

In this video you will learn about huddles and huddle boards - as used in continuous improvement.

Objectives

- What is a huddle
- Types of huddle boards
- Theory of huddles (the concept of visual management)
- Huddles as part of a system (tiered huddles)

We will cover:

- What is a huddle
- Types of Huddle Boards
- Theory of Huddles which is Visual Management
- And the idea of huddles as part of a tiered system

What is a Huddle?

In continuous improvement, a huddle is:

A frequent, short meeting – around a huddle board, that uses visual indicators to check the status of key areas to prompt continuous improvement action and celebration. They may also be used for more than continuous improvement, as a time for knowledge sharing and team connection.

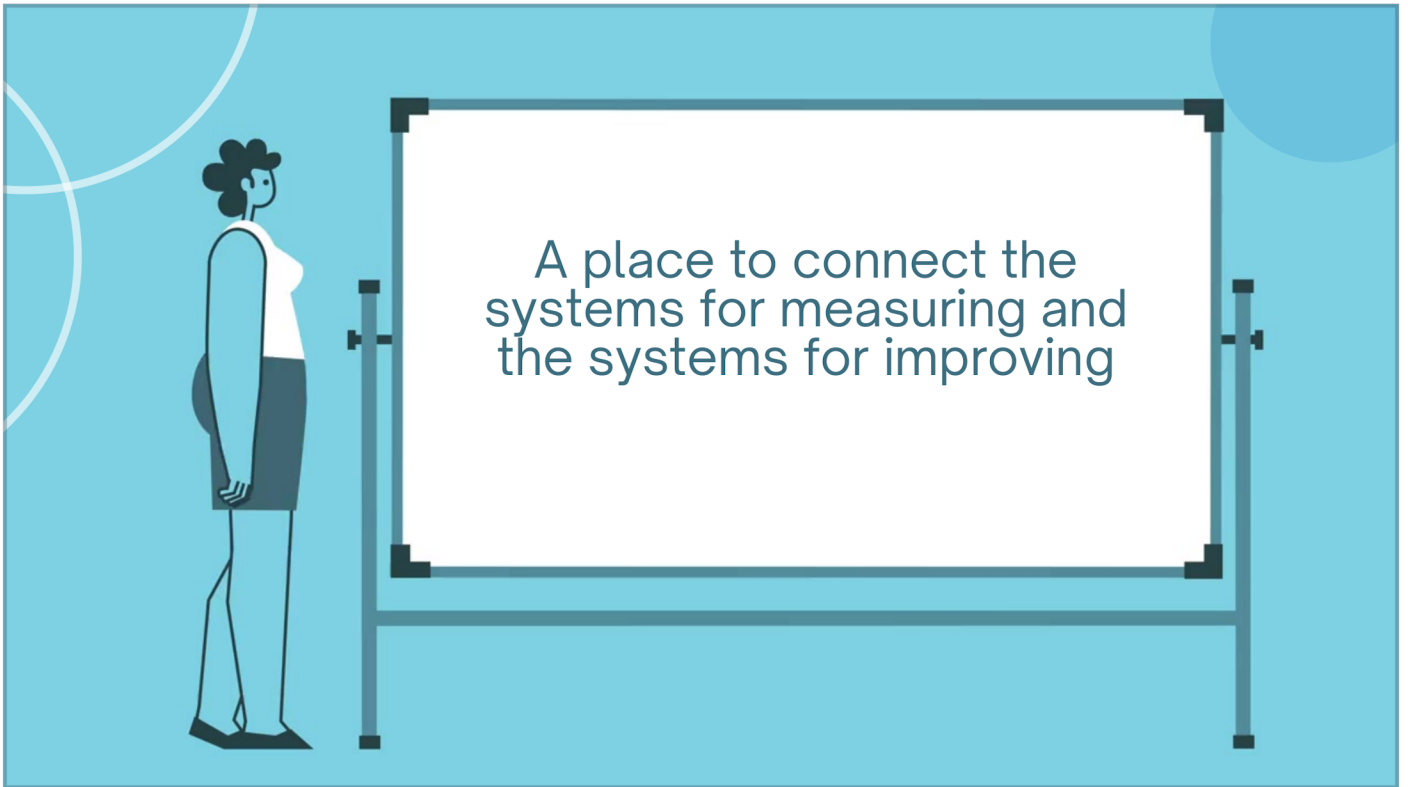
Key Attributes:

