



the
**ANNUAL AGILE
RETROSPECTIVE
REPORT
2017**

THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR RETROSPECTIVES



Contents

Keys to Retrospective Adoption | **p. 3**

Timing: When & How Long? | **p. 4**

Participants & Facilitators | **p. 5**

Retrospective Techniques | **p. 6**

The Post-Retro Follow Up | **p. 7**

Use of Tools & Sticky Notes | **p. 9**

Demographics | **p. 10**

Company Profile & Agile Maturity | **p. 11**

Conclusion: The Opportunity for Retrospectives | **p. 12**

About the Survey & Participants | **p. 13**

Executive Summary

If you search for information on retrospectives, you'll quickly find many stories of their importance in the agile transformation process. Agile practitioners frequently cite their value for team learning, since they give every person an outlet to share their voice. And we intuitively understand that effective retrospectives help to create a culture of openness to change that can catalyze continuous improvement.

We also know that retrospectives are one of the more common agile practices. According to the 11th Annual State of Agile Report by VersionOne (2017), fully 83% of teams run retrospectives. Just as importantly, The Impact of Agile Quantified by Larry Maccherone and Rally Software (2013) showed the positive relationship between retrospectives and team performance.

However, we wanted to go deeper. We wanted to gain a better understanding of the benefits, challenges, methods, and tooling associated with retrospectives. In fact, prior to this report, no one had ever done a systematic, in-depth study focusing exclusively on the retrospective. This survey is an attempt to begin to address this knowledge gap. We focused our research on those who were currently running retrospectives, though it may also be interesting in the future to explore why

some teams start and then stop running retrospectives. We developed the questions with input from some of the world's leading agile retrospective experts and received a total of 277 valid responses. All of the survey respondents work in organizations that use agile software development practices and currently run retrospectives with their team.

They have a wide variety of roles, including agile coaches, scrum masters, software developers, product managers and more, and work in a wide variety of industries, organizational sizes and structures, and locations. Most of the people who participated in our survey had facilitated a retrospective previously (94%), typically have a retrospective with their team once every other week (75%), and have more than 5 years of experience with agile (55%). They were also familiar with a wide range of techniques and best practices associated with retrospectives, making for a reasonable sample of the larger population of those that use agile retrospective techniques.

This is just the beginning of our work to better understand retrospectives, so if you have feedback or questions, please direct them to RetroReport@retrium.com.



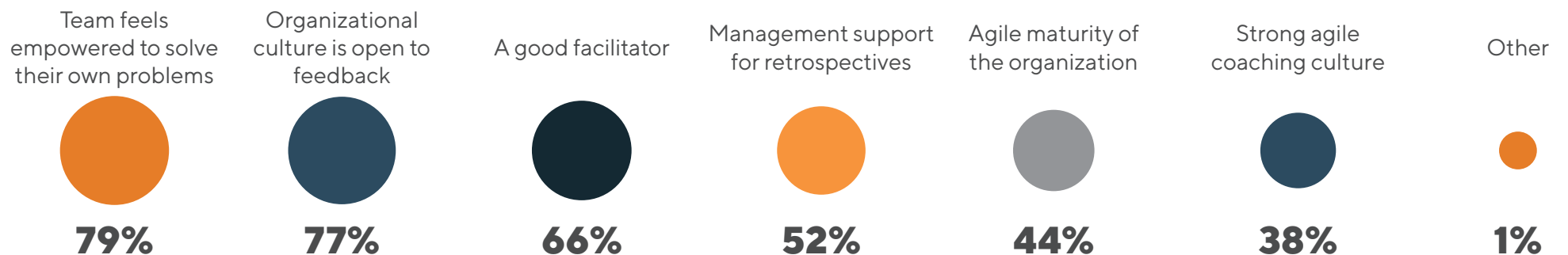
Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Retrium

A very special thank you to those who provided feedback on early versions of the survey and who shared the survey with their friends and colleagues including Mark Kilby, Luis Goncalves, Mandy Ross, Carrie Kuempel, Ben Linders, and Diana Larsen.

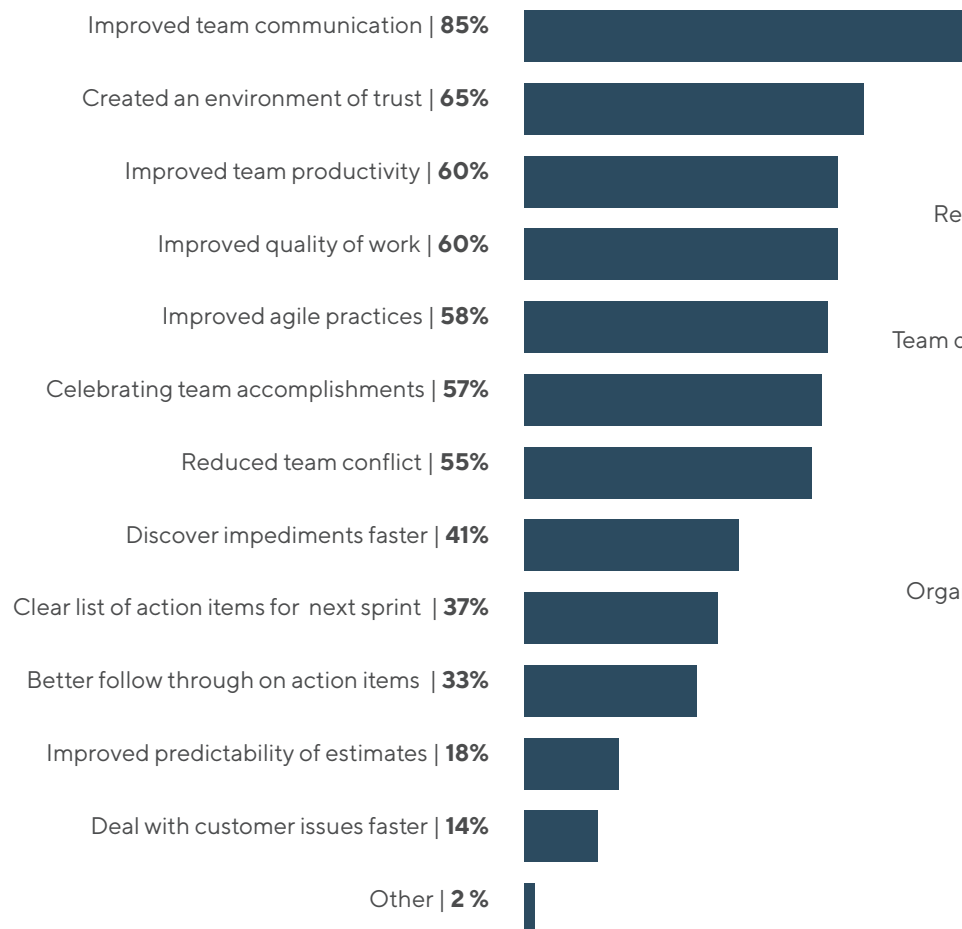
Keys to Retrospective Adoption

Empowered teams and a culture open to feedback are the two factors that most increase the likelihood of running retrospectives. The most frequently cited benefit of retrospectives was improved team communication. The biggest challenge was that the team could not solve the problems discussed.

