

# GROUP CHARTER

A Group Charter defines the shared expectations of appropriate behaviors among members of a group or team. Reviewing and building agreements in the form of a charter can set the environment and guide people's interaction as the team evolves. It can also assist the team from straying from their stated intentions of how they want to be together. The charter acts as the foundational agreement, one which builds a sense of unity and commonality. It represents something which each team member aspires to uphold. Members are held accountable to behave according to his or her agreement while they are members of the group.

Below are some sample elements often included in charters. They are categorized according to the type of 'prevention' or 'intervention' you may require when facilitating group meetings, and interactions. Select the elements which are most appropriate for your team. Please note: These are just samples; it is best to write your own, as the language will be more meaningful to you.

Atmosphere/Climate	Roles/ Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have Fun!</li> <li>○ Take opportunities to get to know each other.</li> <li>○ Enjoy each other's company!</li> <li>○ Create Fun!</li> <li>○ It's OK to enjoy yourself!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decide your expectations, and work to achieve them.</li> <li>○ Share responsibility for making this meeting a success.</li> <li>○ Decide what YOU want or need from today and work to achieve that.</li> <li>○ Share ownership for the successes of this team.</li> </ul>
Creativity	Maintain Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explore other's ideas and suggestions.</li> <li>○ Incorporate the good points from everyone's ideas.</li> <li>○ Look for ways to make new ideas work ... not for reasons they won't.</li> <li>○ Everybody's ideas count.</li> <li>○ Think as though there are absolutely no obstacles or rules in the way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respect other people's time - stick to the topic and to the timetable.</li> <li>○ Confine your discussion to the topic.</li> <li>○ Honor time limits.</li> <li>○ Respect time.</li> <li>○ Avoid side conversations.</li> <li>○ Focus on the issue at hand.</li> <li>○ Stay focused and honor timelines.</li> </ul>

Criticism/Feedback		Confidentiality	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide constructive feedback and receive it appropriately.</li> <li>○ It's OK to disagree.</li> <li>○ No finger pointing and blame</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep confidences and trust others to keep yours</li> </ul>	
Openness/ Communication		Participation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Share candidly - Open, Honest, and Straight from the Heart.</li> <li>○ Listen with your heart and mind.</li> <li>○ Open Communication.</li> <li>○ Listen as an ally.</li> <li>○ Listen to understand what others are saying.</li> <li>○ Ask questions to clarify, not to debate.</li> <li>○ Give freely of your experiences.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate, contribute, speak up.</li> <li>○ Everyone participates - no one dominates.</li> <li>○ Share the airtime; contribute, speak up, encourage others to participate.</li> <li>○ Enter into discussion enthusiastically.</li> <li>○ Share the airtime.</li> </ul>	
Sensitivity/ Respect for Others			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appreciate the other person's point of view.</li> <li>○ Focus on the issue and problems, not the person.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Protect the other person's self-esteem ("golden rule").</li> <li>○ We're all colleagues - let's respect each other.</li> </ul>	

## TEAM NORMS

It is very important for a team to reach consensus on their norms. Each person needs to be listened to. Norms are meaningless unless all team members buy into and live them.

A new team needs to discuss and decide on ground rules that fit their situation. The following checklist is intended as a guide for teams who are developing team norms. Some of the items may not be applicable, however it would be valuable to go through each of the items to determine how it might (or might not) apply to your team.

## GENERAL

Decision Making		Notes
	Which process will be used and what is the fall back?	
	How will work be prioritized?	
Performance Measurement		
	How will the group get and give feedback and measure their performance?	
	How can the group constantly improve what they do?	
Confidentiality		
	How is confidential team information handled?	
Communication		
	How will team members communicate outside of meetings?	

	How will we give each other feedback?	
	How will we support each other?	
<b>Team Maintenance</b>		
	How will the team take care of itself? (Relationship/maintenance concerns)	
	What kind of climate do we want in our group? How can we build it?	
	How is conflict identified and resolved?	
<b>Recognition/Celebration</b>		
	How will team members be recognized?	
	How will success be celebrated?	
<b>Creativity/ Innovation</b>		
	What is the team going to do to stay current and look at new ways? (Avoid getting 'locked into old ways')	
	How can we continue to build our knowledge and share it?	

## Team Meetings:

Attendance/Quorum		Notes
	Expectation for attendance (what is the priority)	
	What is the minimum number for attendance?	
Timing		
	Start and end on time?	
	If required – will items be prioritized and rescheduled?	
	Use 'parking lot' to deal with side issues and concerns?	
Meeting Schedule		
	How often will the group meet? How long?	
	Who is the prime to handle meeting arrangements?	
	Location?	
Agenda		
	Will it be built at completion of meeting or...?	
	How and when will it be distributed?	
	Who is responsible for distribution?	

	Communication expectations (ground rules for the meetings)	
<b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities (Names &amp; Expectations)</b>		
	Leader	
	Facilitator	
	Recorder	
	Members	
<b>Group Memory</b>		
	Format (to indicate decision/action/next steps/prime/dates/expectations)	
	How and when is it distributed?	
	Who is responsible for distribution?	
	Parking lot items – capture related issues and work into next agenda?	