

# FaST Guide

**Version 3.0**

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**Building a Better World  
Through Better Workplaces**

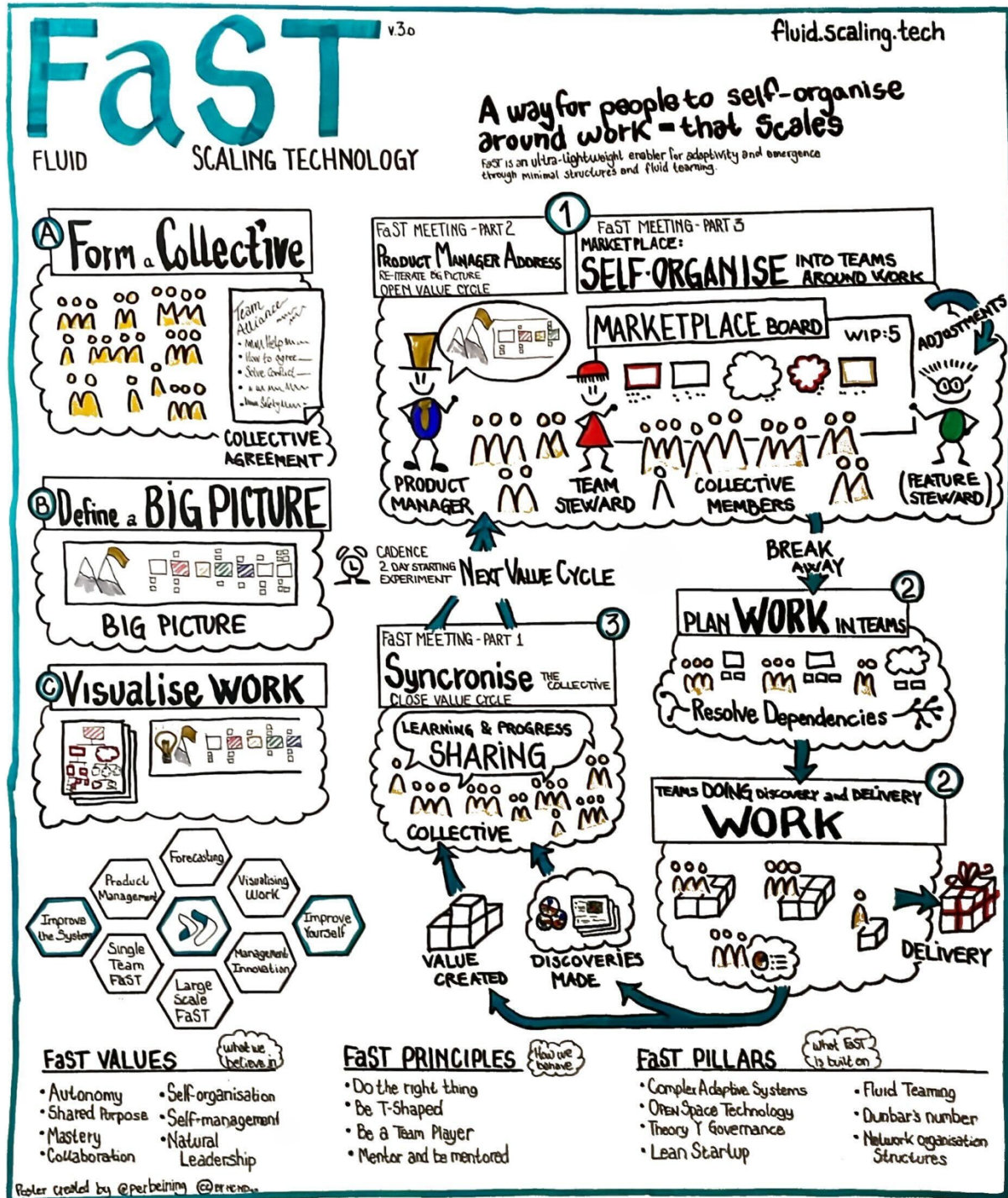
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# Rich Picture by Per Beining



# Fluid Scaling Technology (FaST)

A way for people to self-organize around work  
- that scales.

FaST is an ultra-lightweight enabler for adaptivity and emergence through minimal structures and fluid teaming.

## FaST Method

### One-Time Setup

**A) Form a Collective** - Combine everyone needed to do the work into a **Collective**.

The **Collective** is an autonomous, empowered, self-organized, self-managed group of people gathered around a common purpose capable of product discovery and delivery of business goals.