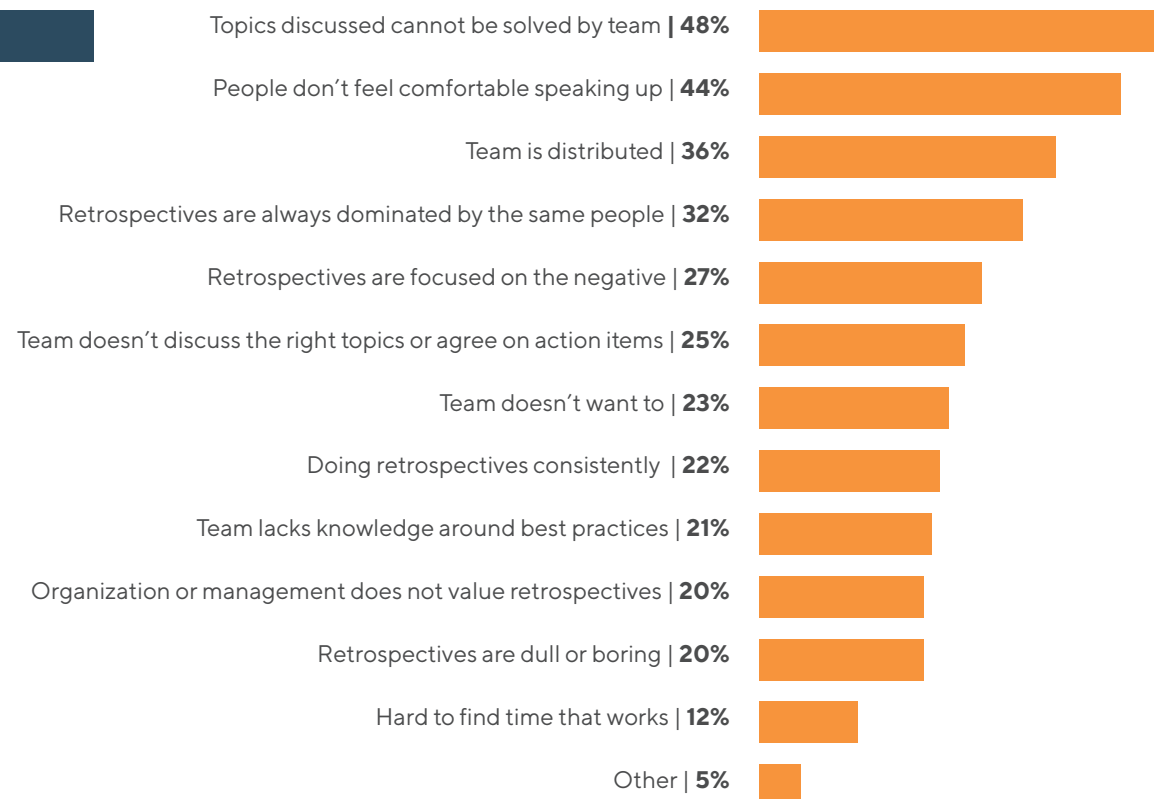
What do you believe are the things that increase the likelihood of running retrospectives within any organization?



What do you believe are the benefits of doing retrospectives for your team?



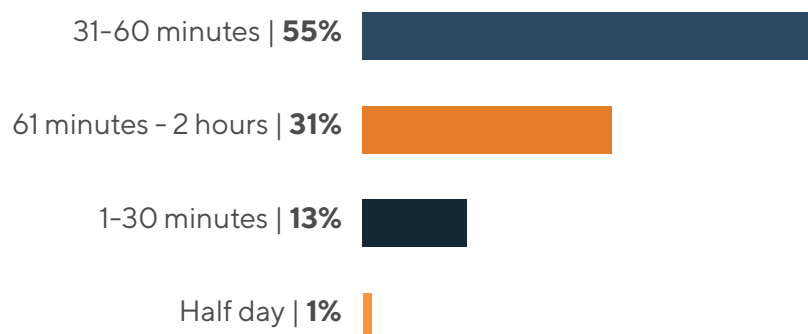
What is/are your biggest challenge(s) in running successful retrospectives?



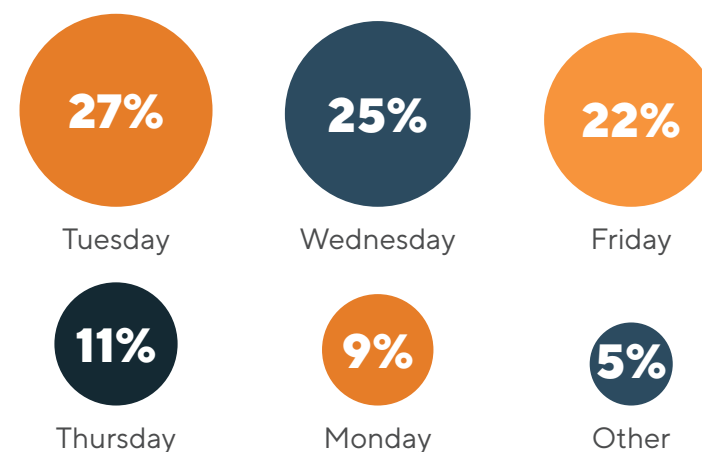
Timing: When & How long?

The most popular days to run retrospectives are Tuesdays or Wednesdays. 75% of teams run them every other week and 90% run them at the end of each sprint. A typical retrospective is most likely to be between 31 and 60 minutes.

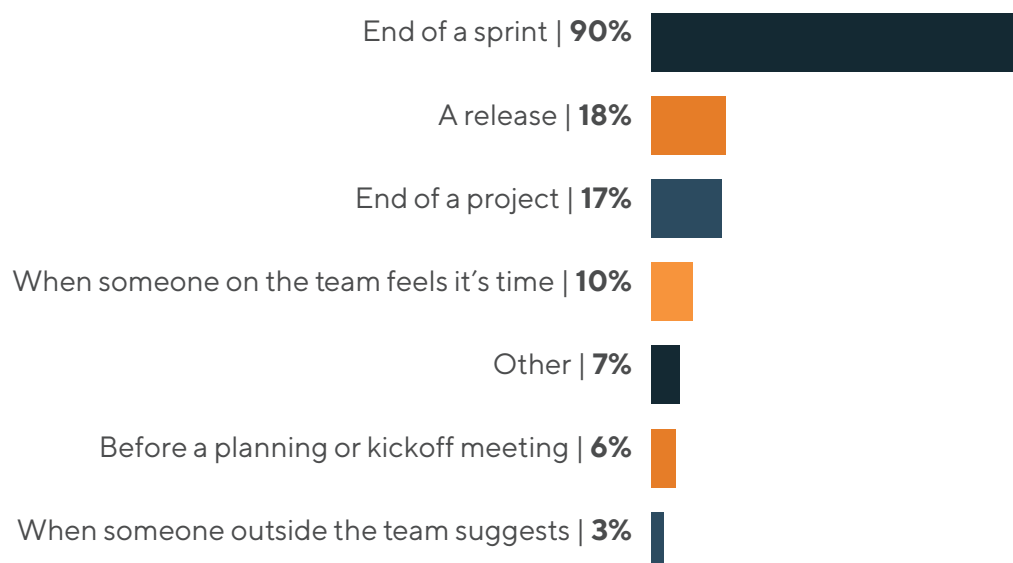
How long does a typical retrospective last?



