Vanity Metric Test

Amplitude

Use this worksheet to grade the metrics your team is using—and see if you're veering into vanity metric territory. Learn more about product metrics you should track by visiting **amplitude.com/metrics**.

Is it a vanity metric? Or a meaningful metric?

Below are 10 statements that describe the healthy and effective use of metrics. This includes themes of context, intent, responsible action, and learning. For each statement, mark whether you agree, disagree, or are neutral in regards to your metric. Then, use the text boxes to elaborate on your response, flag areas of concern, and brainstorm ways to move from "disagree" to "agree."

The metric in question:

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Statement 1: The team understands the underlying rationale for tracking the metric. *Tip: Include metrics orientation in your employee onboarding plan. Amplitude customers frequently use our Notebooks feature to provide context around key metrics.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Statement 2: We present the metric alongside related metrics that add necessary context. When presented in isolation, we add necessary footnotes and references. *Tip: Normalize displaying guardrail and related metrics in key presentations.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

Statement 3: The hypotheses (and assumptions) connecting the metric to meaningful outcomes and impact are clearly articulated, available, and open to challenge/discussion. *Tip: Use tree diagrams (driver trees, North Star Framework, assumption trees, etc.) and causal relationship diagrams to communicate hypothesized causal relationships. Consider playing the "Random Jira Ticket" game. Can you randomly pick a Jira ticket and "walk the tree" up from that item to something that will matter in the long term?*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Statement 4: The metric calculation/definition is inspectable, checkable, and decomposable. Its various components, clauses, features, etc. can be separated. Someone with reasonable domain knowledge can understand how it works. *Tip: Whenever possible, share the metric in a way that allows someone to "click in" to how it is calculated. For example, if the metric involves a filter like "shared with more than 7 users in the 7 days," it should be possible to adjust that clause, and/or see how that number compares to the total number of users, of which that is a subset. Build trust by enabling people to recreate the metric.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

Statement 5: The metric is part of a regularly reviewed and discussed dashboard, scorecard, or report. It has survived healthy scrutiny. If the metric is more exploratory and untested (e.g. "I was curious whether...") that context is made clear from the outset. *Tip: Scrutiny is a good thing. The more eyes you can get on a metric the better. Invite criticism. Record questions as they come up. Make each "showing" of the metric (e.g. at all hands meeting or product review) successively better.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Statement 6: The team has a working theory about what changes in the metric actually indicate. *Tip: Here's a basic prompt to get you thinking: "An increase in this metric is a signal that _____ and a decrease in this metric is a signal that _____".*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

Statement 7: Over time, the metric provides increasing value and confidence. We can point to specific decisions and actions resulting from use of the metric (and those actions are reviewable). The company would invest to continue tracking it and communicating it. *Tip: Indicate confidence levels when displaying metrics, and keep a decision/action log. Try to normalize not being 100% sure at first. Balancing displaying metrics with high confidence levels alongside new candidate metrics with lower confidence levels.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Statement 8: The team establishes clear thresholds of action (e.g. if it exceeds X, then we may consider Y). The metric can go down. And if it goes down, it will likely inspire inspection/action. *Tip: Conduct a scenario planning workshop to better understand how movements in the metric will dictate future behavior. Set monitors in your analytics tool to warn you when a threshold has been reached.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

Statement 9: The metric is comparative (over time, against similar metrics, etc.) Put more broadly, if tracking it for a protracted period of time, it is possible to make apples vs. apples comparisons between time periods. *Tip: Include period over period views in your dashboards to get more eyes on comparisons.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree

Statement 10: The metric is used to communicate challenges AND wins. Not just wins. *Tip: Leaders set the tone here. Discuss situations that didn't work out as you expected, and how you used data to figure that out.*	Disagree	Neutral	Agree