

## Purpose and Agenda

### Purpose

The team sync serves to coordinate the team's activities and raise blocking issues and dependencies, some of which will need to be resolved afterward. High-performing teams use the team sync to find opportunities to help each other so that the entire team succeeds in delivering its committed iteration goals. Scrum masters and team coaches typically facilitate the team sync.

*Note: Although the team sync is a scrum event, many Kanban teams also hold a team sync in front of their SAFe team Kanban board to coordinate work and identify bottlenecks or WIP problems.*

### Agenda

The team sync is typically timeboxed to 15 minutes and held at the same time and location each weekday to make it predictable for teams.

#### Arrive early

You should be ready to host and start the meeting. Team members should arrive just a bit early to be ready to participate on time.

#### Start on time

Signal that it is time to start the meeting.

#### Each team member gives an update

These should be one minute or less per person. Coach team members to give a brief update. One format that can work is answering these questions:

- 1) What did you do yesterday to advance the team's iteration goals?
- 2) What will you complete today to advance the team's iteration goals?
- 3) Are there any blockers or impediments for your work or for the team to complete iteration goals?

You and other team members should ask brief clarifying questions. Anything requiring deeper discussion or a lengthy back-and-forth is a candidate to be named in the team sync, but resolved in a meet-after or other meeting outside of the team sync.

#### Remaining minutes of meeting

You should read out any topics that require further discussion and help team members organize meet-afters to address them. Meet-afters should hold only the involved people so that others can leave.

#### Meeting conclusion

End the meeting on time and move into meet-afters. One technique to move through meet-afters is to start with the items that had the most participants and progressively move to those with the least participants so that team members can leave the meet-after portion efficiently.

**Purpose and Agenda**

Preparation Checklist

Tips and Tricks

Overcoming Challenges

## Preparation Checklist

### Location, time, inputs

- ☐ Establish a time for the team sync that the team agrees upon
- ☐ Find a physical or virtual space which fosters communication and collaboration
- ☐ Ensure there is time reserved for meet-afters, if needed
- ☐ Prepare inputs:
  - ☐ Updates on previously raised risks and impediments
  - ☐ Status of iteration goals
  - ☐ Updates visualized on work management tool or SAFe team Kanban board
  - ☐ Updates from dependent teams

### Expected outcomes

- ☐ Alignment on the work completed previously and for the day ahead
- ☐ Surfaced risks/impediments that are blocking the team
- ☐ Resolution of meet-after topics or follow-up actions agreed upon

### Post-event actions

- ☐ Scrum master or team coach follows up on risks and impediments
- ☐ Product owner updates iteration goals, if required
- ☐ Communicate possible impacts to dependent teams or PI objectives
- ☐ Update work management tool or SAFe team Kanban board

Purpose and Agenda

**Preparation Checklist**

Tips and Tricks

Overcoming Challenges

## Tips and Tricks

### Facilitating remotely

**Work with the team to agree on and use a work management tool** since you cannot manage work in person, such as at a physical SAFe team Kanban.

**Set aside special time for being social** so that the natural inclination to chat doesn't steal time from the team sync. Your team may want time to chat since they don't see each other in an office. You can start this meeting 10 minutes early for the specific purpose of "team chatting."

**You can focus the meeting by sharing your screen with the iteration goals displayed** so that participants have this in mind as they share their update.

**Ask team members to let you know if they won't be able to attend** so that the team is not waiting.

**Make sure there is a communication channel for the team** so that if someone cannot attend, they can share a written update.

**Be sure to update the team** if anything important to the team's iteration goals or planned work emerges from the team sync or meet-afters.

### Using this meeting creatively

**Popcorn!** Have one person start. As each person completes their team sync update, they call on the next person.

**On a day with no meet-afters and fast updates**, ask the team to each share an appreciation before you leave.

**Ask each person to share their intention for the upcoming iteration**, along with their standard team sync update.

**Give the team a break!** Instead of holding a team sync, use that 15 minutes for a team coffee talk, social time, or additional working time.

Purpose and Agenda

Preparation Checklist

**Tips and Tricks**

Overcoming Challenges

**Introduce Icebreakers** into your team sync so your team can get to know each other better. This can work for in-person and remote team syncs.

Some favorites include:

- What was your favorite movie to watch as a kid?
- What was your least favorite job and why?
- Dog person or cat person?
- What is one food you love or hate that is polarizing?
- Describe the last 24 hours with a movie title.
- Favorite gift you ever gave?
- Many more Icebreakers were discussed in this SAFe scrum master forum post:

<https://bit.ly/3fVP4AG>

## Overcoming Challenges

Let's face it; not everything goes perfectly all the time. In a fast-paced business environment, change is the only constant. It can be difficult to move your team forward when disagreements or conflicts occur. Below are some common areas where scrum masters or team coaches can succeed in the face of adversity.

Purpose and Agenda

Preparation Checklist

Tips and Tricks

**Overcoming Challenges**

### POTENTIAL ISSUES

#### Conflicts between team members

It's not uncommon for issues between team members to arise during the team sync. They may come up around shared work, misunderstandings, deadlines, or communication.

##### Ways to overcome:

Team conflicts are normal, and helping the team to manage this is part of the scrum master or team coach role. If you feel that a team sync is being dominated by conflicts within the team, stop the team sync to address it. If the conflict cannot be addressed quickly, schedule a time to sit down with those involved with the conflict. It is not your job to fix this issue or find the solution, but to act as a facilitator so that everyone feels heard and can explore the best way to move towards resolution.

#### Blocked work

If blocked work or impediments are preventing the team from meeting their goals, the team sync is one place where this may surface.

##### Ways to overcome:

Work as a team to identify stories that can wait, be broken down, or be taken by someone else so that a single team member is not overloaded or experiencing burn-out. Pairing to increase T-shaped skills in other team members may decrease a skills bottleneck on one team member over time.

#### A team member gives lengthy updates or over-uses airtime

If teammates are giving overly detailed updates, it can be an issue both for the timebox and for achieving the purpose of the team sync.

##### Ways to overcome:

Scrum masters and team coaches act as a coach to the team, and in this case, offering coaching to the individual can help everyone. You may try re-stating the purpose and agenda of this meeting. You can also coach the team or individual on giving shorter team sync updates by modeling concise updates or stepping into longer conversations and helping teammates formulate meet afters. If you are coaching the individual, suggest that they bullet point their updates and write them down on a sticky-note before arriving at the team sync.