

Team Chartering

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Preface

A team is a group of individuals organized to work together to accomplish an aim. The term associated with the combining of skills, talents, and knowledge of others in a common effort is synergy, or the synergistic effect. An organizational work unit may not necessarily function as a team. However, a team may be comprised of members of a work unit.

A team cares about achieving common goals. Teams are formed with the understanding that improved quality can be achieved using the skills, talents, and knowledge of appropriate individuals. Process Improvement Teams (PIT), as they are typically called, focus on creating or improving a specific business process. A PIT may attempt to completely reengineer a process or work on incremental improvements. If attempting a breakthrough, the team is usually cross-functional in composition, with representatives from a number of different functions and with a range of skills related to the process to be improved. A PIT working on incremental improvements often is comprised of persons having a functional interest in improving a portion of the overall process, e.g., representatives from a specific functional work unit.²

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. This initial expectation setting activity is especially important in a cross-functional team. Often team members have not worked with each other before or even part of the same organization. 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 figuring out what they are supposed to do. A well developed Team Charter helps move the team to the performing stage. It answers a number of issues that usually arise in the norming and storming phase of a team startup cycle³. A detailed Team Charter focuses valuable organizational resources on the task to be accomplished.

Introduction

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² John Bauer, Grace Duffy, Russell T. Westcott, The Quality Improvement Handbook, 2002, Chapter 3, Quality Press, Milwaukee, WI

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forming,_storming,_norming_and_performing - Tuckman, Bruce. "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 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. 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 complete a Team Charter so 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 meetings are often wasted trying to decide “why we are here, what we should do, and when it should be done.” The team spends a considerable amount of time and energy second guessing what the sponsor really wanted when they formed the team. This is a loss of valuable team time and talent that could be avoided by designing a clear mission statement prior to team 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.

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 find 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 Statement⁴:		
6. Team Sponsor		7. Team Leader:

⁴ 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*

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

Each of the nineteen sections of the charter is explained below describing what each section accomplishes and why it is important, with 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:	Differentiates the team work in the following way: 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 identified. A <u>Task Force</u> is usually less prescribed, usually focusing on a problem to be solved or an improvement opportunity. 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.

Example:	Project: Implementation of a scheduling system. Task Force: Waits and Delay, Improvement Team.
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Section 2. Team Name:	
What it does:	Identifies the team.
Why it is important:	Enables the team to distinguish the effort from others. Tip: Keep it simple, unique, and easily stated.
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:	Charters if used well will be iterative; it is important to establish the last time the document was edited. Tip: Using only the last edited date is the simplest method.
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,

	<i>Eliminating Waste.</i> Grouping objectives into change concepts facilitates creative thinking with improvement teams.
Example:	<i>Eliminating Waste</i> ➤ 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 Orange County, Florida, Department of Health

2. Team Name: (PPAT) Permitting Process Action Team	3. Version: III 4/17/08	4. Subject: Septic System Permitting
5. Problem / Opportunity Statement:		
1) Time is too long between application and permit issuance.	2) Tracking of paperwork between application and issuance is not effective.	
6. Team Sponsor: Scott Chambers	7. Team Leader: Mary Howard	
8. Team Members:	Area of Expertise:	
1. Michele Drengberg	SME: QA and OCHD culture/procedures	
2. Drew Burns	Data gathering, Arms length observer, SME	
3. Gary Smith	Supervisor, authority for resources & time allocation	
4. Chaquana Elliot	SME Clerical and internal process flow	

5. Yelitza Jimenez	SME Field Inspection and External contractor communication.
6. Melissa Hulse	SME Data, QA and arms length observation
7. Grace Duffy	Facilitator, coach, Process Imp SME
8. Anne Marie Strickland	QA administration and support
9. Process Improvement Aim (Mission): Reduce cycle time and balance use of resources without reducing quality of service within Orange County EVH for the Septic System Permitting process. Pilot activities in test by 2 nd quarter 2008 with continuing improvement and monitoring drafted by end of 3 rd quarter 2008.	
10. Scope (Boundaries): Starts with initial application by contractor for Septic System Permit. Ends with complete, accurate issuance of Septic System Permit	
11. Customers (primary and other): Contractors, business owners, builders, engineers, [repairs vs. new], permit pullers, Homeowners institutions, site evaluators, Tallahassee, permitting companies, restaurants, internal staff	Customer Needs Addressed: Completed permit, in perfect case in 3 – 5 business days. Ability to issue permit for internal staff
12. Objectives: ✓ Maintain or improve quality of permits ✓ Reduce cycle time of permit issuance from + or – 8 bus days to 3 – 5 bus days by 6/12/08 (consider line loctr) ✓ State requirements 9 bus days. New and 2 business days repair. ✓ Increase customer satisfaction of permit process from _____ to _____ by _____ ✓ Document and track process activities from application to final permit issuance	
13. Success Metrics (Measures): Quality of work processes (cycle time, workload, continuity of numbers with Rehost) Quality of outcomes (internal and contractor sat)	Effective and complete tracking of green folders Reduction of time to correct issuance of permit
14. Considerations (Assumptions / Constraints / Obstacles / Risks): .Septic applications are not consistent quantity day to day. Current scheduling of clerical inputs may be causing delays. Opinion and input of involved staff, 4 day week schedules. “Green” considerations	
15. Available Resources: Team member commitment. Date/Time/Tracking numbers already in use	16. Additional Resources Required: Samples of permits, paperwork. Partnership with Nancy Smith
17. Key Milestones: 3/25 Line Locates and Green Folder process improve. 4/22 On-site meeting with entire EVH staff for opinions and input, 6/12 Pilot updated Septic System Permitting flow. 6/24 Future state process test measures and work balancing results/analysis. 7/1 Final report and celebration.	Date: 3/25, 4/22, 6/12, 6/24, 7/1/08

18. Communication Plan (Who, How, and When): Minutes @ meetings on SharePoint. Cc: Grace Duffy by email attachment. Bart Harris: After 5/13/08 meeting for Interim update report. Final Report to Scott/David/Dr. Sherin by 7 31 08. General: Scott Chambers, David Overfield, Dr. Sherin, Bart Harris, Internal staff. Other department supervisors.	
19. Key Stakeholders: Bart Harris, Dr. Sherin, David Overfield, Septic Contractors. (End of April Update) State & other Regulatory bodies	Areas of Concern (as it relates to the Charter): Ensuring good measuring points for consistent data. Staffing. Quality must not suffer in order to make time Frames. Paperwork must come back in when sent off for Additional information.

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.

One key point to note is that 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 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 by defining 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.