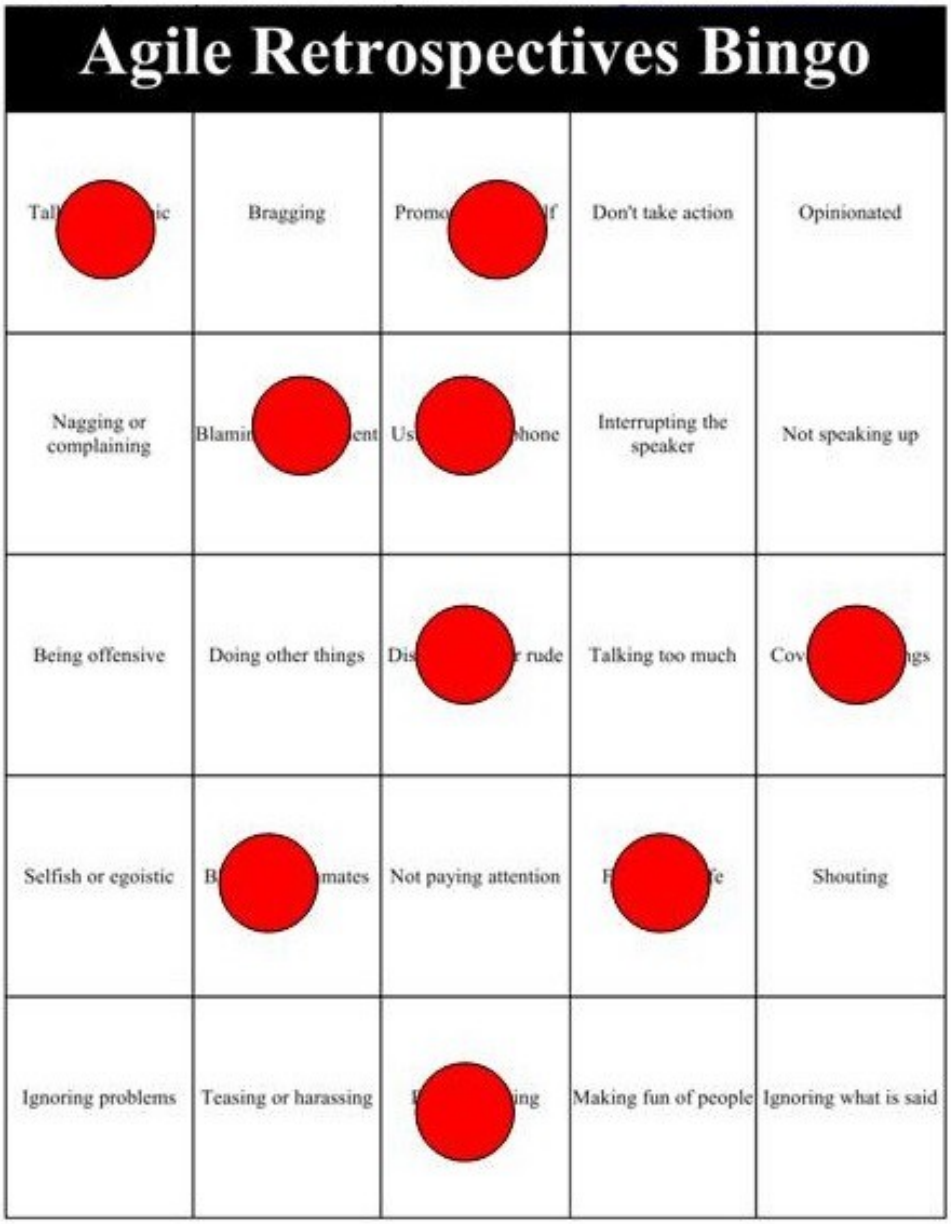

Agile Retrospective Bingo

by Ben Linders

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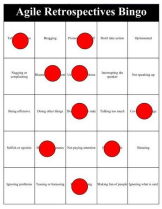
Agile Retrospectives Bingo

The Game

The Agile Retrospectives Bingo can be used by teams and organizations to improve their retrospectives. It helps them to identify and discuss unproductive behavior in retrospective meetings. With the Agile Retrospectives Bingo, teams can improve their communication and collaboration in retrospectives, making their agile retrospectives more valuable.