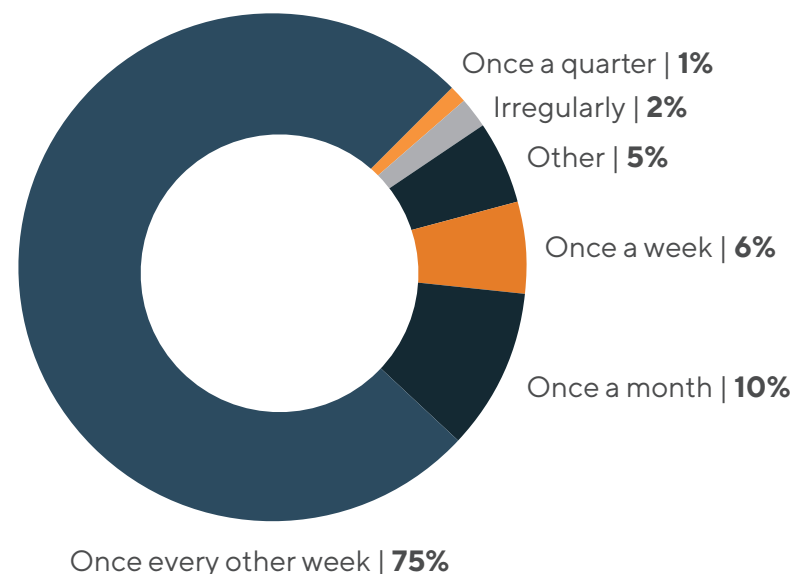
What day of the week does your team have retrospectives?



What event(s) triggers the need for your team to run a retrospective?



How often does your team typically have a retrospective?



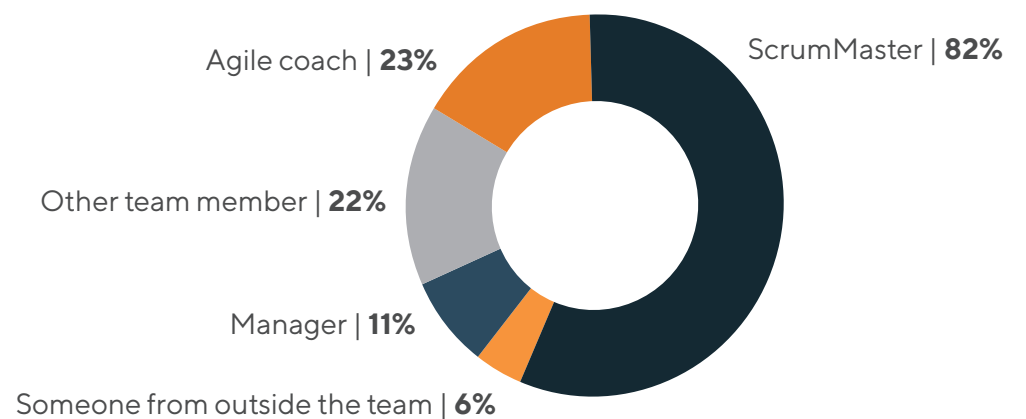
Participants & Facilitators

While ScrumMasters are the most common facilitator, 94% of respondents indicated they have facilitated a retrospective despite the fact that only 33% are ScrumMasters (see page 10).

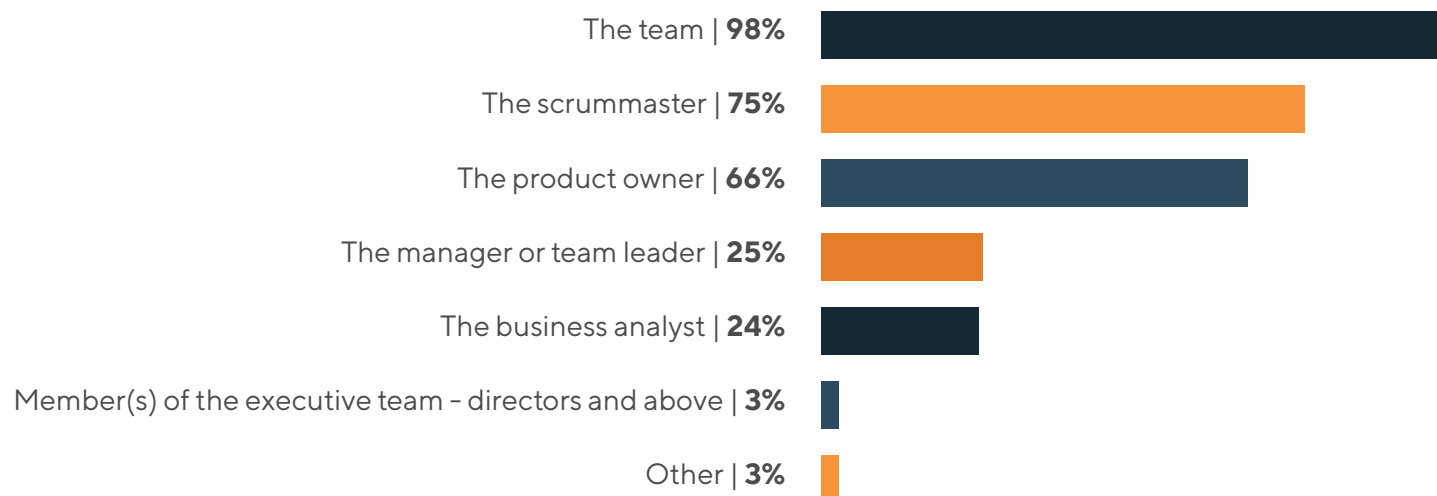
Have you ever facilitated a retrospective?



Who typically facilitates your retrospectives?



