

Essential Agile Kickoff Meeting



Effective communication skills are essential for all involved in a project using any Agile approach! A kickoff is a short session for the team responsible for developing a solution to understand the objectives, accept them as realistic, and feel empowered and inspired to deliver a solution.

This template has been created considering the DSDM principle "**Communicate continuously and clearly**" which underpins many the Agile principle of "**Individuals and interactions over processes and tools**". DSDM is **an Agile method that focuses on the full project lifecycle**, from Kickoff to Close-Out or Retrospective.

A kickoff is vital for effective teamwork and to ensure transparency. As the name suggests, it kicks off an allocated timebox and outlines the objectives. It is *not* a meeting to find the solutions, but rather to **equip team members with clear objectives to empower them to find the solutions**.

The agile approach favors face-to-face communication, and a kickoff can be done virtually or in person, depending on if the team is co-located or remote.

The key objectives of a kickoff are to:

- Review objectives for the timebox and understand what is to be achieved
- Ensure that the deliverables are still feasible within the time box, and re-plan if this isn't possible
- Agree on the acceptance criteria for each deliverable
- Review the availability of all team members who will participate in this time box and decide on roles and take ownership of responsibilities.
- Highlight any known dependencies

The beauty of templates is that you can adjust them to fit your own team's needs. These are the starting blocks to your Agile kickoff and are yours to move around as you see fit!

■ Preparation ■ Introduction ■ energizer/icebreaker ■ exercise ■ Presentation ■ discussion/debriefing

TIME	NAME	DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL INFO
Introduction to an Agile Kickoff			
09:00 10m	Before the Kickoff: Pre-Project, Foundations & Feasibility	<p>Align everyone presenting the Project Vision or Project Summary to ensure it clearly expresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the project objective • proposed timescale • the rationale <p>Gather the people who will manage the project and the team involved in creating the solution, as this kickoff workshop is designed for them! The goal is for them to clearly understand the project's objectives and to leave feeling confident, inspired, and aligned to create the solution.</p> <p>Key tip #1 : It's always a good idea to share the Project Vision or Summary before the meeting so that the team might consider any thoughts or ideas beforehand. And share any hopes and fears.</p> <p>Key Tip #2: You might share the 12 Agile Principles with teams prior to the meeting to familiarise themselves with the ways in which the project will be guided.</p>	<p>The Pre-project phase might be something as simple as a conversation between a person with an idea for a project and another person willing to bring this idea into reality.</p> <p>The Feasibility takes a high-level overview of whether the project is feasible from both a technical and business perspective.</p> <p>And the Foundations phase is when we create a high-level overview, which could be a Project Vision or Summary to present at the kickoff.</p>
09:10 10m	Introduction	<p>Welcome your team! Share any meeting rules & the agenda.</p> <p>Provide a brief overview of what Agile is and why we're adopting that approach</p>	<p>Welcome your team to space, give everyone time to get settled.</p> <p>Share any rules around communication and general housekeeping</p>
09:20 10m	Ice breaker/Warm-Up/Check-In	<p>Depending on how well the team know each other, you might wish to try an icebreaker or warm-up activity, for example: The Name Game is a short warm-up activity for people who don't know each other as it helps to learn names.</p> <p>If teams know each other already, checking in might be as simple as giving people space to share how they are feeling and what their expectations are for the meeting.</p>	<p>Encouraging people to speak early on in a meeting, warms people up. Having space to feel present, to be heard and seen can help people feel more comfortable and prepared to share later on.</p> <p>For icebreaker inspiration, read 53 Icebreaker Activities [that your team won't find cheesy!]</p>
09:30 20m	Introduce or Review the Agile Principles & Values	<p>Try a fun and interactive exercise that promotes collaboration, communication, and understanding among the participants. The goal of this exercise is that it provides a hands-on opportunity for participants to apply the Agile values and principles to a real-world context.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide the participants into small teams. 2. Provide each team with a set of Agile values and principles cards (one value or principle per card). 3. Instruct the teams to sort the cards into two groups: "Values" and "Principles." 	<p>The Agile Manifesto consists of four values and twelve principles laid out in the instructions tab.</p>