Agile Retrospectives Bingo

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The Agile Retrospectives Bingo consists of ten bingo cards listing unproductive behavior like "blaming management", "ignoring what is said", and "bragging". Additionally, there are nine role cards describing the way people may behave in retrospective meetings.

Playing with the bingo and role cards enables teams to reflect on their way of working and agree what behavior they would like to see changed in their retrospective meetings. It helps them to discover how they are doing and what they can do in their retrospectives to become better in continuous improvement and deliver more value to their customers and stakeholders.

Agile coaches use the Agile Retrospectives Bingo in agile transformations to coach teams in retrospectives and help them learn how to change habits to communicate and work together more effectively.

Playing Bingo

There are many different ways to use the bingo cards and role cards. Depending on how your team is doing and what they would like to improve, you can use one of the below suggestions to play or use them as inspiration to come up with your own solution.

1) Basic game

The basic can be played at the start of a "normal" retrospective. It takes about 15-30 minutes additional time.

Give bingo cards with coins to some of the team members in the retrospective (two or three people is usually enough). Instead of participating in the retrospective, they will be observers.

The team starts doing the retrospective. When an observer sees unproductive behavior, they put a coin on the field. The first one who has a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line, yells bingo and the retrospective stops.

The team members who were observing reflect the team about the behavior that they noticed. Next, the whole team discusses this and decides what behavior they would like to see changed. Write it down in large, e.g. on a whiteboard or flipchart so that people can notice it.

Now the team restarts the retrospective where all team members join in, all being aware of the unproductive behavior that they just identified. If any team member notices the unproductive behavior that was identified, they interrupt the retrospective. Then anybody can bring up suggestions to behave differenly in this specific situation.

You might want to keep the unproductive behavior visible during the next couple of retrospectives to establish new habits. After some time you can repeat this exercise to identify other unproductive behavior and work on that to make your retrospectives more valuable.

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2) Role play

The bingo role play is a retrospective gamification exercise that helps you to improve your agile retrospectives.

The team will be divided in two. One half of the team will play an agile retrospective, while the other half of the team will observe.

In the half of the team doing the retrospective, one person will be the facilitator. The other team members take a card that describes their role. During the retrospective the team members will play their role while the facilitator leads the retrospective.
In the other half, everyone is an observer. Each observer gets a bingo card with coins. Their role is spot unproductive behavior.

Now the exercise starts by one half playing the retrospective according to the role that they have. When an observer notices unproductive behavior, they put a chip on the field on their bingo card.

Optionally the retrospective players can switch their role card for another one during the retrospective (there are eight different cards to try out).

The first observer who has a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line, yells bingo and the retrospective stops.

Next, everyone together discusses the behavior that has been noticed. Explore how such behavior impacts the retrospective, and discuss what can be done alternatively and what facilitators can do to deal with it.

Write the unproductive behavior and any decisions and actions down in large, e.g. on a whiteboard or flipchart so that people can notice it. Keep the unproductive behavior visible during the next couple of retrospectives to establish new habits.

Licensing

The Agile Retrospectives Bingo Cards and Role Cards are licensed under a CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 license.

When you buy the Agile Retrospectives Bingo it comes with this license:

- You can play the game in your team(s) and use it to coach people, attribute me as the originator.
- I provide services like assessments and in-house or public workshops, please contact me.
- Ask me for a license if you want to use it in your meetups, conferences, workshops, or training.
- Commercial use is not allowed: Do not provide services or products based on the game.
- Do not share or sell the game, or use (parts of) it to build your own variant.

The license described for the Agile Self-assessment Game is applicable, please see benlinders.com/game.

More info

If you want to use the Agile Retrospective Bingo commercially, please contact Ben Linders (benlinders@gmail.com or +31 6 2901 3863).

The Agile Self-assessment Game - The book

The Agile Self-Assessment Game is used by teams and organizations to self-assess their agility. Playing the game enables teams to reflect on their own team interworking, discover how agile they are and decide what they can do to increase their agility to deliver more value to their customers and stakeholders.

The book The Agile Self-Assessment Game is published on Leanpub. The current edition (August 2018) features 85 pages with background on agile self-assessments, information about the Agile Self-assessment Game, playing suggestions, experiences stories, frequently asked questions, and much more.

