

AN AGILITY LAB RESOURCE

“Lean Coffee” Meeting Guidance

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WHAT IS THE “LEAN COFFEE” MEETING FORMAT?

“Lean Coffee” is a flexible meeting format that allows teams to have democratically structured conversations each week that are directed, highly productive, and—dare we say it?!—enjoyable.

The format still allows for open, free-flowing conversation within the constraints of a prioritized topic list that focuses on relevance for the whole group. The team also decides whether they want to continue or stop a conversation, recognizing that time is a precious commodity.

There are three major components to a successful “Lean Coffee” meeting:

- **MIRO BOARD:** Here is a [Miro template](#) you can use for your Lean Coffee session
 - **AGENDA FLOW:** The board flows left-to-right, top-to-bottom, following both a flexible and formatted structure.
 - **FACILITATOR:** Helpful to have one person leading the meeting, managing the clock and moving items. Can rotate so there’s a different facilitator each week.
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COLUMN OVERVIEW

- **FUN/CELEBRATION/NO:** Share your personal or team celebrations, fun moments, and nos here.
- **SORTED:** Work as a team to move cards to this column as a prioritized list for discussion

- **IN PROGRESS:** Move a card to this column when actively discussing
- **BLOCKED:** Move a card to this column if the team is blocked from having the conversation today (the right people aren't in the room, we don't have necessary information)
- **DONE:** Move a card to this column when the conversation is complete
- **TO DO:** Track any next steps that emerge from conversation in this column in real time

Example of a real-life board in process:

The board shows the following cards in each column:

- Fun/Wins/Celebrations/N... | 10**
 - MG - First use of Notion on a sales call!
 - MM - Diego + Mateo
 - AR - tripling RAM coaches this week!
 - MG - heroic work this past week from Marcela, Kendra, Luke
 - DP- Mistral: Successful 3rd location opening
- Topic List | 0**
 - (Empty)
- Sorted | 2**
 - ML- 5 min- Value-based backlog example
 - AR - Org chart overview (5 min)
- In Progress | 1**
 - AR - Immediate- next steps w/ Beyrna
- Blocked | 1**
 - ML- Empathy Friday Draft Agenda + participant list
- Done | 5**
 - AR - my Achieving Impact at Scale Presentation + Indonesia overview of their forest concession purchase
 - DP - Hubspot immersion Wks + RAM
 - ML- Metric dashboard
 - ER - <https://elicit.org/> + <https://vizologi.com/>
- To-Dos | 2**
 - ML- figure out next steps with faacilitator contracts ER - who's leading facilitator contract updates?
 - ALL- read the women in conservation article

Up-close detail:

The up-close detail shows:

- Fun/Wins/Celebrations/N... | 10**
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AGENDA FLOW

1) Start with sharing victories, fun, and celebrating no's: This promotes team connection and well-being. Celebrating “No's” helps reinforce the importance of prioritization and focus. Eg. “I said no to a collaboration with an external partner I knew would shift our focus away from our quarterly priority.”

- Take 2 minutes for individuals to populate cards in the “Celebration/Fun/Nos” column
- When you're first trying out the Lean Coffee meeting structure, it can be helpful to limit the time spent in the share-outs from this section. Use the timer in Miro for visibility.
- Work down this list from top-to-bottom, giving people a chance to share.
- Use the “*Context Section*” to share pictures from your Nature Friday hike, links to inspirational articles and videos, etc.

2) Build a Topic List

- Give the team a couple of minutes to add potential discussion topics to the list, noting that the team can also pre-populate topics throughout the week
- Include initials with the topic and that person will kick-off the discussion (ex. below)
- Use a tag in Miro to identify “Quick” topics that will take ~one minute to discuss/share
- Use a tag in Miro to identify “Flag” topics that are urgent and require attention ASAP.
- Note any conversations that you suspect will take more than 3 minutes, and the team can decide if they want to prioritize these longer conversations that day. Here's an example:

ML- (10 min) - Planning our team hike

3) Build a Sorted Column

- Give the team 2 minutes to sort the topic list by pulling the cards to the “Sorted” column in order of highest-lowest importance.
- We recommend prioritizing the quick items at the very top, as it boosts morale to quickly clear items. Follow with any flagged items, and then proceed in order of importance.

- You may also consider saving longer topics for the end of the meeting (or not, if they are a priority for the team!)
- This is an art not a science and is a group effort. Your team will have the best sense of what works for your team.

4) Discuss the topics!

- Unless otherwise noted, each topic gets 3 minutes
 - Use the Miro timer when starting a conversation
 - If there seems to be more to discuss at the end of 3 minutes, the team votes if they want to continue the conversation. You can ask, “Do we want to add 2 more minutes to this conversation?”
 - *Thumbs up = Yes, add more time*
 - *Thumb sideways = I’m neutral*
 - *Thumbs down = No, let’s stop this conversation*
 - A facilitator may also have a clear sense that a topic has lost energy and is complete. When in doubt, ask the team to vote.
 - If you didn’t get to certain topics, it is up to the topic owner to determine whether or not it should be moved to next week’s topic list.
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Questions? Please reach out to our Agility Lab team members!

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