- 1 Frequent, short meeting
- 2 Visual Indicators
- 3 Prompt Continuous Improvement

In continuous improvement a huddle is defined as this:

A frequent, short meeting - around a huddle board, that uses visual indicators to check the status of key performance indicators to prompt continuous improvement activity and celebration. They may also be used for more than continuous improvement, as a time for knowledge sharing and team connection.

Some of the key attributes are the fact that they are short and frequent, they include visual indicators and they prompt continuous improvement.

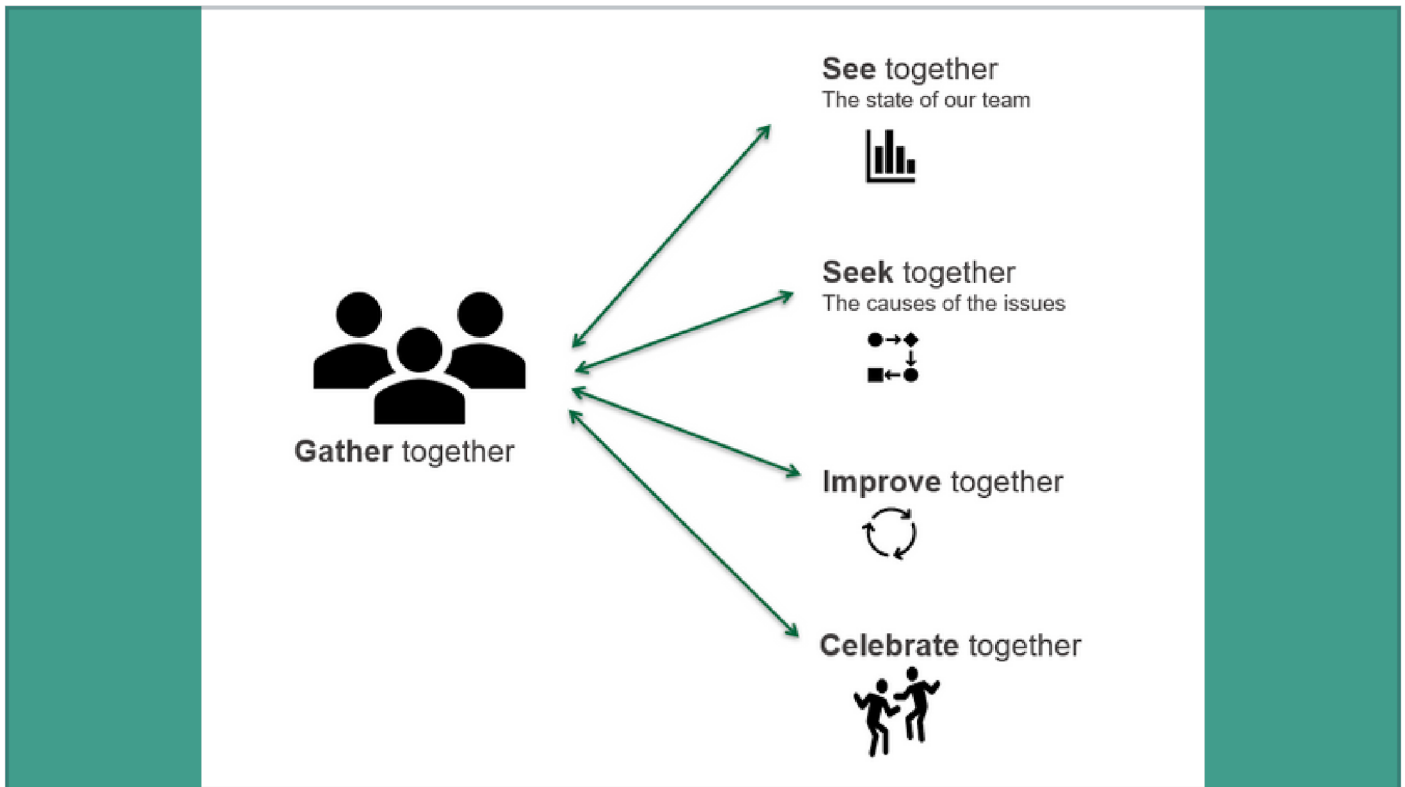


Some describe huddles as the place to connect the systems for measuring and the systems for improving - and that both need to be aligned.