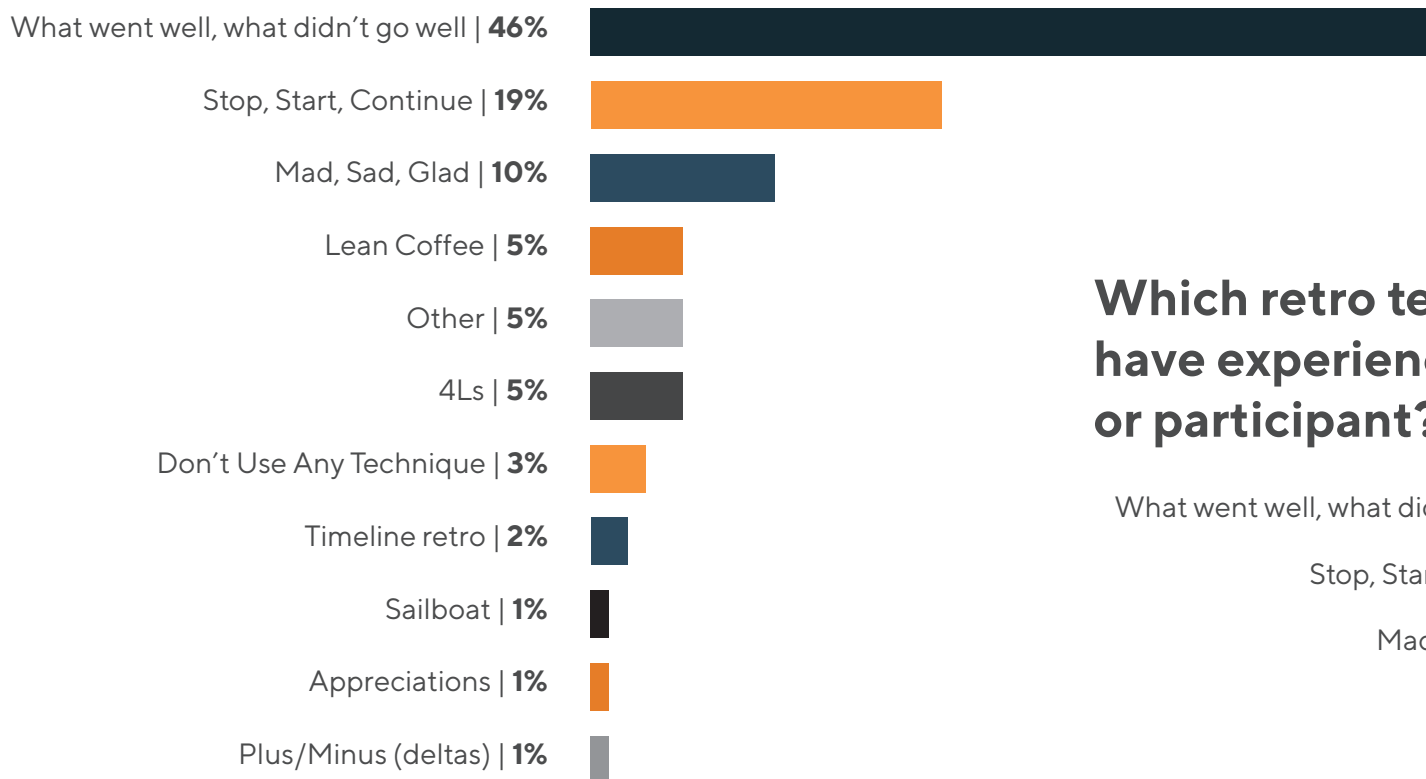
Who attends your retrospectives?



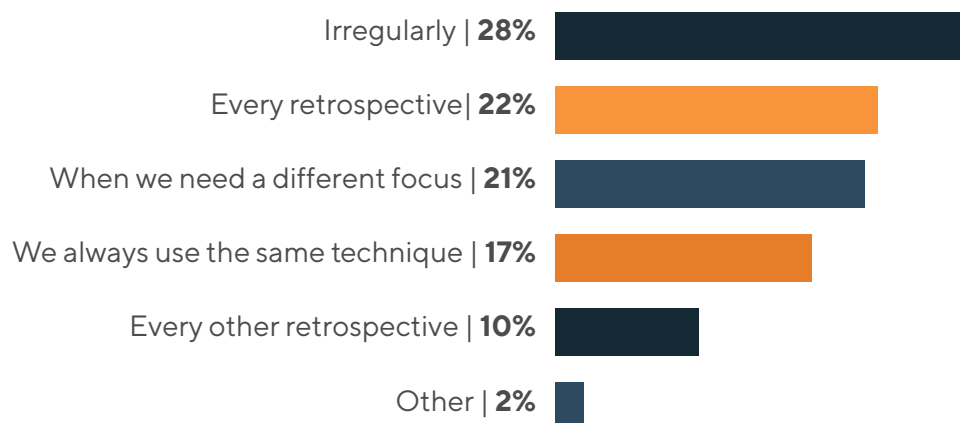
Retrospective Techniques

46% of respondents said the technique they used most often was "What went well, what didn't go well". 17% of respondents always use the same technique while 28% change techniques on an irregular basis

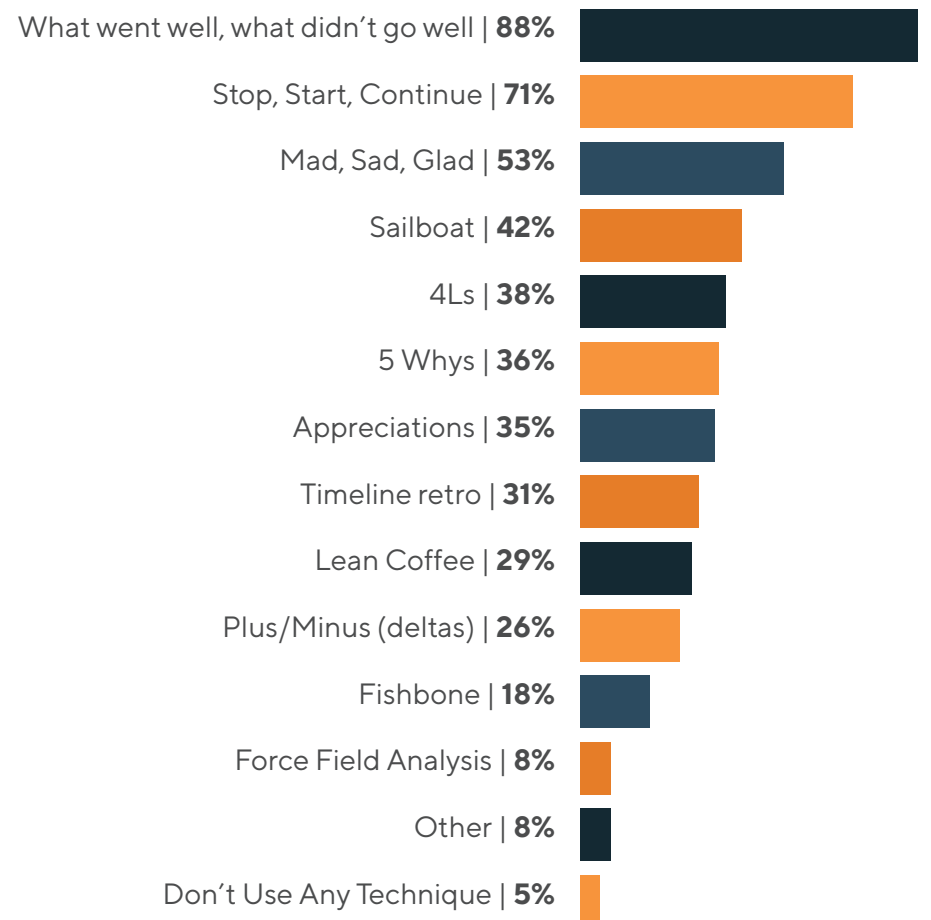
Which retro technique have you used most often with your current team?



