

The Say-Do Ratio


A Metric for Reliability and Accountability



<https://ctoframework.com>

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What is the Say-Do Ratio?

- A metric that compares what is committed to what is delivered.
- Measures the consistency between words and actions.
- Applies to individuals or teams.
-  High say-do ratio is associated to reliability and effectiveness.

Uses of the Say-Do Ratio

- Aids in planning and decision-making.
- Helps identify **issues** and **opportunities**.
- Good predictor of **execution effectiveness**.

Say-Do Ratio in Agile & Scrum

- **Commitment vs. Delivery** – Measures completion within sprints.
- **Predictability & Velocity** – Helps refine estimation and planning.
- **Continuous Improvement** – Useful in retrospectives.

Example 1: Say-Do Ratio with Story Points

Scenario:

- A Scrum team commits to completing 50 story points in a sprint.
- At the end of the sprint, they complete 40 story points.

Say-Do Ratio Calculation:

$$\text{Say-Do Ratio} = \frac{\text{Completed Work}}{\text{Committed Work}} = \frac{40}{50} = 0.8 \text{ (80\%)}$$

Interpretation:

- A ratio below 100% suggests overcommitment or blockers.
- This data can guide better future sprint planning.

Example 2: Overdelivering and High Say-Do Ratio


Scenario:

- A development team commits to completing 8 features in a sprint.
- They work efficiently and manage to complete 12 features.

Say-Do Ratio Calculation:

$$\text{Say-Do Ratio} = \frac{\text{Completed Features}}{\text{Committed Features}} = \frac{12}{8} = 1.5 \text{ (150\%)}$$

Interpretation:

- This could indicate high efficiency, but also suggests **conservative planning**.
-  A balance is needed to maintain **realistic yet ambitious commitments**.

How/When not to use the Say-do ratio

- **Punishing Honest Communication** – Can discourage openness and ambition.
- **Measuring Performance in Isolation** – One of many KPIs.
- **Discouraging Risk Taking** – Innovation requires some risk.
- **Micromanagement** – Strict tracking can limit adaptability.
- **Rigid Performance Measurement** – Agile requires flexibility.

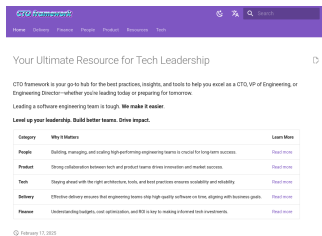
- The say-do ratio is a **guiding metric** that represents commitment and delivery.
- Helps teams refine **predictability, sprint planning, and trust**.
- Should support **continuous improvement** rather than stifle innovation.

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The screenshot shows the CTO Framework website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Delivery, Finance, People, Product, Resources, and Tools. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads "Your Ultimate Resource for Tech Leadership". A sub-heading states: "CTO Framework is your go-to hub for the best practices, insights, and tools to help you excel as a CTO, VP of Engineering, or Engineering Director—whether you're leading today or preparing for tomorrow." Below this, a key message says: "Leading a software engineering team is tough. We make it easier. Level up your leadership. Build better teams. Drive impact." A table follows, listing various categories with brief descriptions and links to learn more.

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Product	Strong collaboration between tech and product teams drives innovation and market success.	Read more
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Delivery	Efficient delivery ensures that engineering teams ship high-quality software on time, aligning with business goals.	Read more
Finance	Understanding budgets, cost optimization, and ROI is key to making informed tech investments.	Read more

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