TIME	NAME	DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL INFO
		<p>4. Once the teams have sorted the cards, ask them to discuss each value and principle and come up with an example of how it applies in a working context.</p> <p>5. After the teams have had time to discuss and come up with their examples, have them share their examples with the larger group.</p> <p>6. As a group, discuss any differences or similarities in the examples given by the teams.</p> <p>7. Use this as an opportunity to further clarify the values and principles, and to discuss how they can be applied in the development process.</p>	
Kicking off the Project			
09:50 20m	Present the Project Vision or Project Summary	<p>Here the team presenting the project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the project's scope and timeline Clearly define the objectives Give the rationale for starting the project and the benefits of the outcomes Identify any potential risks or challenges that the team may face 	
10:10 10m	Discussion & Questions	Check everyone's understanding and make space for questions and answers	
Forming A Team			
10:20 20m	Team Formation	<p>One of the Agile principles focuses on forming a self-organizing team. Agile teams are empowered to make decisions and collaborate in a way that allows them to work together effectively, without being micromanaged.</p> <p>During team formation, the focus should be on creating a shared understanding of the project's goals and objectives. Teams will define roles and responsibilities, and establish a collaborative culture that supports Agile principles such as communication, transparency, and continuous improvement.</p> <p>This section of the kickoff will lay the foundation for the team's work moving forward and provide a solid basis to define and deliver the project's specifics as they move through the development process.</p>	<p>Define together on a whiteboard or online whiteboard tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Agreements Roles & Responsibilities Team goals and objectives <p>Write short guidelines to answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how will you communicate? how will tasks be divided? how to approach decision making?
10:40 20m	Agile Practices & Tools	<p>Explore the Agile practices and tools to define how the team will collaborate to achieve the goals.</p> <p>Discuss if Scrum or Kanban boards will be used and how</p> <p>Scrum is a time-boxed set of sprints in which teams work on a prioritized list of tasks.</p> <p>A Kanban board is a visual tool with columns representing different stages in the workflow, such as "To Do," "In Progress," and "Done." Tasks or work items are represented by cards or sticky notes that are moved between the columns as they progress through the workflow. For a team new to Agile, try the Kanban Pizza Game!</p>	<p>Outline the rituals of sprints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long is a sprint? In Agile, they are usually 2-4 weeks, but this can be adapted to the project specific How often will we have an update meeting? Usually, a team will have a daily stand-up that lasts around 15 minutes and reports on progress at a high-level. and cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you accomplish yesterday? What is on your to-do list for today? Is there anything blocking your progress? How close are you to hitting your sprint goals? Do you need anything from the team? Other self-organised meetings within teams might happen for solution-finding purposes. Either done async or in short face-to-face conversations.
11:00 10m	Define success criteria	<p>Based on the project goals, define the criteria for success. What are the specific outcomes or results that need to be achieved in order to consider the project a success?</p> <p>Make sure everyone involved in the project understands the success criteria and how they will be measured. This will help to ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and will make it easier to track progress and make adjustments as needed.</p>	
Closing a Kickoff			
11:10 10m	Next Steps & Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the key takeaways from the meeting Identify any next steps or action items that need to be taken by the team Set a timeline for follow-up meetings and check-ins 	
11:20 10m	Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage team members to ask questions or share any additional thoughts or concerns 	
11:30	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank everyone for their time and participation 	

TIME	NAME	DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL INFO
5m		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reiterate the team's commitment to Agile values and principles and to achieving the project's goals	

11:35

TOTAL LENGTH: 2h 35m

MATERIALS

- Blank cards** in Introduce or Review the Agile Principles & Values
- Pens** in Introduce or Review the Agile Principles & Values

Essential Agile Kickoff Meeting - block details

Introduction to an Agile Kickoff

09:00 10m **Before the Kickoff: Pre-Project, Foundations & Feasibility**

Align everyone presenting the Project Vision or Project Summary to ensure it clearly expresses:

- the project objective
- proposed timescale
- the rationale

Gather the people who will manage the project and the team involved in creating the solution, as this kickoff workshop is designed for them! The goal is for them to clearly understand the project's objectives and to leave feeling confident, inspired, and aligned to create the solution.

Key tip #1 : It's always a good idea to share the Project Vision or Summary before the meeting so that the team might consider any thoughts or ideas beforehand. And share any hopes and fears.

Key Tip #2: You might share the 12 Agile Principles with teams prior to the meeting to familiarise themselves with the ways in which the project will be guided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The **Pre-project** phase might be something as simple as a conversation between a person with an idea for a project and another person willing to bring this idea into reality.

The **Feasibility** takes a high-level overview of whether the project is feasible from both a technical and business perspective.

And the **Foundations** phase is when we create a high-level overview, which could be a **Project Vision** or **Summary** to present at the kickoff.

09:10 10m **Introduction**

Welcome your team!
Share any meeting rules & the agenda.

Provide a brief overview of what Agile is and why we're adopting that approach

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Welcome your team to space, give everyone time to get settled.

Share any rules around communication and general housekeeping

09:20 10m **Ice breaker/Warm-Up/Check-In**

Depending on how well the team know each other, you might wish to try an icebreaker or **warm-up activity**, for example: [The Name Game](#) is a short warm-up activity for people who don't know each other as it helps to learn names.

If teams know each other already, **checking in** might be as simple as giving people space to share **how they are feeling** and what their **expectations** are for the meeting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Encouraging people to speak early on in a meeting, **warms people up**. Having space to feel present, to be heard and seen can help people **feel more comfortable** and prepared to share later on.

For icebreaker inspiration, read [53 Icebreaker Activities](#) [that your team won't find cheesy!]

09:30 20m **Introduce or Review the Agile Principles & Values**

Try a fun and interactive exercise that promotes collaboration, communication, and understanding among the participants. The goal of this exercise is that it **provides a hands-on opportunity for participants to apply the Agile values and**

principles to a real-world context.