How often do you use a different retrospective technique with your team (or the same team)?



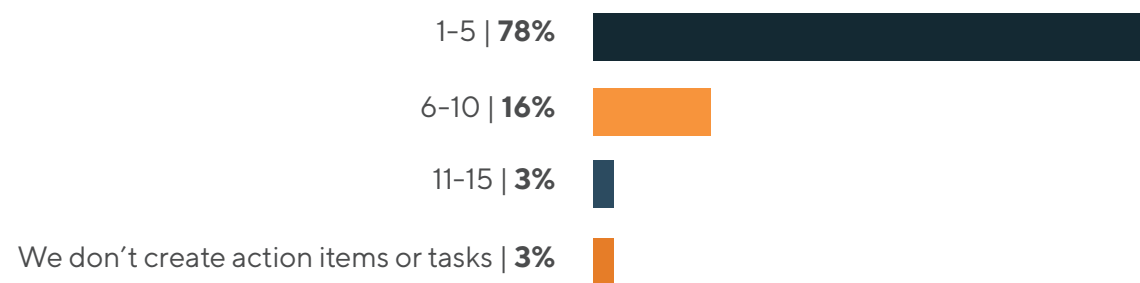
Which retro techniques do you have experience with as a facilitator or participant?



The Post-Retro Follow Up

While the majority of teams usually use the SMART format for creating action items (41%) and assign actions to team members (62%), only 12% of respondents indicated they always assign deadlines to action items.

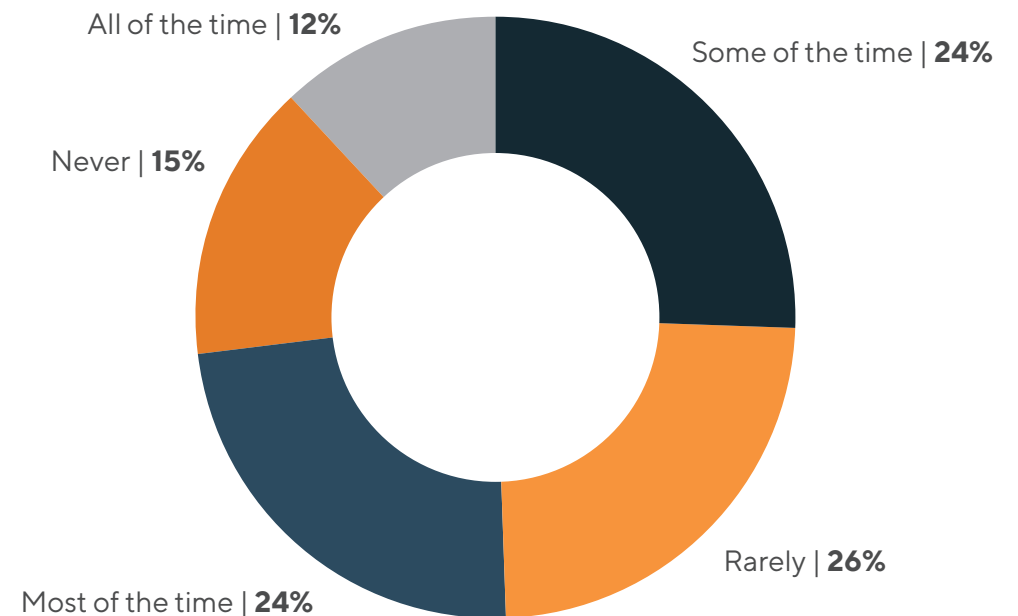
How many action items or tasks does your team typically produce at the end of the retrospective?



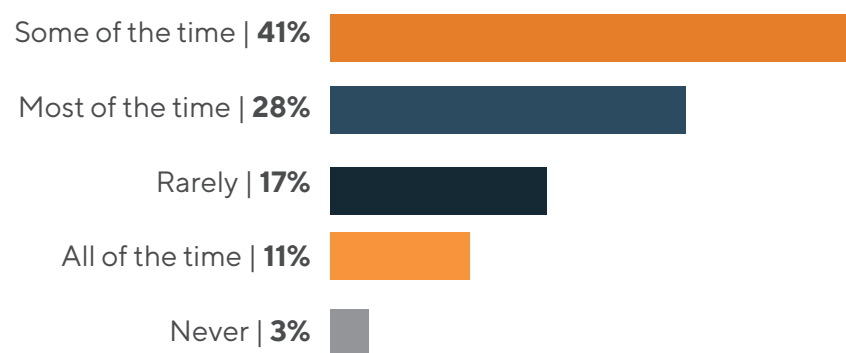
Does your team typically assign action items to specific team members?



How often does your team typically assign deadlines to your action items?



How often does your team typically write action items using a SMART format?



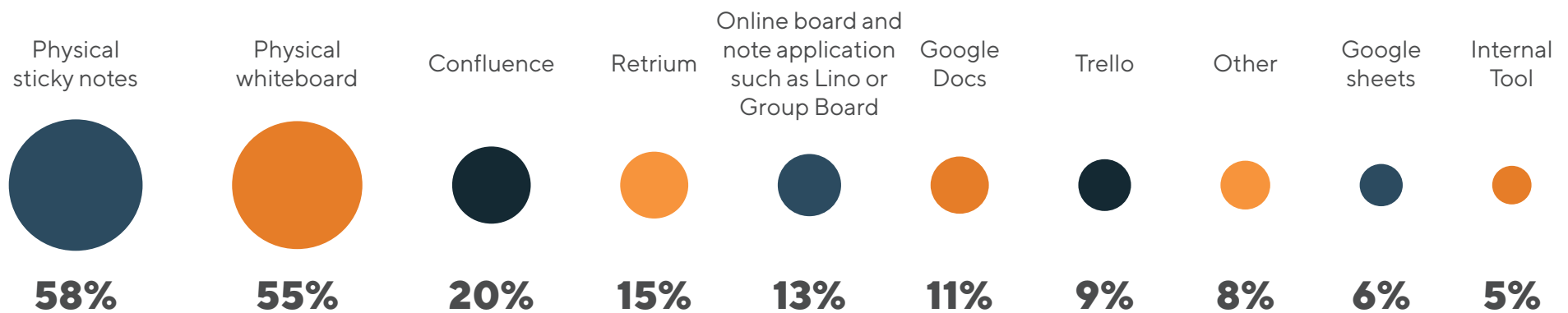
Does your team ever use a SMART goal (specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, timely) format?