Part of what makes
continuous improvement,
continuous.



Other's describe huddles as part of what makes continuous improvement continuous.



Ultimately huddles are the place where we come together for the goal of problem solving, ideas and improvement.

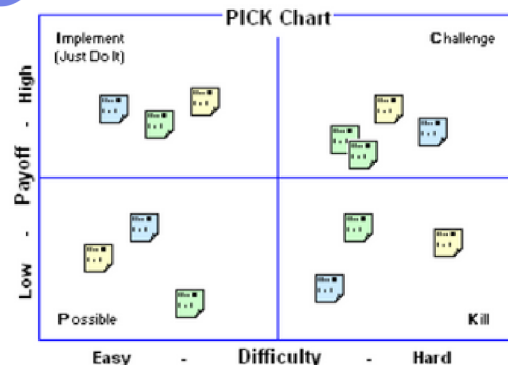
Conceptually we can describe huddles as the place where we gather together to see the state of our team/processes, to seek together the causes of the issues, to improve together and of course to celebrate together.

Types of Continuous Improvement Huddle Boards

1 Metrics Based



2 Ideas Based



Or a combination!

When we look at huddle boards used in various industries you will often see two different various types of components.

The first one is a metrics-based where the focus is very visual. At the top you will often see data and trends, and a visual status. You might also see the top "reason codes" for reoccurring issues.

Another type of huddle board that you may often see is centered around ideas. It is often called a pick chart - where anyone can suggest improvements and they are categorized into what's possible, what to implement (just-do-its), what ideas to challenge and what ideas to avoid.

Most huddle boards will fall into either of these two categories or be a combination of the two.

The metrics based boards are good for systematically triggering deeper improvement projects and also maintaining a responsiveness to issues that come to the surface. It is especially powerful when we huddle over the right metrics and the areas we really care about improving.

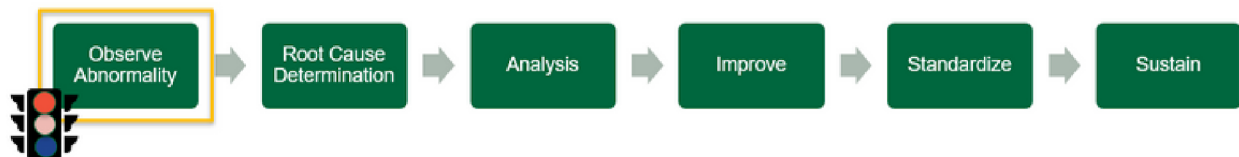
The use of PICK charts are great for engaging front line team members especially - and allow for focus on rapid improvement, ideation and giving everyone a chance to voice their ideas for improvement.

Theory Behind Huddles

- 1 A key concept for many continuous improvement tools is to make abnormalities, painpoints or issues **pop** right out.
- 2 The huddle board is the same. We rely on the Visual Management Cycle

Visual Management Cycle ^[4]

