Team or Project
Charter
Format and Explanation

A Healthy Systems How-To Guide Supplement

by Sara S. Grigsby

Charter format and explanation
Healthy Systems How To Supplement 2005

Healthy Systems ebooks provide readers with practical information and tools, focusing on organizational development. We welcome your feedback. info@healthysystems.net.

Healthy Systems How-To Guide Series

Healthy Systems How-To Guides focus on organization development topics such as meeting facilitation, project management and organizational change.

Each topic is presented as a Series of three stand-alone Guides —

• Process and Tools

• Principles and Mental Models

• Personal Skills and Practices

Additional Supplements such as this are published from time to time on special challenges associated with the Series.

You may start with any of the three Guides — Process, Principles or Person. All three Guides are filled with practical information, tools and illustrations. Together they form a framework of understanding and practice.
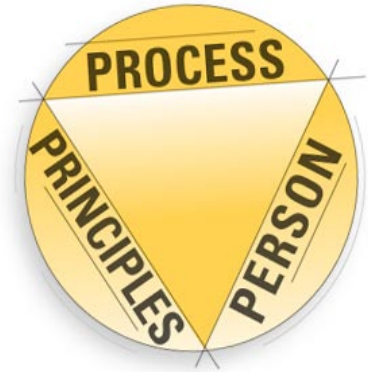
Elements of a Team or Project Charter

A charter is a tool that sets Identity and Direction. Charters can be formatted a variety of ways. They can include a variety of elements of your choosing. This is one format that can guide the formation of your team and the definition of your project, governance, mission and goals.

Use this tool to help

·   Define your project

·   Organize your team on its purpose

·   Document direction

·   Remind others of past agreements shown in the Charter

Description of Charter Elements:

Name of Team or Project:

Functional, Creative, Clear, Fun -- You decide

Time frame:

How long will it take? How long do you want to give to it? Doesn't it depend on the goals that you are trying to reach? If your team is on-going, set a date (perhaps annually) for the team to review and reassess their charter.

Sponsor(s):

The sponsor can be a group of an individual. Usually this is known when the team is formed.

Purpose:

An Overall Purpose Statement is often provided by the person or agency that is sponsoring the project. Nonetheless, the purpose must be understood by all and "bought into" by the team. The purpose is broad and usually does not contain measurements, metrics, targets, etc. It is usually 1-2 sentences and answers the question, Why are we here? You can think of this as the Team's or Project's mission.

Goals:

Goals must be clearly stated and measurable (at least in deadlines) so that there can be no question as to whether or not the team accomplished the goal. The goals serve as "milestones" and/or "products" of the team. Goals begin to define accountability of the team and its members. Goals are translated into "Desired Outcomes" in your meeting agenda.

Team Members:

The membership list is sometimes provided by the sponsor, and sometimes not. The team may ask for other members in its organizational phase. Members should agree to be members during the first meeting. Buy-in at this point is critical. The Charter may help some members decide on their level of willingness and commitment.

Roles and Functions:

There may be many roles. Neutral facilitator, scribe, logistics, administrator, time keeper, leader-manager, archivist, liaison to outside groups, other(s): These roles may be assigned, agreed to, volunteered for, combined, permanent, or rotated. There are advantages and disadvantages for each. The team needs to know about the responsibilities of each role before selecting roles and certainly clarity of role expectations leads to better performance.

Authority:

Authority is what the team can (and can not do). On what types of issues can it decide and act? On what issues does it have recommending authority? Where does its scope of authority end? What are the hand-offs or deliverables to the broader organizational unit (the boss, other teams, staff, peer groups)?

Decision-Making Method:

Primary: _____ Fallback: _____

How will the group make a decision? Consensus, voting, leader decides and announces. There are several styles of decision-making and no one way is appropriate for all teams and in all situations. Generally, it is a good idea to have a primary way to make decisions and a fallback decision-making method. Whatever method the team selects, it must the explicitly agreed upon by the members. It is important to see if the sponsoring agent has any input to this section. It is also critical that the team's decision-making style "hand-shakes" with the broader organizational method of decision making.

Reporting and Lines of Communication:

Who will the team report to, what is the purpose of the communication, in what form, and how often? In the charter, the team simply lists the audience, the reason for reporting, and any other details that it has been asked to do or that it decides is appropriate. Later in the team's organization, a more formal reporting plan should be created.

