

UCCSC 2014: Lean Coffee: Agile framework for spontaneous discussion/collaboration

Facilitated by Michelle Bautista, UC Berkeley

Lean Coffee is structured but agenda-less meeting in which participants gather, create and prioritize an agenda. Agenda items get a set time period for discussion and may be extended by group consensus. By using a personal kanban board throughout the meeting, the group self facilitates the meeting. All you need are post-its. Quick, easy, productive. There are now hundreds of Lean Coffee meet ups in coffee houses throughout the world. For more information see Leancoffee.org

Why Lean Coffee?

The biggest complaint that people have are non-productive meetings or meetings that ramble for far too long. In Lean Coffee, teams learn to facilitate themselves and ensure that important items to the team are covered.

What is Kanban?

Kanban is a technique to manage workflow. It can be used to manage large queues of work down to an individual. Kanban structure in a meeting keeps the group focused on the matter at hand with a clear understanding of the pipeline.

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What you need:

- **Post-its**
- **Pens**
- **Timer**
- **People**
- **Place to stick post-its so everyone can see**

Instructions:

1. **Create a kanban board. (2 min)** A kanban board is a way to keep track of the order and completion of the conversation.
 - a. **Label 3 post-its:** To Discuss, Discussing, Discussed and place them across as the headers of their own columns.
2. **Generate Topics. (5 min)**
 - a. **Write your discussion idea down, 1 per post-it.** Anyone with a topic writes one topic per post it and places it on the table.
 - b. **Introduce the topics and yourself.** If you offered up a topic, explain it in a sentence or two so everyone gets the gist of the idea.
3. **Dot vote! (5 min)**
 - a. **Vote.** Each person gets 2 votes and puts a check mark or an X on the post-it they want to discuss. You can vote twice for the same thing or on two different topics.
 - b. **Rank.** Count up the votes and rank them in order of the number of votes received highest to lowest under the “To Discuss” post-it.
4. **Discuss!**
 - a. **Set a timer for 8 minutes.**
 - b. **Move #1 topic to the “Discussing” column.**
 - c. **Start the timer and go!**
5. **Vote**
 - a. **“Do you want to keep talking?”**
 - i. Thumbs up! = Keep going
 - ii. Middle = Not sure
 - iii. Thumbs down = Next topic
 - b. **Next steps**
 - i. Yes, let’s keep talking! – add 4 minutes
 - ii. Half and Half – add 2 minutes
 - iii. Nah, we’re good! – Move the Discussing topic to the “Discussed” column
6. **Rinse. Repeat.** Repeat Step #4 above with the next highest ranked topic.