



cto / Building shared understanding in a team

Building a shared understanding often takes longer than we realise.

"We can cover that in 20 minutes, right?"

But what actually happens is it takes an hour.

Retrospectively we think it was due to poor facilitation, bad planning, or similar - "why did it drag on?"

Instead what we really should be asking is, "should we have allocated more time?"

Can't find the time? Then it's a symptom of a bigger issue.

Meeting culture doesn't help either.

When everyone is in back-to-back meetings we struggle to find adequate time...we then compromise:

- "I could only find 30mins in everyones diaries...hope that's ok"
- "Does this need to be 2 hours, can we do it in 1?"
- "Sorry I need to drop off early for another meeting"

All signs of deeper issues like too much WIP (work in progress) and no slack.

This lack of shared understanding costs us in the long run.

We misinterpret things, drift, become misaligned...

Realignment costs us more time... more meetings... and the vicious cycle continues.

Remedy?

□ Lower WIP.

□□ Embrace asynchronous communication (not everything needs to be a meeting)

□ Allocate more time to understanding, questioning, unearthing each other's beliefs and assumptions.

Timeboxes shouldn't be to cut things short, they should be a reflection point to ask "do we need more time or is this good enough?"[#leadership](#)
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