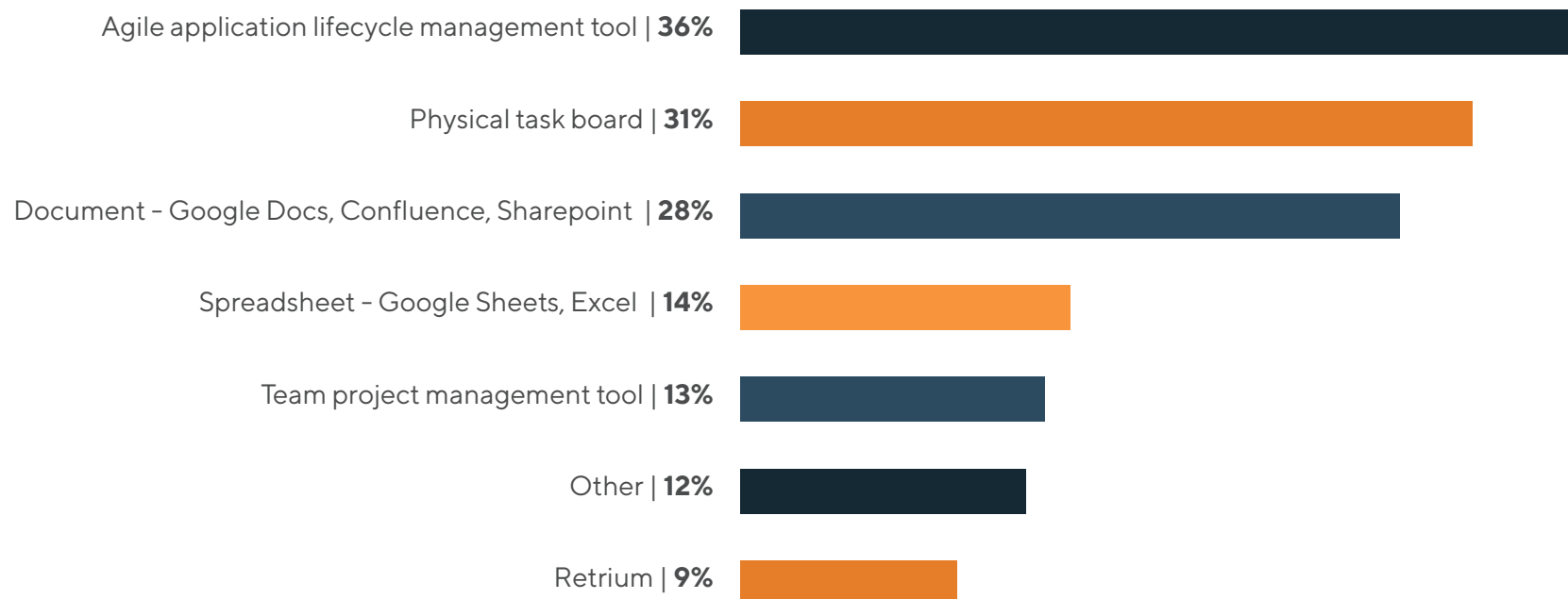
Use of Tools & Sticky Notes

Sticky notes and white boards are the most common tools for facilitating retrospective meetings, while the action items from retrospectives are most likely to be tracked in Agile lifecycle management tools.

What tool(s) are you currently using to facilitate or participate in retrospectives?



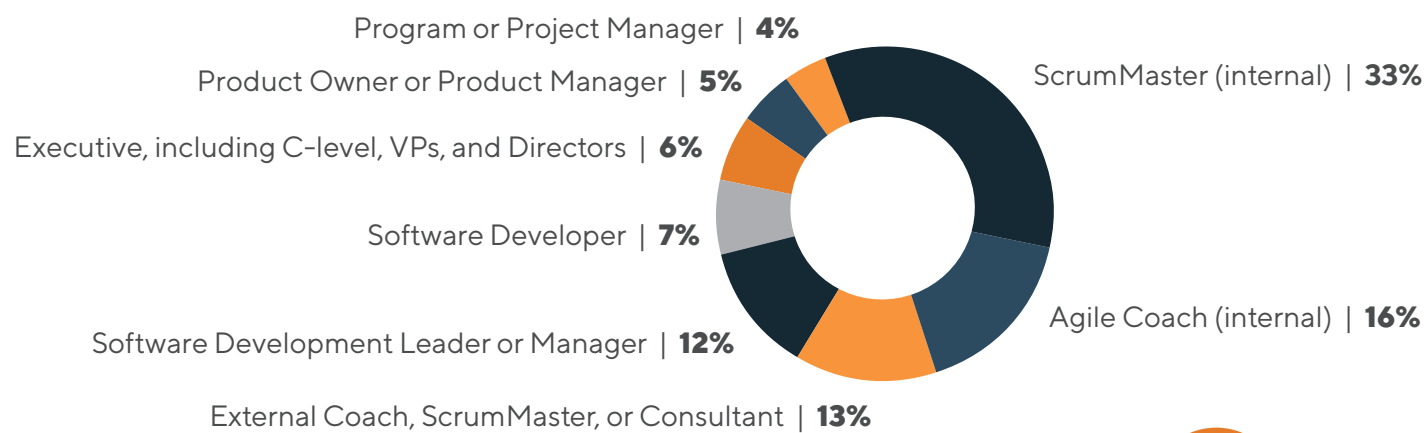
How does your team typically track the completion of action items or tasks that are produced during your retrospectives?