Make abnormalities jump out to trigger improvement activity

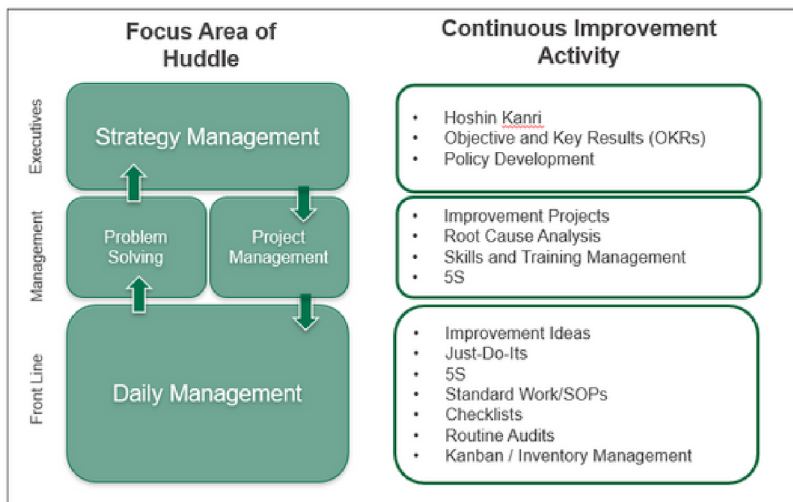


There is theory behind huddle boards. A key concept for many continuous improvement tools is ultimately to make abnormalities, or painpoints or issues just POP right out. The huddle board is based on the same theory. We in this case we rely on the visual management cycle which you can see right here. Basically abnormalities pop out, and it prompts us to dig deeper “oh we see a trend, an issue” and that is what should be happening in the huddle. We will gather as a team to get a sense of how well everything is going in the key areas that we care about.

And if an issue pops up, – now we begin to prompt the improvement discussions and actions that will happen outside the huddle. We ask, why why why, do a root cause analysis or a deeper dive to see what’s going on and then put some corrective actions and improvements in place. Then of course we standardize and sustain to ensure our improvements can stand the test of time.

Keeping a weekly Huddles, over an effectively designed huddle board ensures we are being responsive to issues that pop up and ensuring we continually improve our operations. It is also the place for ideas, and suggestions as we all come together with the common goal of improvement – so we can enhance the service we provide, smooth out our own workflows and ensure we're getting the job done in a way that’s sustainable for our team.

The key to the methodology: Making Painpoints Visible



Visual representation of huddles as part of a larger system. Adapted from [5]

Through an interconnected system:

- Painpoints escalate up
- Strategic goals cascades down
- Different types of CI activity is triggered at different org levels
- Cross departmental huddles break silos, painpoints become visible to others
- Challenging to achieve
- Strategic timing required

Although not easy, one of the amazing parts of great huddles is when the huddle board system is interconnected. So different levels of the organizational huddle, and the information and issues escalate upward and different messages or targets cascade downwards. It's not easy to implement necessarily, but when done well, it can be very powerful making huddles really play a great role in the whole continuous improvement system. It increases connection, and creates speed and momentum for issues to be addressed and improvement to be realized.

Summary

- What is a huddle
- Types of huddle boards
- Theory of huddle boards (the visual management cycle)
- Huddles as part of an interconnected system (tiered huddles)

Huddles are part of what makes continuous improvement, **continuous**.



In this video you learned about what is a huddle, the types of huddle boards, the theory behind huddle boards that which is the visual management cycle, and how huddles can ideally be part of an interconnected system.

As we wrap up, remember that a huddle is more than a tool; it's the heartbeat of your team's daily quest for excellence. Embrace it, and you'll not only work to streamline your processes, but you'll also give opportunity to empower every team member to collaborate and contribute to the improvement of our day to day workflows - which is something we all want!

Additional Huddle Resources

[1] [Why John Deere Monitors Employee Morale every 2 Weeks](#), Harvard Business Review

[2] [Video that explains Visual Management, "Lean Manufacturing - Visual Management"](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXYYJq7iyjk>

[3] [Lean Daily Management: Visual Tracking Boards and Visual Management](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRdOOF78OWU>

[4] [Implementing Lean \(C.W. Protzman, F. Whiton, D. Protzman\) Chapter 22, +QDIP Boards](#)
(available on Algonquin's digital library)

[5] [Tiered Meetings with Visual Management](#)
<https://teamassurance.com/blog/tiered-meetings-with-visual-management/>



Make your Huddles Inclusive and Accessible

[1] [Inclusive Meeting Guide](#), Harvard Business Review
https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/inclusive_meeting_guide_final_1.pdf?m=1617641674

[2] [Inclusive Meetings Checklist](#), Quiet Revolution
https://www.quietrev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/RC_Inclusive-Meetings-Checklist.pdf