Packages are available of the book together with Agile Self-assessments cards for Agile, Scrum, Kanban, DevOps, and Business Agility, enabling you to start playing the game today!

If you buy the book on Leanpub you will automatically get all future updates of the book.

About the book

This book explores the Agile Self-assessment Game, a card game that I created and that is now played by teams all over the world. Teams use it to reflect on their own interworking and to agree upon the next steps for their agile journey.

This is the first book specifically about Agile Self-assessments. In this book I explain what self-assessments are and why you would do them, and explore how to do them using the Agile Self-assessment Game. I'm also sharing experience stories from people who played the game.

This is a practical book with many techniques and ideas that you can apply in your specific situation. It aims to help you to support teams that want to improve and become fully self-organized.

I'm aiming this book at Scrum masters, agile coaches, consultants leading agile transformations, developers and testers, project managers, line managers, and CxOs; basically for anyone who is looking for an effective way to help their agile teams improve and increase the agility of their organization.

With plenty of ideas, suggestions, and practical cases on Agile Self-assessments, this book will help you to apply assessments and help teams to improve.

About the author

Ben Linders is an Independent Consultant in Agile, Lean, Quality, and Continuous Improvement, based in The Netherlands. Author of Getting Value out of Agile Retrospectives, Waardevolle Agile Retrospectives, What Drives Quality and Continuous Improvement. Creator of the Agile Self-assessment Game.

As an adviser, coach and trainer he helps organizations with deploying effective software development and management practices. He focuses on continuous improvement, collaboration and communication, and professional development, to deliver business value to customers.

In need of advice, consultancy, training? Have a question? Contact me! info@benlinders.com

Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Blaming management	Not paying attention	Not speaking up	Doing other things	Talking too much
Disrespectful or rude	Ignoring problems	Feeling unsafe	Nagging or complaining	Covering up things
Talking off-topic	Shouting	Selfish or egoistic	Ignoring what is said	Don't take action
Teasing or harassing	Opinionated	Interrupting the speaker	Promoting yourself	Using mobile phone
Being offensive	Bragging	Making fun of people	Finger pointing	Blaming teammates

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Nagging or complaining	Bragging	Selfish or egoistic	Talking off-topic	Not speaking up
Using mobile phone	Being offensive	Making fun of people	Talking too much	Ignoring what is said
Feeling unsafe	Blaming teammates	Blaming management	Doing other things	Not paying attention
Ignoring problems	Opinionated	Covering up things	Disrespectful or rude	Interrupting the speaker
Don't take action	Finger pointing	Shouting	Teasing or harassing	Promoting yourself

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Talking off-topic	Bragging	Promoting yourself	Don't take action	Opinionated
Nagging or complaining	Blaming management	Using mobile phone	Interrupting the speaker	Not speaking up
Being offensive	Doing other things	Disrespectful or rude	Talking too much	Covering up things
Selfish or egoistic	Blaming teammates	Not paying attention	Feeling unsafe	Shouting
Ignoring problems	Teasing or harassing	Finger pointing	Making fun of people	Ignoring what is said

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Selfish or egoistic	Finger pointing	Bragging	Don't take action	Opinionated
Shouting	Blaming teammates	Interrupting the speaker	Making fun of people	Disrespectful or rude
Promoting yourself	Not speaking up	Covering up things	Doing other things	Feeling unsafe
Ignoring problems	Being offensive	Teasing or harassing	Ignoring what is said	Talking too much
Nagging or complaining	Not paying attention	Using mobile phone	Talking off-topic	Blaming management

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Blaming management	Selfish or egoistic	Using mobile phone	Nagging or complaining	Being offensive
Talking too much	Talking off-topic	Interrupting the speaker	Blaming teammates	Bragging
Disrespectful or rude	Feeling unsafe	Doing other things	Covering up things	Promoting yourself
Ignoring what is said	Opinionated	Don't take action	Making fun of people	Teasing or harassing
Ignoring problems	Not paying attention	Shouting	Finger pointing	Not speaking up

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Making fun of people	Talking too much	Disrespectful or rude	Blaming management	Shouting
Ignoring problems	Not paying attention	Don't take action	Opinionated	Doing other things
Not speaking up	Being offensive	Feeling unsafe	Ignoring what is said	Finger pointing
Teasing or harassing	Blaming teammates	Selfish or egoistic	Nagging or complaining	Using mobile phone
Bragging	Talking off-topic	Interrupting the speaker	Promoting yourself	Covering up things