Demographics

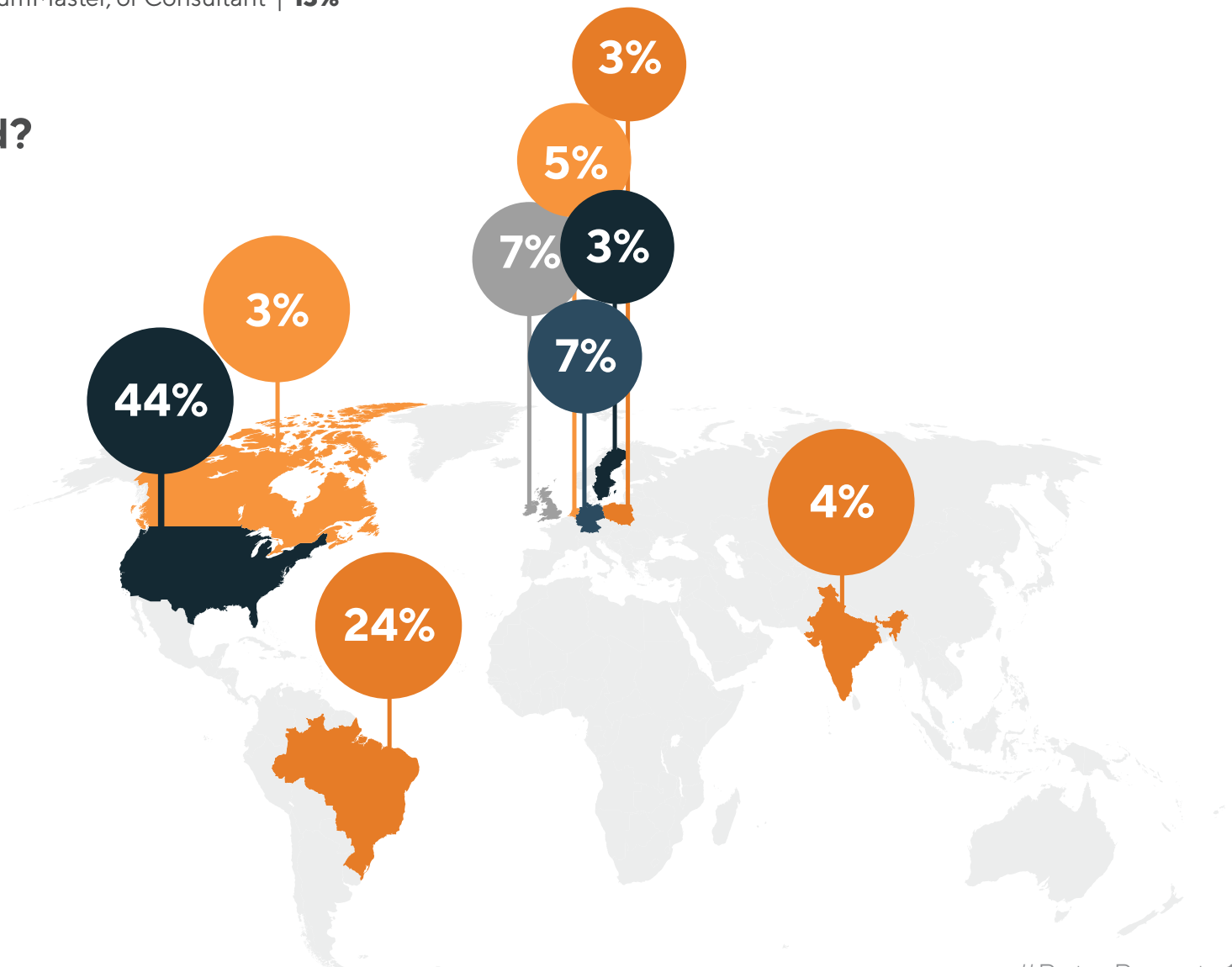
49% of respondents were either internal ScrumMasters or Agile Coaches. 44% are located in the US.

Which option best describes your job title?



Where are you located?

- US | 44%
- UK | 7%
- Germany | 7%
- Netherlands | 5%
- India | 4%
- Canada | 3%
- Poland | 3%
- Sweden | 3%
- Other | 24% (New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Chile, South Africa)



Company Profile & Agile Maturity

35% of participants were from the software industry. The most common organizational structure was one where employees worked from multiple office locations. The respondents came from mature agile organizations of various sizes.

What industry best describes your organization?



Software
95 people, 35%



Financial Services
36 people, 13%



Professional Services
18 people, 7%

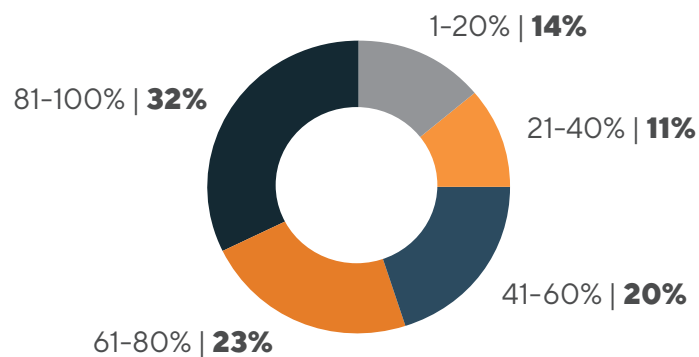


Healthcare
15 people, 6%

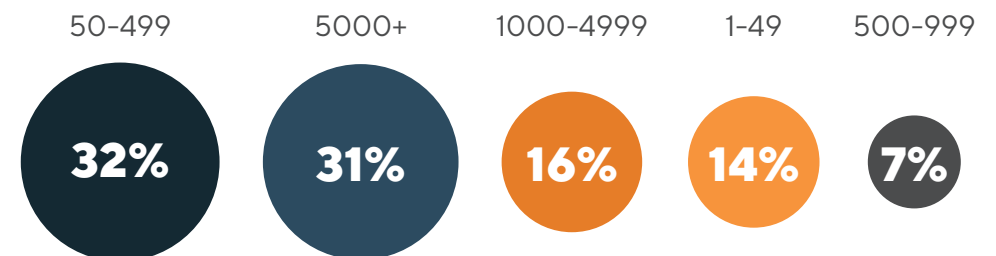


Insurance
13, 5%

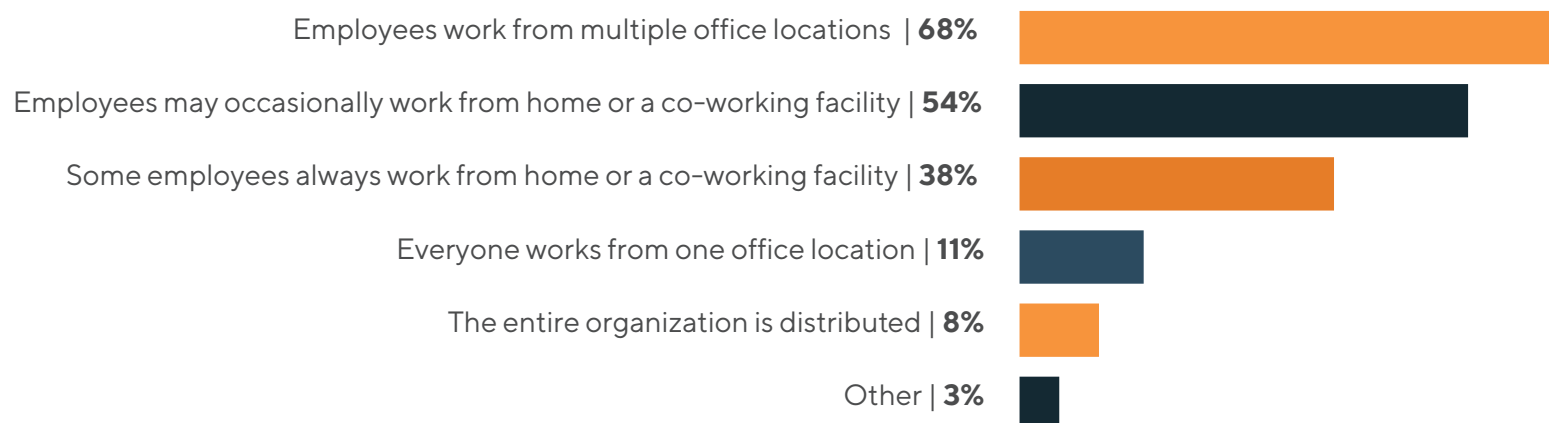
Approximately what percentage of teams in your development organization follow agile practices?



