

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.

COLUMN OVERVIEW

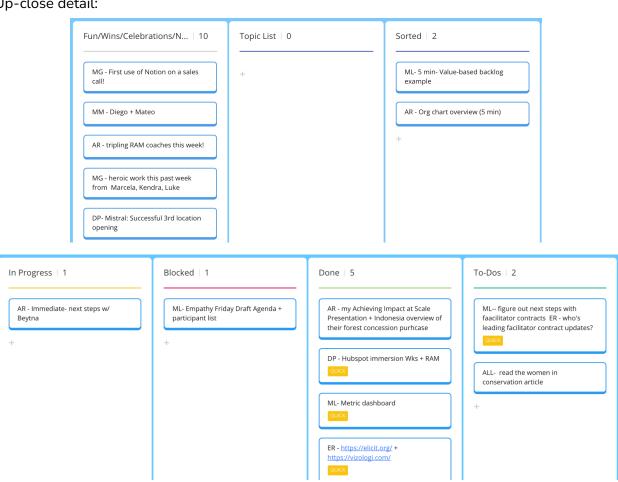
- **FUN/CELEBRATION/NO:** Share your personal or team celebrations, fun moments, and nos here.
- **SORTED:** Work as a team to move cards to this column as a prioritized list for discussion

- 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:



Up-close detail:



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.

Questions? Please reach out to our Agility Lab team members!

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