

Why the morning huddle is the best meeting you'll ever have

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A morning huddle (also known as daily stand-up or daily scrum) is probably the single most effective meeting that you can have with your team.

The key lies in the **purpose** of the team huddle. Your goal is to check in with team members about what your day will look like. The huddle is not to plan your week or projects – that's what all the other meetings are for.

An effective morning huddle is chance for your team members to share information with each other and deliver project status checks.

So how can you make your morning huddles more successful? Here are a few things you need to consider if you want to run the most effective morning huddle.

Should you stand during your morning huddle?

Yes! If your team has not adopted standing up during meetings yet, it's time you give it a try. Generally, standing up will help keep meetings short and to the point.

This is especially important during a morning huddle, as your purpose is to share the status of the projects you're working on, not to solve problems.

But remember, it's not really about standing up! It's about keeping the huddle short and to the point. So if sometimes your team members want to sit down – who cares, as long as they stay on point? Don't get hung up on rules that have no meaning.

Who speaks?

This one's simple, everybody speaks! Everybody must say something during the morning huddle, and if you think about it, it really makes sense: each person should have something to share about what they're working on. Vocalising individual status updates in front of the whole team will lead to greater commitment and task accountability from each team member.

Talk to each other

The morning huddle is not for reporting to the team leader. It's so that team members can communicate with each other, pull together and know what each is working on.

What do you actually say?

What you say during your morning huddle depends on what your team needs. However, keep in mind that the purpose of the team huddle is to check-in with your team. Keep each update short and crisp.

Here are some ideas of what to share during the huddle:

- What did you accomplish yesterday/last week?
- Top 3 priorities for the day/week.
- Review your company's or your team's top 3 metrics.
- Share roadblocks that you need help in (but team members should help after the huddle, not during!)
- Recognise other team member accomplishments.
- Share personal project wins.
- Client updates.

You shouldn't try to communicate all of these things during your huddle. Start with a few of these items and ask your team to stick with them.

Review your morning huddle process regularly and see if it's still fulfilling your team's communication needs. After a while, you might find that as team evolves, you might have different things to communicate during your morning huddle.

Why you shouldn't try to solve problems during morning huddle

Problem solving requires debate, discussion, and a thorough review of all options. In other words, it requires time!

Since your morning huddle should be fairly short, you should schedule a separate meeting with the team members concerned.

Also, usually not all team members are involved in solving a certain problem. Be respectful of other team members' time. If they're not directly involved with the problem you're trying to solve, why would you waste time during the huddle? Instead, prioritise information sharing instead of consensus building and problem solving.

If the meeting takes a turn toward discussion, quickly interject and suggest that folks debating a topic need to schedule a separate time to talk. Then ask for the next person's update.

How long should your team huddle be?

The shorter your team huddle, the better. Keep it under 15 minutes, but also allow each team member to touch all the points you've decided to talk about during your meeting.

If huddles turn into 45 minute discussions, then you'll start to get a lot of glazed over looks from everyone who doesn't need to be part of the discussion.

When should you have your team huddle?

Generally, mornings are a good time to have your team huddle, since everyone will be extra-motivated to get their tasks done since they have made a commitment to their team members already.

But beware of making your team huddle a way to start the day. Some team members might feel like “work” doesn’t actually start until after the morning huddle – *you don’t want that!*

If your team huddles go on too long, then try scheduling your huddle right before lunchtime (11:45am). Your team will have extra incentive to wrap things up quickly.

Same place, same time

If your team works flexible hours, choose a core time when all the team members are present. Be consistent as much as possible – same time, same place, every day. Of course, circumstances will sometimes ask for adjustments – make sure to communicate these things to other team members in a timely manner.

Remote teams

Daily team huddles are not just for teams that share the same work space. Remote teams can also benefit from them and the same general advice applies to remote teams.

The biggest advantage for remote teams who do daily team huddles is probably the commitment and task accountability that comes from sharing status updates with team members.

Building a morning huddle ritual will help make your team more effective by getting your team to vocalise what they’re working on to their colleagues.

It also gives everyone a chance to know what’s keeping everyone busy.