



Team Chartering



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Preface

Before starting any type of a teaming process, it is important that the team sponsor develop a draft Team Charter. The sponsor starts the process and then works with the team leader to develop more of the details. A detailed Team Charter provides the start-up direction a team needs to be successful in tackling the task it has been assigned. Too often teams spend a considerable amount of their valuable resources trying to figure out what it is they are supposed to do. A well developed Team Charter helps move the team to the performing stage since it answers a number of issues that usually arise in the norming and storming phase of a team startup cycle.² A detailed Team Charter focuses valuable organizational resources on the task that needs to be accomplished.

Introduction

The Team Charter is the official document from the team sponsor that empowers the team to act. It is a written document describing the mission of the team and how this mission is to be accomplished. The Team Charter is one of the most under-used and under-valued tools available to sponsors, team leaders, and facilitators for helping a team succeed. The Team Charter is often overlooked because it is time consuming to develop. To write a clear, concise, and inclusive Team Charter requires great forethought and effort. Too often the sponsor is in such a rush to start the teaming process that they skip the basic step of filling out a Team Charter that clearly defines the goals and objectives to be achieved. A sponsor must take the time to fill out a Team Charter so that the team will clearly understand the why, what, who, when, and where of the process they are to undertake.

When a team is started without a formal Team Charter many meetings are often wasted trying to figure “why we are here, what we should do, and when it should be done.” The team spends a considerable amount of time and energy trying to second guess what the sponsor really wanted when they formed the team. This is a loss of valuable time and talent on the part of the team that could be avoided by designing a clear mission statement prior to the team’s formation.

The Team Charter is an official work contract. This document delineates the strategic goals, boundaries, measures of success, constraints/limits, and available resources. The Team Charter provides a framework for ongoing discussions between the team and its sponsor with regard to the team’s direction and progress.

The Team Charter is an iterative process until a base line acceptance is established. It must be reviewed on a regular basis by the sponsor, the team leader, facilitator, and team members to ensure that it is reflective of what the team is doing or will be doing in the future.

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2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forming,_storming,_norming_and_performing—Tuckman, Burce. “Developmental sequence in small groups”. *Psychological Bulletin* **63** (6): 384-99, 1965, accessed 12/21/09. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3954/is_200104/ai_n8943663

The Team Charter

Figure 1 shows an example that will be used to guide the reader through the process of writing a successful Team Charter. The authors have found this type of Team Charter a useful tool in working with a sponsor to guide the work of a proposed team. After a few iterations of this charter a sponsor has a written document that describes in detail what the team is to accomplish. This becomes the official work contract for the team leader and the facilitator to begin the teaming process.

1. TEAM CHARTER:

2. Team Name:		3. Version:	4. Subject:
5. Problem / Opportunity Statement³:			
6. Team Sponsor		7. Team Leader:	
8 Team Members:		Area of Expertise:	
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
9. Performance Improvement AIM (Mission):			
10. Scope (Boundaries):			
11. Customers (primary and other):		Customer Needs Addressed:	
12. Objectives: SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Frame			
✓			
✓			
✓			
13. Success Metrics (Measures):			
14. Considerations (Assumptions / Constraints / Obstacles / Risks):			
15. Available resources		16. Additional Resources Required:	
17. Key Milestones:			Date:
18. Communication Plan (Who, How, and When):			
19. Key Stakeholders:		Area of Concern (as it relates to the Charter):	

Figure 1

³ For additional information on developing AIM Statements reference: *Ready, AIM, Problem Solve*, L. Beitsch, MD, G. Duffy, and J. Moran, The Quality Texas Newsletter, October 2009

Each of the nineteen sections of the charter is explained below describing what each section accomplishes, why it is important, and includes an example of a typical statement(s) that may be written for that section. Some sections include tips for implementation.