1. Divide the participants into small teams.
2. Provide each team with a set of Agile values and principles cards (one value or principle per card).
3. Instruct the teams to sort the cards into two groups: "Values" and "Principles."
4. Once the teams have sorted the cards, ask them to discuss each value and principle and come up with an example of how it applies in a working context.
5. After the teams have had time to discuss and come up with their examples, have them share their examples with the larger group.
6. As a group, discuss any differences or similarities in the examples given by the teams.
7. Use this as an opportunity to further clarify the values and principles, and to discuss how they can be applied in the development process.

MATERIALS

- Blank cards
- Pens

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Agile Manifesto consists of four values and twelve principles laid out in the instructions tab.

GOALS

A fun and interactive exercise that promotes collaboration, communication, and understanding among the participants.

Goal: it provides a hands-on opportunity for participants to apply the Agile values and principles to a real-world context.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the participants into small teams.
2. Provide each team with a set of Agile values and principles cards (one value or principle per card).
3. Instruct the teams to sort the cards into two groups: "Values" and "Principles."
4. Once the teams have sorted the cards, ask them to discuss each value and principle and come up with an example of how it applies in a working context.
5. After the teams have had time to discuss and come up with their examples, have them share their examples with the larger group.
6. As a group, discuss any differences or similarities in the examples given by the teams.
7. Use this as an opportunity to further clarify the values and principles, and to discuss how they can be applied in the development process.

The Agile Manifesto consists of four values and twelve principles:

Values:

1. Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
2. Working software over comprehensive documentation
3. Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
4. Responding to change rather than following a plan

Principles:

1. Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery.
2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.
3. Deliver working solutions frequently, with a preference to a shorter timescale.
4. Business/management and the solution team must work together daily throughout the project.
5. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.
6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a solution team is face-to-face conversation.
7. A working solution is the primary measure of progress.
8. Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, solution delivery team, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace.
9. Continuous attention to excellence and good design enhances agility.
10. Simplicity: the art of maximizing the amount of work not done, is essential.
11. The best architecture, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.
12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

Kicking off the Project

09:50
20m

Present the Project Vision or Project Summary

Here the team presenting the project will:

- Review the project's scope and timeline

- Clearly define the objectives
- Give the rationale for starting the project and the benefits of the outcomes
- Identify any potential risks or challenges that the team may face

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

10:10 10m **Discussion & Questions**

Check **everyone's understanding** and make space for questions and answers

Forming A Team

10:20 20m **Team Formation**

One of the Agile principles focuses on forming a **self-organizing team**. Agile teams are empowered to make decisions and collaborate in a way that allows them to work together effectively, without being micromanaged.

During team formation, the focus should be on creating a **shared understanding** of the project's goals and objectives. Teams will define **roles and responsibilities**, and establish a **collaborative culture** that supports Agile principles such as **communication, transparency, and continuous improvement**.

This section of the kickoff will lay the foundation for the team's work moving forward and provide a solid basis to define and deliver the project's specifics as they move through the development process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Define together on a whiteboard or online whiteboard tool:

- Team Agreements
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Team goals and objectives

Write short guidelines to answer

- **how will you communicate?**
- **how will tasks be divided?**
- **how to approach decision making?**

10:40 20m **Agile Practices & Tools**

Explore the Agile practices and tools to define how the team will collaborate to achieve the goals.

Discuss if **Scrum or Kanban boards** will be used and how

Scrum is a **time-boxed set of sprints** in which teams work on a prioritized list of tasks.

A Kanban board is a visual tool with columns representing different stages in the workflow, such as "To Do," "In Progress," and "Done." Tasks or work items are represented by cards or sticky notes that are moved between the columns as they progress through the workflow. For a team new to Agile, try the [Kanban Pizza Game!](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Outline the rituals of sprints:

- **How long is a sprint?** In Agile, they are usually 2-4 weeks, but this can be adapted to the project specific
- **How often will we have an update meeting?** Usually, a team will have a daily stand-up that lasts around 15 minutes and reports on progress at a high-level. and cover:
 - What did you accomplish yesterday?
 - What is on your to-do list for today?
 - Is there anything blocking your progress?
 - How close are you to hitting your sprint goals?
 - Do you need anything from the team?

- **Other self-organised meetings** within teams might happen for solution-finding purposes. Either done async or in short face-to-face conversations.

11:00
10m

Define success criteria

Based on the project goals, define the criteria for success. **What are the specific outcomes or results that need to be achieved in order to consider the project a success?**

Make sure everyone involved in the project understands the **success criteria** and **how they will be measured**. This will help to ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and will make it easier to **track progress** and **make adjustments** as needed.

Closing a Kickoff

11:10
10m

Next Steps & Action Items

- Summarize the **key takeaways** from the meeting
- Identify any **next steps** or action items that need to be taken by the team
- Set a timeline for **follow-up meetings** and check-ins

11:20
10m

Q&A

- Encourage team members to **ask questions** or share any **additional thoughts** or concerns

11:30
5m

Closing

- **Thank everyone** for their time and participation
 - Reiterate the team's **commitment to Agile values** and principles and to achieving the project's goals
-