Lesson   Thursday

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/ Developer Reality: Daily Team Meetings

Text

Daily team meetings in tech are called by many names and they are sometimes shaped by the development methodology that a team follows. The most common names for daily team meetings is "stand-up", "morning roll call", "daily huddle", or "daily scrum", but it could be named anything. In this lesson, we'll explain what to expect from these team meetings: we'll dive into the daily team meeting and inclusive language choices, discuss other types of team meetings, and learn a bit about Agile and Scrum.

Daily Team Meetings

Daily team meetings are incredibly common amongst software and technology companies both small and large. They are very short, focused meetings that are held amongst a team, a subteam, or a division.

Daily team meetings are generally 5 – 15 minutes in length and are an opportunity to hear announcements, share short pieces of news, ask for clarification or bring up issues relevant to the team as a whole, but are not generally the place for lengthy discussions or to troubleshoot individual issues.

Daily team meetings don't have to be daily. In fact, there is no set frequency for having short team check-ins — small team meetings may take place one or even twice a day, but weekly or bi-weekly is also common. The most common frequency is daily, at an agreed upon time and place that generally does not change.

For daily team meetings, keep your questions & comments short and on topic. Make a point to connect with individuals after the meeting to follow up on questions or topics that got brought up during the meeting.

Company-Wide Meetings

If a meeting involves the entire company, office, or multiple divisions team, these meetings are often called an "all-hands" or "town hall" meeting, but just like with daily team meetings, these could be called anything. The goals of these meetings are to share business updates and get staff aligned on company goals, including culture, strategy, and mission.

Choosing Inclusive Language

The most common name for a daily team check-in is **stand-up**. The term "stand-up" comes from the fact that these meetings generally take place standing to help ensure that the meeting is concise and to the point. However, at Epicodus we call our daily team meetings **Scrum**, because it includes people who don't stand up, but instead sit and roll. With this choice, we are joining efforts across tech to change terminology and company practices to be inclusive to people with disabilities.

Changing the names of practices and procedures should be trivial, so it's one of the simplest changes a company should make to create a work environment that is both inclusive and focused on being aware of who is impacted by the very same practices and procedures. As you get involved in discussing the practices and procedures of the company you work for, we encourage you to ask these questions:

- Who's voice is not being heard in the discussion?
- Who is excluded from the decisions we make?

Daily Scrum Comes From Agile Methodologies

We also call our daily team meetings "Scrum", because it comes from a popular development framework in tech called **Scrum**. Scrum is one framework that makes up Agile (https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/), which is a long list development methods and practices that are centered on 4 core values (https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/the-agile-manifesto/):

- **Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools
- **Working software** over comprehensive documentation
- **Customer collaboration** over contract negotiation
- **Responding to change** over following a plan

Agile is an umbrella to several methodologies (https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/subway-map-to-agile-practices/) that share Agile core values, including some that we are familiar with, like pair programming and test-driven development, and others that we're less familiar with, like Scrum. In tech, it's very likely that the development team you join uses Agile methodologies.

The Scrum framework centers around shipping new features every 2 – 4 weeks and maintaining a tight cycle of feedback, iteration, and adaptation. According to the Scrum Alliance (https://www.scrumalliance.org/about-scrum),

> At its heart, scrum works by breaking large products and services into small pieces that can be completed (and potentially released) by a cross-functional team in a short timeframe.
>
> Scrum teams inspect each batch of functionality as it is completed and then adapt what will be created next based on learning and feedback, minimizing risk and reducing waste. This cycle repeats until the full product or service is delivered—one that meets customer needs because the business has the opportunity to adjust the fit at the end of each timeframe.

We won't delve into all of the details of Scrum now — there's a lot to learn after all — but we must give credit to Scrum for informing two of our practices: Scrum meetings and retrospectives.

At Epicodus, a **retrospective** is the end-of-class meeting to talk about how the class session went with your dev team; we use this time to share code, do group peer code reviews, talk about questions, or chit chat in general. For development teams practicing Scrum, a retrospective meeting is focused on reflecting on the past in order to improve the future by discussing what worked, what didn't, and why. These meetings happen at the end of every development cycle (or "sprint"), every 2 – 4 weeks.

During **Scrum** at Epicodus, we meet with our dev teams and our cohorts to have short check-ins about the curriculum, projects, bugs, questions, and to share announcements and resources. Scrum at Epicodus is similar to what developers do in a "Daily Scrum" meeting:

> **Daily Scrum** — The developers (team members delivering the work) inspect the progress toward the sprint goal and adapt the sprint backlog as necessary, adjusting the upcoming planned work. A daily scrum should be timeboxed to 15 minutes each day.

While there are some obvious differences to how a company uses Scrum to build a product, and how we use Scrum and retrospectives at Epicodus, there are a few common goals:

reflection, communication, support, and a tight feedback loop so that we can adapt to the next requirement.

During your first week of internship or job, be sure to make note of when and where your daily team meeting takes place.

During your time at Epicodus, try your best to not miss your Scrum meetings — this is when important announcements and answers to common questions take place; instructors will assume that you are aware of questions answered during your cohort's Scrum.

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