TEAM NORMS / CHARTERS

**Description**

After Psychological Safety, Google’s research found that **Dependability** and **Structure & Clarity** were the 2nd and 3rd most important factors, respectively, impacting a team’s effectiveness. To increase the probability of being successful in these areas, teams establish team norms, or “rules of conduct,” around how the work will get done, how members will communicate, and how members will make decisions and resolve conflict. Norms help members know what is expected of them, how to act, and what the values of the team are. When difficult situations arise, norms can serve as a useful reference point to discuss and resolve actions or behaviors that appear to be violating or conflicting with the established norms.

Team Charters are documents that include the team’s norms as well as articulate, or spell out, the agreements or expectations important to the team’s operations and effectiveness.

**Assignment Instructions**

Setting Team Norms

1. One member of the team needs to facilitate the process. If no one wants to volunteer, the person with the most recent birthday gets to do it.
2. Engage the entire team in brainstorming norms critical to a team’s effectiveness. The facilitator also contributes ideas.
3. For each norm offered, ask the others if they agree and/or if they have an improvement to offer. Record all the ideas where everyone can see them.
4. When there are no more ideas, review what you have and try to combine similar ideas and cross out any that seem redundant so that you end up with between 5 and 7 norms that are the most important to your team. (Try to keep the number close to 10.)
5. Edit the norms so that they are clear and easy to remember. Short, pithy phrases work best.

Setting Agreements & Expectations

Once the norms are set, go through the following checklist and come to agreement as a team on how the team will function in the identified areas:

* Meetings/Attendance – *How will we meet (in-person, virtually), how often, and where? Who is responsible for scheduling? Will an agenda be set ahead of time? What are legitimate reasons for missing a meeting? Is being late acceptable? How late? What behaviors are/are not acceptable during meetings?*
* Communication/Discussion – *How will we communicate and what channels will be used for what purpose? What is the standard response time? How far in advance must members notify others of any changes or updates?* *How will we ensure everyone’s ideas and perspectives are considered and respected?*
* Coordination – *How will we track who is doing what? How will we ensure deadlines are met? How will we keep the whole team updated on our progress for our part?*
* Decision-making – *How will final decisions be made if there is disagreement? Is consensus our goal or will majority vote rule?*
* Conflict – *How will we use conflict to improve our interpersonal relationships and effectiveness as a team? When difficult situations arise out of mistakes, misunderstandings, different working, learning, or communication styles, etc., what is our expectation for how to name and raise the problem and how to respond to it?*
* Contribution – *How will we be proactive in ensuring that everyone does real work in successfully moving the team towards its final goal/deliverable? How will we draw on our individual strengths while also improving in growth areas?*

Incorporate the norms and agreements into a Team Charter (See end of document for templates, but format is optional.)

Ask all members to give their final agreement and commit to holding themselves and each other accountable to the Charter. Keep the Team Charter readily visible/accessible to the team, referring to it frequently, and revising when necessary.

Common Norms for Consideration

* Start on time, end on time
* Stick to task and topic
* One speaker at a time
* Step up, Step back
* Listen to understand first & keep an open mind
* Silence = Agreement
* Attack problems, not people
* Disagree, but no blaming, shaming, or attacking
* No triangulating – speak to the person, not about them
* Assume good intentions
* If you “see” something, say something
* Make the implicit, explicit
* Choose compassionate candor over “being nice/polite”
* The only thing that leaves the room is what is agreed upon
* We keep our commitments
* Everyone does real work
* Inform of non-completion
* Test all assumptions
* Facts over opinions
* All perspectives & ideas are welcomed and valued
* Value diversity
* Respect each other
* Support each other
* Take time to have fun

|TEAM CHARTER

**TEMPLATE A: List (feel free to add/adjust sections as you deem appropriate)**

**Our Team Commits to the following Norms, Expectations, & Agreements:**

|TEAM CHARTER

**TEMPLATE B: Table (Feel free to add sections or make adjustments as you deem appropriate)**

**Our Team Commits to the Following Norms, Expectations, and Agreements regarding Meetings/Attendance, Communication, Coordination, Decision-making, Conflict, & Contribution**

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| **Agreed to by:**  **Date:** | | |