**B) Define a Big Picture** – A purpose and mission for the **Collective**.

**C) Visualize Work** - Visually represent the current understanding and progress of the work for the **Collective**.

### Value Cycle - A Continuous Cycle of Work

The next three steps form the **Value Cycle**. Repeat these steps continuously.

**1) Self-organize** - Facilitate a meeting for people to self-organize into teams around work.

**2) Work** - Teams plan and collaborate on the work item that they formed around.

**3) Synchronize** - On a short cadence, the **Collective** meets to share learning and progress to gain a shared understanding of product state and current conditions.

There is no prescription in FaST regarding the length of the **Value Cycle**; merely a directive to find the shortest possible period that is sensible for the **Collective**. **Value Cycle** length doesn't need consistency from one cycle to the next. For example, a **Collective** may have a two-day **Value Cycle** followed by a three-day **Value Cycle**.

FaST is a pull-based flow system where work is continuous and not time-boxed.
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## FaST Roles

**Member** - Everyone in the **Collective** is a **Member**.

**Product Manager** – A **Member** who understands the mechanics of strategy, product discovery, and value delivery to customers and the business.

A **Collective** can work on multiple products and have multiple **Product Managers**.

**Team Steward** - A **Member** who has volunteered to steward a team in a **Value Cycle**.

**Feature Steward** (Optional) – A **Member** who has volunteered to understand a feature from conception to completion fully and can discuss development progress.

## FaST Tools

**Collective Agreement** - a living document describing how the **Collective** will be together. At a minimum, it should describe how decisions are made and conflicts resolved.

**Marketplace Board** - an artifact to visually see which work items were chosen for the current **Value Cycle** and who is in each team that formed around those items.

**Work Visualization** – information radiators of current understanding and progress.

**Product Mapping and Discovery Trees**  
are information radiators from the first FaST experiment.

## FaST Meeting

The **FaST Meeting** creates a heartbeat for the **Collective** to pause for sense-making, adaptation, synchronization, self-organization and emergence of work and structure to best match current conditions and understanding.

## Part 1: Synchronize the Collective

### - Close Value Cycle

In part one, a representative of each team takes their turn giving a concise update, with just enough information for the **Collective** to understand what that team did and learned in the **Value Cycle**.

The goal of this part is for the **Collective** to synchronize in understanding. What has changed in the environment, market, and the state of product development since we last met?

Reset the **Marketplace Board**, and the **Value Cycle** is considered closed. There is no break in the **FaST Meeting**; immediately open the next **Value Cycle**.

## Part 2: Product Manager Address

### - Open Value Cycle

The **Product Manager** opens a **Value Cycle** with an inspiring message. Ideally reiterating the **Big Picture**. The **Product Manager** might highlight changes to the product since the last **FaST Meeting**, e.g., new aspects or a change in urgency.

## Part 3: Self-organize Into Teams Around Work

### - Marketplace

Using a process inspired by Open Space Technology, the **Collective** creates a **Marketplace** of work for a new **Value Cycle**. **Team Stewards** voluntarily stand up and deliver a brief "pitch," one by one, announcing their intent to steward work. The **Team Steward** then puts a placeholder on the **Marketplace Board** for that work. Once all **Team Stewards** have pitched, the **Collective** has a **Marketplace** of work. **Members** individually decide how best to contribute and put their names next to a work item on the **Marketplace Board**, thus self-selecting into a team.

The **Collective** evaluates proposed work items and team compositions and may adjust these based on sense criteria such as dependencies or limited specialties. A final evaluation rounds up the **FaST Meeting**, and **Members** break away to work with their self-selected team.

# How FaST Teams Work and Resolve Dependencies

FaST Teams can work however they wish as long as it aligns with the **Collective Agreements**. Each team agrees on how they will collaborate.

A team could agree on such things as:

- Working synchronously or asynchronously?
- Core hours?
- Collocated or distributed?
- If collocated, then office, someone's home, or a coffee shop?
- Solo work or ensemble?

## Breaking Down Work and Planning

Most often, work is prepared just enough and just in time inside the **Value Cycle**. Work is recursively broken down until actionable items are discovered.

Teams merge for planning and breakdown when larger cross-team items require a shared understanding.

**Discovery Trees** are a useful visual tool for breaking down, tracking progress, and creating a shared context for work items while enabling rapid understanding.

