Retrospectives

“I SHALL TRY TO CORRECT ERRORS WHEN SHOWN TO BE ERRORS, AND I SHALL ADOPT NEW VIEWS SO FAST AS THEY APPEAR TO BE TRUE VIEWS”

/ Abraham Lincoln /

References/ Sources

- Retrospective Agenda by Lean Project Consulting / Rebecca Bettler, 2008.
- Retrospectives by Lean Project Consulting / Rebecca Bettler, 2011.
- The One Hour Retrospective by Kathy Iberle.
1.0 Why

Retrospectives create value on Lean/IPD teams that are willing to take the time and effort required to stop momentarily, review specific actions or events, realistically assess the plan/actions/outcomes against the expected outcome, and commit to improve the next event. Teams should conduct Retrospectives in a structured, open forum for the purpose of to improve future effectiveness. Retrospectives facilitate continuous learning and improvement; they should be used to ensure improvement of any repeated work cycle. A Retrospective is intended to create a positive outcome and should focus on processes, not people.

2.0 What

It is common for team members to experience the same problems or encounter variations of multiple projects throughout their careers. Often times these projects have different team members who have individual goals and tend to think only about the issues at hand. This in turn can lead to a significant amount of waste. In the construction industry, waste can exceed 50% of a project’s cost. Lean/IPD projects strive for continuous improvement and attempt to address the issues of waste by regularly using Retrospectives.

A Retrospective is a structured reflective event resulting in a common understanding of a team’s experience. The Retrospective leads a team to new action. It is the “Check” part of a Plan Do Check Adjust (PDCA) process.
Retrospectives can be done at any time in a project and in a variety of formats:

Quick-format Retrospectives can be conducted at the end of every meeting or work session.

Regularly occurring Retrospectives can be conducted at the completion of work cycles or on a recurring basis such as every three weeks.

Event-based Retrospectives can be conducted at the completion of major milestones or the declaration of a major Breakdown.

3.0 When

4.0 How

Quick-format Retrospectives:

- Use the Plus/Delta format.
- Are typically facilitated by a team member.

Regularly occurring Retrospectives:

- Reflect on some portion of the work/process. In doing this, the team asks three questions:
  - What do we want to keep doing?
  - What do we want to stop doing?
  - What do we want to start doing?
- Can be done in an open-team format, an anonymous format, or a small breakout group format
- Are typically facilitated by a team member
- Require the team to align with new actions to take. The new actions will involve team member commitments to drive the new actions.

Note: For more information about conducting regularly occurring Retrospectives, see [Lean Project Consulting - “Retrospectives, Making it Simple”].

Event-based Retrospectives:

- Require that an Agenda be issued in advance of the Retrospective [see Lean Project Consulting Retrospective Agenda]. The agenda must include Goals, Ground Rules, and Process.
- Require that participants come prepared to engage in a constructive manner.
- Require the team to align with new actions to take. The new actions will involve team member commitments to drive the new actions.
- May be facilitated by a neutral party, depending on the situation.

Note: For more information about conducting event-based Retrospectives, [see Lean Project Consulting - “Retrospectives-Making it Simple”].