up Meeting?](http://joelylean.blogspot.com/2003/01/why-daily-start-up-meeting-yesterday-i.html) <http://joelylean.blogspot.com/2003/01/why-daily-start-up-meeting-yesterday-i.html>
- [More on Daily Start-Up Meetings](http://joelylean.blogspot.com/2003/01/more-on-daily-start-up-meetings-few.html) <http://joelylean.blogspot.com/2003/01/more-on-daily-start-up-meetings-few.html>