*"It's in the doing of the work  
that we discover the work we must do."*

*Woody Zuill*

## Dependency Resolution

Self-organization and adjustments in the **FaST Meeting** resolve the most obvious dependencies. However, understanding of work often changes once it starts, so dependencies can still surface. Interdependent teams self-manage through communication, collective intelligence, and best judgment to resolve dependencies.

Example – During planning, team A discovers they will clash with the work of Team B. Team A calls an impromptu meeting with Team B to discuss and perhaps have an architectural discussion. They then find creative ways to move forward.

Resolutions might be:

- One team drops the work item they were on to pick up something else.
- Teams merge temporarily.
- The architectural discussion revealed separate work tracks that do not collide, and the teams stay independent to work on these.
- Teams do parallel probes until an obvious best solution reveals itself.
- Etc. There are infinitely more resolutions than just these examples.

Resilient teams have full agency in finding creative solutions to continue momentum.

## Law of Mobility

The law of mobility comes from Open Space Technology, allowing **Members** to switch teams at any point if it makes sense.

*"Resilient learning team members form a collaborating, self-organizing team.*

*They have the autonomy to determine how they approach the work.*

*The essential motivators—purpose, co-intelligence, and autonomy—lay the foundation for enabling high performance. Purpose and co-intelligence without autonomy equals dependencies and bottlenecks."*

*Diana Larsen and Tricia Broderick*

# FaST Values, Principles, and Pillars

## FaST Values

- Autonomy
- Shared Purpose
- Mastery
- Collaboration
- Self-organization
- Self-management
- Natural leadership

## FaST Principles

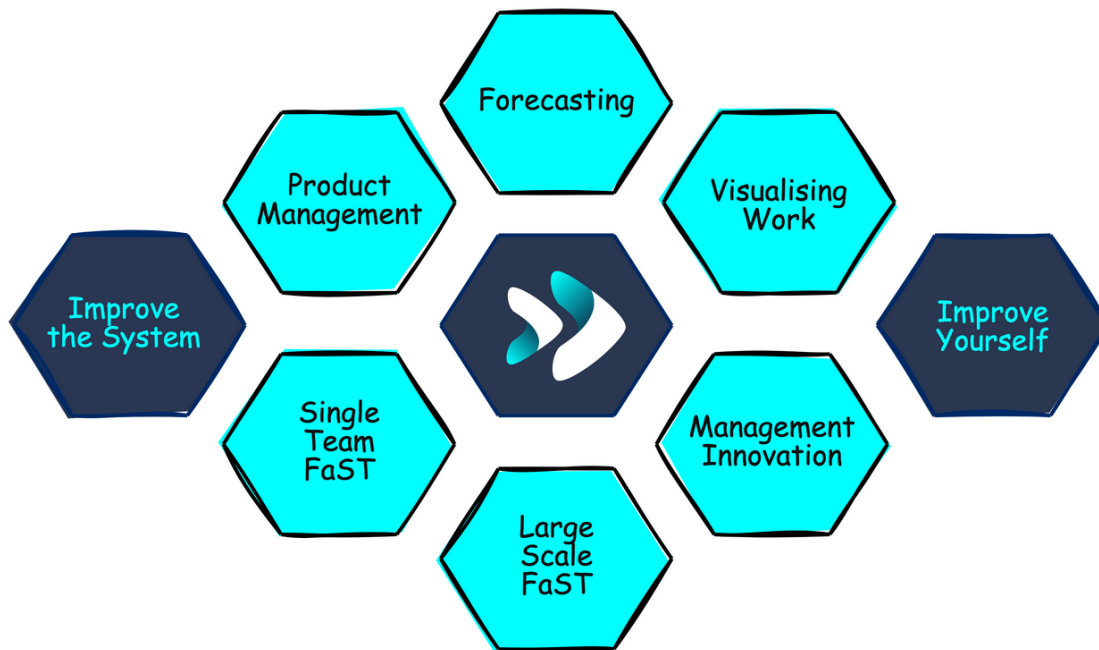
- Do the right thing
- Be T-shaped
- Be a Team Player
- Mentor and be mentored

## FaST Pillars

- Complex Adaptive Systems
- Open Space Technology
- Theory Y Governance
- Lean Startup
- Fluid Teaming
- Dunbar's Number
- Network Organization Structures

# FaST Method and FaST Operating Model

This document describes the **FaST Method**, which is just one component of the **FaST Operating Model**. The **FaST Method** is depicted as the center hexagon with the FaST logo in the figure below.



The surrounding hexagons comprise framework aspects and supporting concepts described in more detail in [separate supplementary guides](#).

For Single Team FaST, this core guide is still relevant and should be read first.