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Bragging	Selfish or egoistic	Being offensive	Making fun of people	Disrespectful or rude
Opinionated	Blaming management	Ignoring what is said	Shouting	Don't take action
Interrupting the speaker	Using mobile phone	Doing other things	Talking too much	Covering up things
Blaming teammates	Teasing or harassing	Not paying attention	Feeling unsafe	Nagging or complaining
Talking off-topic	Promoting yourself	Finger pointing	Not speaking up	Ignoring problems

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Using mobile phone	Feeling unsafe	Blaming management	Selfish or egoistic	Teasing or harassing
Shouting	Promoting yourself	Nagging or complaining	Disrespectful or rude	Opinionated
Bragging	Don't take action	Being offensive	Making fun of people	Not speaking up
Doing other things	Ignoring what is said	Finger pointing	Interrupting the speaker	Talking too much
Talking off-topic	Covering up things	Blaming teammates	Ignoring problems	Not paying attention

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Bragging	Blaming management	Making fun of people	Ignoring problems	Interrupting the speaker
Promoting yourself	Using mobile phone	Shouting	Talking off-topic	Teasing or harassing
Being offensive	Disrespectful or rude	Blaming teammates	Not speaking up	Not paying attention
Feeling unsafe	Covering up things	Selfish or egoistic	Don't take action	Talking too much
Doing other things	Ignoring what is said	Opinionated	Nagging or complaining	Finger pointing

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Agile Retrospectives Bingo

Ignoring problems	Not paying attention	Blaming teammates	Making fun of people	Talking off-topic
Covering up things	Doing other things	Don't take action	Disrespectful or rude	Opinionated
Nagging or complaining	Talking too much	Ignoring what is said	Feeling unsafe	Blaming management
Promoting yourself	Selfish or egoistic	Shouting	Not speaking up	Bragging
Teasing or harassing	Finger pointing	Being offensive	Using mobile phone	Interrupting the speaker

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Agile Retrospective Bingo

Always right

You consider yourself to be the most experienced person on the team. You have an opinion about everything and will bring it out. You don't make mistakes, if you did then you won't admit it. You prefer to work alone, don't trust your team members.

(c) BenLinders

Agile Retrospective Bingo

Afraid of change

You don't think that any improvement is needed, things are going good enough. You're often uncertain about things, prefer to keep things as they are.

(c) BenLinders

Agile Retrospective Bingo

Not my fault

You will be the first one to admit that things don't go well. But it's not because of what you did, problems are always caused by someone else. You prefer to point that out and blame others, in and outside the team.

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Agile Retrospective Bingo

Silent introvert

You don't talk a lot, always hoping that other people will speak up. You're shy, a bit scared, and afraid to make mistakes. You don't feel safe in retrospectives. You do think about solutions for problems and have ideas, but don't dare to say them.

(c) BenLinders

Agile Retrospective Bingo

Talk a lot

You just love retrospectives because you can talk for hours. You also enjoy to joke and tease people. When the team wants to decide and define actions, you will bring up new points to keep the discussion going.

(c) BenLinders

Agile Retrospective Bingo

Follow the process

You prefer to always follow the process and stick to the rules, and you hate it when other people don't do that. You think retrospectives are meant to improve the process, so the team needs to define new rules or improve existing ones. The more actions the better.

(c) BenLinders

Agile Retrospective Bingo

Dissatisfied

You are unhappy with how things are going. You will bring up many problems, complain about how things are going, and blame everyone and everything. You don't think that anything can or will improve, we're doomed to fail again.

(c) BenLinders

Agile Retrospective Bingo

One happy family

You want everyone to be happy on the team. You don't like to talk much about problems, afraid that someone's feelings might be hurt. If we all work together, that will solve all problems automatically, so we don't need any actions coming out of the retrospective.

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Agile Retrospective Bingo

Facilitator

You will serve the team and guide them through the retrospective, helping them to reflect and learn. During the retrospective you will keep a close eye on how people behave, addressing things that hamper the retrospective and keep everyone involved.

With this team it will be a real challenge; things will go wrong. Experiment and try things to improve your facilitation skills.

(c) BenLinders

Valuable Agile Retrospectives

by Ben Linders

Agile Retrospective Role Cards

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