# Webinar: Select and Use Metrics Effectively FAQs

You can download the following research blueprint to guide your efforts to select the most effective and efficacious metrics for your team(s): [*Select and Use SDLC Metrics Effectively*](http://www.infotech.com/research/ss/select-and-use-sdlc-metrics-effectively)*.*

Book a call with one of our analysts to support your metrics selection efforts.

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| I manage a team of software developers. Can you tell me which metrics are best for me to use? | We won’t “tell” you which metrics are best, but we will show you how to select the best metrics for your situation. Our [blueprint](http://www.infotech.com/research/ss/select-and-use-sdlc-metrics-effectively) will help you to evaluate potential metrics and critically assess their individual value in your particular circumstances.  As for potential metrics to assess, the blueprint identifies a number of sources of metric definitions (no matter what area of IT you are trying to measure). Select a bunch that pass the sniff test for you, and then plug them into our [*Metrics Evaluation and Selection Tool*](https://www.infotech.com/research/sdlc-metrics-evaluation-and-selection-tool) to see where the results point you.  Don’t be lulled into believing that any “off the shelf” metrics that everyone seems to be using will be right for you. A metric’s popularity has little to do with whether it will help you meet your goals.  Already have an existing set of metrics? Plug them into the tool, then sit your team down and collaboratively assess your metrics against six key dimensions. The results may surprise you and will also highlight any questionable metrics you may be using. |
| What is the difference between a metric and a KPI (Key Performance Indicator)? | All KPIs are metrics, but not all metrics are KPIs.  KPIs are special metrics for the whole organization (a small, focused set of metrics that convey overall performance). |
| Do my organization’s KPIs affect the metrics I should select for my team? | It is beneficial for team metrics to be aligned with the organization’s KPIs whenever possible.  Info-Tech’s TAG approach to selecting metrics will help to facilitate this alignment, because it starts with identifying your team’s business-aligned goals (which often flow from your organization’s KPIs). |
| ­Good Practice #1 says we should avoid using metrics for either reward or punishment. Is this guidance absolute? What about rewarding people for meeting clear business goals like revenue or sales targets? | This is a great question. Good Practice #1 is not absolute. However, your organization needs to understand the substantial risk of Gaming Behavior and Unintended Consequences whenever a metric is used for reward or punishment.  Therefore, metrics used for reward should be used only when truly necessary and must be selected with great care so as to minimize these risks. |
| Good Practice #4 suggests we stick to just 3-5 metrics. Is that per team, per department, or per division? | Great question. First, let’s keep in mind that the 3-5 metrics rule is a guideline, rather than a prescription (it helps to underscore the importance of not over gathering metrics by forcing you to pick only the best possible metrics for your circumstances).  The 3-5 rule applies to whatever area of the organization you are trying to measure (each team can have its own set of 3-5 metrics that align to 3-5 metrics captured for the entire department, and similarly each department’s metrics would align to a set of metrics for the entire division, and so on).  Schedule a call with an Info-Tech analyst if you want to know more on this topic. |
| Good Practice #8 suggests we change our metrics every 6-12 months, but doesn’t that make trending difficult/impossible? | Let’s begin by saying the blueprint does not suggest you **change** your metrics every 6-12 months. Rather, that you should **review** your metrics periodically along with your business aligned goals (and we suggest a 6-12-month cycle, but it’s just a suggestion).  There are two reasons for this. The first is that if your business-aligned goals have changed, then your metrics may be impacted in some way (after all, your metrics need to support your goals). The second is that you should review your existing metrics periodically to ensure they are doing the job. Are they actually helping you? Are they reliable? Look critically at each metric to see if they should be adjusted to address productivity loss, gaming, ambivalence, or unintended consequences.  Replacing a metric can of course, create trending challenges (depending on how much of a change you are making), but if you opt to drop any metric for a good reason, it may be worth it. Also, remember that you always have the option of capturing a Primary set of metrics (3-5 rule) plus a Secondary set (which are referred to only when needed). If trending is important to you, move your metric from Primary to Secondary so you can maintain continuity, but still recognize it is no longer a Primary metric.  By the way, we don’t expect your metrics will change very often, but when they do, there should be a good reason for doing so based on your periodic critical reviews. |
| Isn’t letting your teams collaboratively select and rate potential metrics a little subjective?  And isn’t it also “putting the foxes in charge of the henhouse” to let a team select its own metrics? | Our collaborative team approach is admittedly subjective. But we believe determining the relative value of metrics will always be a subjective undertaking because it depends so strongly on your individual circumstances. By leveraging the [Wisdom of the Crowd](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom_of_the_crowd), our approach often results in better solutions than listening to a single “expert” opinion.  Also, to avoid “*putting the foxes in charge of the henhouse*” the approach discourages using metrics for reward or punishment. Instead it focuses on what will help your teams to improve and achieve their goals. This “trusted partner” approach borrows heavily from Agile principles and drives selection and use of metrics that help your teams to consciously improve over time. |
| In the [*Metrics Evaluation and Selection Tool*](https://www.infotech.com/research/sdlc-metrics-evaluation-and-selection-tool)*,* can I adjust the relative weighting of the individual pros and cons when calculating the Metric Score. | Like all our blueprints and tools, they are editable by our members, they’re not proprietary, and you can modify them to suit your specific needs. The Metric Score uses a middle of the road approach to the weighting of individual pros and cons. You may want to make adjustments to this weighting to better reflect your particular needs.  You can edit the Metric Score calculation by editing the formula used in the Excel spreadsheet (this will require knowing how to Unprotect some areas of the worksheet and working with a Hidden tab). |

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