Measurements of Success

Consider setting measures of success for People, Process and Results. Sometimes the project or team sponsor provides the measures but the targets or goals for each measure are classically the responsibility of the team to set initially. For example, there may be a Time measure. The Target of that Time measure may be "Complete the Project by May, 2015".

Evaluation Mechanism:

Decide on the front side how your team will evaluate its success or performance. A classic method involves all stakeholders in a Post Project Review or Presentation that seeks feedback and reviews data collected.

Timeline or Schedule of Phases, Steps or Tasks:

If your project is large or complex, use a Gantt chart or Timeline tool for this element. If, on the other hand, your steps are simple or straightforward, include your timeline in this Charter.

Team Charter

Name:

Date:

Sponsor(s):

Overall Purpose:

Time Frame or Life of Charter: (start and end dates)

Goals:

Members:

Roles: (facilitator, leader, scribe, member, time-keeper, archivist)

Authority:

Decision-Making Method(s): Primary and Fallback

Reporting & Lines of Communication: audience, purpose, method

Measurements: people, process, outputs/results

Evaluation Mechanism:

Timeline or Schedule of Phases, Steps or Tasks:

Other Healthy Systems How-To Guides

You have completed a Healthy Systems How-To Guide Supplement. Each How-To Guide and Series fits into our leadership and management model illustrated on this page. The table below provides a sampling of the topics covered in other Healthy Systems products.

Content	Process - steps	Principles - guidance	Person - roles
Identity and Direction	Strategic purposing and planning	If you don't know where you are going, any road will do. Identity is self-organizing.	Executive Leadership Leaders at all levels Management
Process Design	Redesign and improvement	Processes are designed to serve the goals and strategies of the organization.	Operations Managers Quality Improvement Teams Organization Development
Project Management	Defining to implementing	Cross boundaries judiciously	Project Managers Teams Administration Support
Meetings	Start up to wrap up	First Understanding and then agreement Go Slow to Go Fast	Facilitators Teams Project Managers
Relationships and Teams	Communication, collaboration and conflict resolution	Relationships are the most personal and meaningful way to practice integration and alignment. Focus on Interests, Not Positions	Human Resources All people, all positions
Culture	Aligning through story telling, surfacing assumptions, problem solving and celebrating	Surface assumptions Define Values Create heroes that define your ideal culture.	Organization Development Human Resources Social Networks All people, all positions
Corporate Wellness	Including a human resource goal in your strategic plan.	There is a reciprocal relationship between the health of the organization and the well being of the people who work there.	All people, all positions
Design and Change	Involving, designing, redesigning, diffusing	Principles of All Systems: Everything is interconnected. Structure dictates functioning. Systems resist change. Lasting change takes time.	Organization Development, Leaders at all levels Managers
Healthy Organization	Integrating all the processes above. Creating a Balanced Scorecard for the health of your organization	Focus on flow, integration and alignment. Release tensions and bottlenecks.	Organization Development Leaders at all levels Managers Social Networks

About Healthy Systems

Healthy Systems is a management consulting firm that aligns and integrates the people, processes and strategic directions of an organization—for the health of the organization and the well-being of its employees.

We train and coach organizations in the dynamics of complex systems and in the skills, tools and strategies for creating and sustaining a vital and balanced workplace.

Healthy Systems works in collaboration with organization development and training specialists to meet your specific and customized needs.

Healthy Systems provides consulting and customized training for organizational effectiveness, focusing on methods to create and sustain vitality and relevance in meetings, projects, processes, planning and interpersonal relationships.

About Sara Grigsby

Sara Grigsby has worked professionally as an organizational development consultant, trainer and facilitator since 1985, providing project-based management, coaching, training and event facilitation services to a variety of corporate, public agency and health care clients.
Sara is the founder of Healthy Systems and its lead consultant.

She has been writing about Organization Development and creating tools to help others create healthy systems since 1995. Her CV is available online: http://healthysystems.net/htmls/about/sara.html

Sara is currently Senior Organization Development consultant for NWNatural in Portland, Oregon. She lives in Corbett, Oregon at Benfield Farm <http://www.benfieldfarm.com>.