Team Charter Detail by Section:

Section 1. Charter: (Project or Task Force)	
What it does:	Establishes the nature of the work.
Why it is important:	<p>Differentiates the team work in the following way:</p> <p>A <u>Project</u> is typically a well defined system or process change, the scope and implementation needs are known up front, the project timeline is predictable, and the outcome known.</p> <p>A <u>Task Force</u> is usually less prescribed, usually focusing on a problem to be solved or an improvement opportunity.</p> <p>The charter is a vehicle by which the team can reach consensus on the aim, define the boundaries of the process, and identify the means by which the effort will measure its success.</p>
Example:	<p>Project: Implementation of a scheduling system.</p> <p>Task Force: Waits and Delay, Improvement Team.</p>

Section 2. Team Name:	
What it does:	Identifies the team.
Why it is important:	<p>Enables the team to distinguish the effort from others.</p> <p>Tip: Keep it simple, unique, and easily stated.</p>
Example:	WIC Waiting Room Time Reduction Team.

Section 3. Version (Number/Date):	
What it does:	Tracks and clarifies versions of the charter, identifies current charter.
Why it is important:	<p>Charters if used well will be iterative; it is important to establish the last time the document was edited.</p> <p>Tip: Using only the last edited date is the simplest method.</p>
Example:	December 12, 20XX or Version #5, December 12, 20XX.

Section 4. Subject:	
What it does:	Identifies the area of focus.
Why it is important:	Clarifies the intent of the project.
Example:	WIC Intake Department.

Section 5. Problem / Opportunity Statement:	
What it does:	States why this effort was initiated and what will be affected by the outcome.
Why it is important:	Orients team and others to the true need for the effort. The source and analysis of the data that identified the problem or opportunity should be included and used as a baseline.
Example:	WIC applicants are complaining that it takes too much time to process their in-person application and there is a lack of privacy while giving information to the clerk.

Section 6. Team Sponsor:	
What it does:	Identifies the senior leader that supports and/or initiated this effort.
Why it is important:	Established who in senior leadership cares about this effort and has overall operational accountability. The Sponsor will be expected to break down barriers and “go to bat” for the team.
Example:	Mary James, Health Officer

Section 7. Team Leader:	
What it does:	Identifies one individual who will guide the team to achieve successful outcomes and who will communicate to senior leaders.
Why it is important:	Established who will conduct team meetings, provide focus and direction, and will ensure productive use of team member’s time. This person is not necessarily the same individual who will be “in charge” of the process, but should be a person who will “lose sleep” over the outcome.
Example:	Joe Smith, WIC Department Manager

Section 8. Team Members and Area of Expertise:	
What it does:	Defines who will be on the team and why.
Why it is important:	Assure that all the people necessary to effect change will be involved. Tip: You may have people that you do not need on the core team however, they are key stakeholders and must be consulted with, and made aware of, changes. These individuals should be identified in the Charter. Refer to the high level process utilized to define the scope to verify that the team has representation from each major process step.
Example:	Team Member: Bill Bates – WIC Intake supervisor

Section 9. Performance Improvement AIM (Mission):	
What it does:	It describes what the team intends to do, providing the team with a focus and a way to measure progress. The aim should be derived from a known problem (data) and need for corrective action.
Why it is important:	Clarifies where the team is going and enables them to know when they get there. A well stated aim affords a team the opportunity to improve many aspects of the system or process related to the aim. TIP: Most successful improvement efforts have a succinct aim with a measurable stretch goal. The measure should be monitored over time and tracked in the form of a statistical process control chart.
Example:	AIM: To reduce the waiting time by 50%.

Section 10. Scope (Boundaries):	
What it does:	Specifies the boundaries of the process you are involved in. They may be stated in time frames and/or process steps.
Why it is important:	Sets the stage; provides focus; identifies limits. Tip: Map out a 7-9 step high-level process flow for the scope you've defined. This will help you understand what you need to be successful, including validating team membership.
Example:	"The time the person arrives in the WIC Department to the time they have successfully filled out the application and leave."

Section 11. Customers (primary and other) and Customer Needs Addressed:	
What it does:	Identifies the primary (and other) customers of the product or service you provide and specifies the ways in which you meet their stated needs.
Why it is important:	Identifying customers early helps you decide if they need to be represented on the actual team. The identification of their needs and how well you are or are not meeting them must be continually assessed during the improvement process.
Example:	Applicant for WIC benefits.