What is the total number of people in your company?



Please tell us more about how your organization is structured.

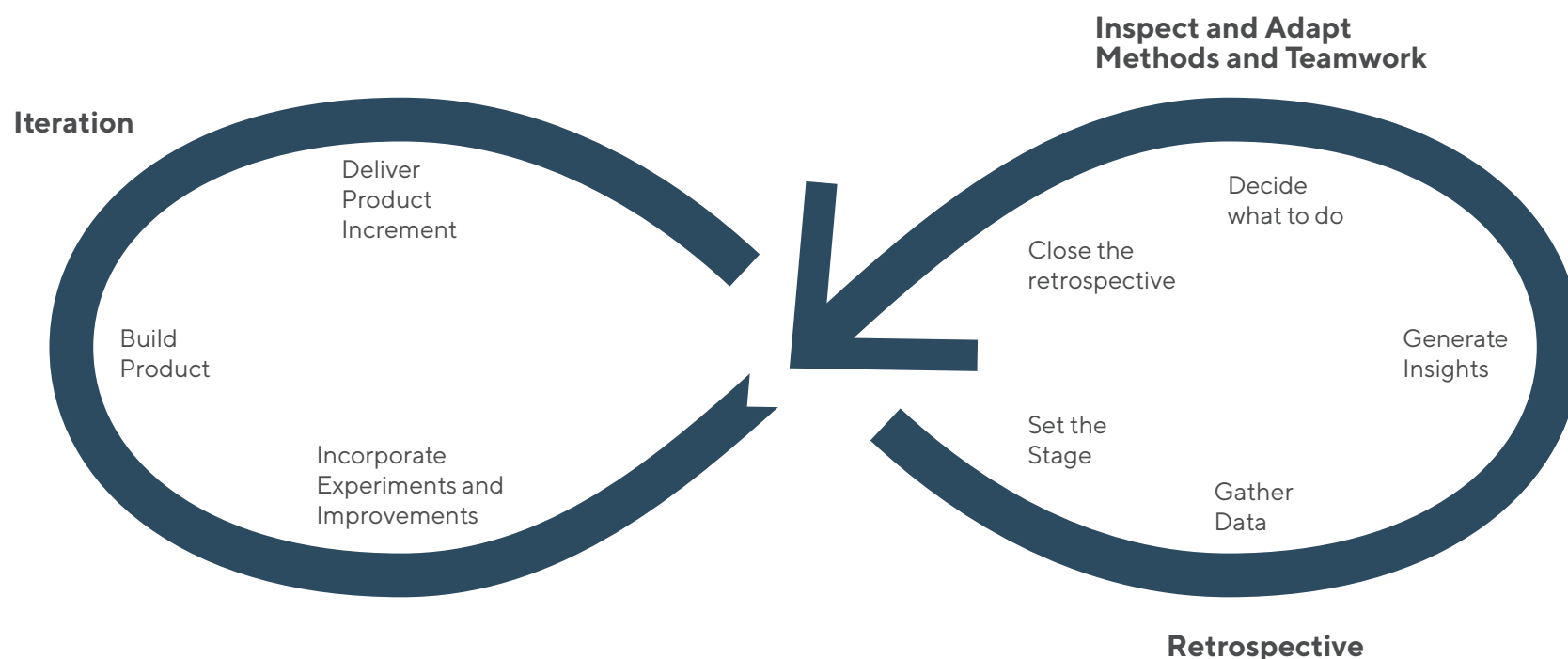


Conclusion: The Opportunity for Retrospectives

From the 277 responses received, it becomes clear that the opportunity for agile retrospectives to play a stronger role in driving continuous improvement by helping teams create an environment of trust, playing a pivotal role in improving agile practices, and creating a more cohesive, productive team is great. With teams continuing to rely on sticky notes and white boards in their retrospectives, there is a disconnect between the practice of retrospectives and the teams' needs for digital platforms. Only 11% of teams are in the same office, leaving distributed team members unable to actively participate in retrospectives. It's time retrospectives adapt to meet the needs of these teams to drive better communication, strong trust among team members, and empowerment. Otherwise, we can expect retrospectives to become less beneficial for teams and, eventually, a forgotten catalyst of true agility.

*"At regular intervals,
the team reflects on
how to become more
effective, then tunes
and adjusts its behavior
accordingly"*
The Agile Manifesto

Retrospective steps as part of an iterative life cycle.



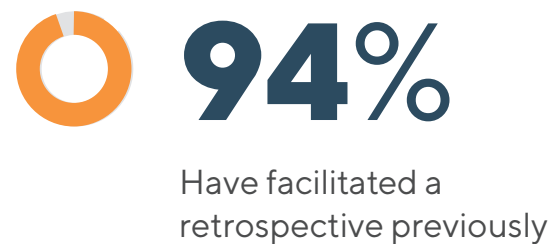
Agile Retrospectives: Making Good Teams Great, 2006, Esther Derby and Diana Larsen

About The Survey

The First Annual Agile Retrospective Report is compiled based on survey feedback obtained between March and April, 2017.

Sponsored by Retrium, the survey invited individuals from a broad range of industries, with varying levels of agile maturity and experience with retrospectives, and was promoted beyond Retrium's customer base through digital channels including social media sites and a strong network of retrospective facilitators and agile coaches. Over 270 responses were collected, analyzed and prepared in the summary that follows. Only 15% of the respondents were Retrium customers.

About The Participants





About Retrium

Think about your latest retrospective.

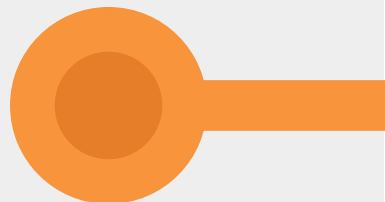
Were people interested and engaged, or did they complain and accuse? Did you learn something valuable, or were you simply there to check a box? Did anyone at the retrospective say, “nothing changes anyway, so what’s the point of this?”

You’re not alone. The fact of the matter is that retrospectives are hard work! Yet effective retrospectives are possible, and they can have a transformative effect on your team’s performance and ultimately your organization’s ability to achieve its goals.

In fact, that’s why we built Retrium – the world’s only enterprise-ready solution for agile retrospectives. Using Retrium, you can finally run engaging and effective retrospectives using industry leading facilitation techniques, including Mad Sad Glad, Lean Coffee™, and more.

With over 15,000 retrospectives performed using Retrium to-date, the solution has become the standard for customers ranging from tech startups to the Fortune 500 and other household brands, including GE Healthcare, Navis, PointClickCare, and Ticketmaster.

For more information, visit www.retrium.com.





retrium

Better retrospectives.
Continuous improvement.

www.retrium.com