Section 12. Objectives:	
What it does:	Listing out the specific and measurable objectives for the effort will help define the opportunities to improve.
Why it is important:	It enables the team to reach consensus on what will be addressed during the course of the effort. Tip: Group similar objectives and give them a descriptive title; for example, Eliminating Waste. Grouping objectives into change concepts facilitates creative thinking with improvement teams.
Example:	Eliminating Waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unnecessary waiting time • Reduce duplicative data entry

Section 13. Success Metrics (Measures):	
What it does:	Defines how you measure the success of the improvement effort or the project as a whole.
Why it is important:	Metrics help the team and sponsor to understand when and if an implemented improvement is meeting the desired goal. Tips: Be specific. Agree to definitions and data sources. It is ideal to have a balanced set of measures: satisfaction / costs / outcome. Identify one overarching measure that can be an assay for the entire effort – measure it over time and use a control chart. Keep it simple – use sampling.
Example:	Overall applicant cycle time to get service and complete an application will be reduced by 50%

Section 14 Considerations (Assumptions /Constraints /Obstacles /Risks)	
What it does:	Describes both positive and negative factors that must be discussed and understood prior to the work beginning. Assumptions: statements of requirements that must be accepted; Constraints: an element that might restrict or regulate project actions or outcomes; Obstacles: a factor that might impede progress; Risks: a course of action that might pose a hazard or cause loss.
Why it is important:	Clarifies expectations; requires people to reflect on the effort in a more thoughtful way; can redefine the work; may facilitate the removal of known obstructions in advance; gives credibility to teams (that they have considered possible issues).
Example:	Assumption: The WIC intake area can be rearranged to make for private booths Constraints: Information Technology solutions will not be entertained at this time (system upgrade planned in 2 years). Obstacles: Departmental practices related to scheduling applicants differ widely. Risks: Changes may not conform to legal requirements

Section 15. Available Resources:	
What it does:	Articulate who and what is available to support the team. This might include a facilitator, trainers, or funds.
Why it is important:	Provides both the team and senior leadership with an opportunity to negotiate what the team needs to be successful.
Example:	Facilitator: Cathy Lee. On campus team workshops. Up to \$5,000 is available for teaching assistant.

Section 16. Additional Resources: Required	
What it does:	Articulate what else will be needed to make this project successful. This might include a subject matter expert (SME), etc.
Why it is important:	Provides both the team and senior leadership with an opportunity to negotiate what the team needs to be successful.
Example:	SME: Ginger Mercy. SME for Value Stream Analysis. Up to \$5,000 is available for additional support personnel.

Section 17. Key Milestones: Date:	
What it does:	Marks significant expectations and/or deliverables the team can expect.
Why it is important:	Holds the team accountable. Maps progress.
Example:	Current State Assessment due March 15 th . Recommendations to be presented to senior leadership in 6 weeks.

Section 18. Communication Plan (Who, How, and When):	
What it does:	Clarifies your communication plan.
Why it is important:	Identifies everyone who is expecting to receive communication on this team effort.
Example:	The entire team will give a report out to the stakeholders 6 weeks from the start of the project (~ Nov15). The Team Leader will update the Sponsor weekly (agenda item at the regular staff meeting).

Section 19. Key Stakeholders and Area of Concern (as it relates to the Charter):	
What is does:	Identifies individuals and/or departments that may be impacted by the outcome. These individuals should be sought out as a resource and communicated with on a regular basis.

Why it is important:	It recognizes their importance and increases the team's awareness.
Example:	John Smith - Information Systems

Example:

1. TEAM CHARTER for the Strategic Organization Team

2. Team Name: SCCA - Strategic Organization Team	3. Version: 2.0	4. Subject: Formal Communication Guidelines. Recommendations for improved communication channels among SCCA leadership related to meeting critical program goals.
5. Problem / Opportunity Statement: The Director of SCCA is committed to providing a more effective communication environment among those reporting directly to her. She has taken action to reorganize the physical workplace to encourage smoother transfer of information and provide a more conducive atmosphere for sharing of critical program and operational data.		
6. Team Sponsor: Shirley Davis-Boyce		7. Team Leader: Grace Duffy
8. Team Members:	Area of Expertise:	
1. Mike K	MBB	
2. Lisa V	Seeking BB; Project Management; Process Improvement; Software Development; Systems Engineering	
3. Tim W	Statistics; Tools	
4. Chris G	Tools; Quality	
5. Jim D	Software Development; Testing	
6. Diane F	Project Management; Interpersonal relations; Requirements elicitation	
7. Sara P	SCCA Employee	
8. Leo L	Community Assistance Business Manager	
9. Dave F	MBB	
9. Process Improvement aim (Mission): Recommend a set of formal communication guidelines that support Direct Reports (people) to the manager of CA to manage common information of key process areas to meet program outcomes.		

10. Scope (Boundaries): Strategic focus; Stay within the scope of process and organizational focus; Software definition focus is outside our scope. Communication around SCCA Direct Reports	
11. Customers (primary and other): Direct Reports of SCCA Director SCCA Director	Customer Needs Addressed: Process Definition and Organizational Enhancement Process Definition and Organizational Enhancement
12. Objectives: ✓ Formal Communication Guidelines ✓ Establish monitoring and measurement tools to maintain improvements ✓ ✓	
13. Success Metrics (Measures): Surveys of percent satisfied with level of communication. Percent improvement of key process area reporting requirements	
14. Considerations (Assumptions / Constraints / Obstacles / Risks): a. No SCCA Leadership involvement on the Strategic Organization team. b. Remote / distributed team will be a challenge c. Volunteer team is composed of full-time employees with limited time to dedicate to the project during the work-days.	
15. Available Resources: Volunteers SCCA Project Leader	16. Additional Resources Required: SCCA Leadership / Management Involvement with the Strategic Organization team
17. Key Milestones: Define Measure Analyze Design Verify	Date: May 2010 June 2010 July 2010 September 2010 December 2010
18. Communication Plan (Who, How, and When): Developed as a separate document.	
19. Key Stakeholders: Team Sponsor - TBD during Measure phase	Area of Concern (as it relates to the Charter): Problem Statement/ Objective Time for direct involvement of SCCA staff and leadership

Summary

Overall, the benefits of using the Team Charter are to provide teams with the following:

- Contract
- Clarity
- Focus
- Alignment
- Permission
- Protection
- Boundaries
- Metrics

These elements of a team project are the foundation upon which the team builds for eventual successful outcomes.

In this article we have shown a step by step template for developing a Team Charter. This template can be modified to fit your specific needs. However, we have found that each section is necessary for providing the direction a team needs to be successful from the beginning.

The charter does not tell the team how to solve the problem or what a solution should look like. The charter sets the process in motion, establishes key milestones and desired outcomes, but does not suggest a solution path. The team must use the tools available to them to figure out how to solve the problem they have been commissioned to study. The charter starts the team in the right direction.

Today resources are scarce. Everyone involved in the health community must use the tools available to get a maximum return on their resources. The Team Charter can save an enormous amount of time and reduce confusion for a team since it defines clear goals, expressed duties, and desired outcomes. To omit this step in planning for a successful team process is to reduce the overall effectiveness of the team and the ultimate goals of the sponsor.

The Public Health Quality Improvement Handbook

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Little in the current world is simple. Nothing comes in a box for us to add water and stir. There are those, however, who have been successful and who are willing to share their success. The messages in *The Public Health Quality Improvement Handbook* are from leaders, physicians, practitioners, academics, consultants, and researchers who are successfully applying the tools and techniques they share. The chapters are written to support the leaders and workforce of our public health community. This book, a collaboration between ASQ and the Public Health Foundation, is an anthology of chapters written by subject matter experts in public health who are successfully meeting client needs, working together to maximize outcomes, and expanding their collaboration with community partners to encourage better health within neighborhoods, counties, and states. There has never been a better time or a more needed one for us to harness the energy, enthusiasm, hard work, and dedication of our public health workforce to make a lasting difference. By effectively using quality improvement tools and techniques, we can and will improve our nation's health.