



What it is: The Team Charter helps the team to discuss and agree on the essential elements of working as a team. Every team needs to clearly identify these basics: team *mission*, team *goals*, team member *roles*, and ground rules governing how the team will *communicate* with each other, make *decisions*, and manage *conflict*.

How to use it:

- **Newly forming teams:** Make it the basic agenda for a 1-2 day team-building retreat in which the team discusses and agrees upon basic team parameters. Each team member should be given a copy to keep notes with during the team discussions. This document becomes the basis for discussion, and the team should work through each area until it is complete. One team member should be responsible for recording decisions into the appropriate area of the charter, and for distributing a completed version to everyone at the conclusion of the retreat.
- **Ongoing teams:** Make it the basis for a health check up at least once every six months. Set aside a 2-3 hour block of time to discuss how the team is doing and to recalibrate team goals and ground rules. Each team member should have a copy of the previous version during the meeting. One team member should be responsible creating and distributing an updated version after the meeting.
- **Transitioning teams:** Make it the basic agenda for a team-building retreat with new members. Each area in the charter should be revisited together and a new version developed by the end of the retreat.

Question #1: Mission: "Why are we a team?"

In other words, *what is it that compels us to work together?* What are we called to do as a team? Like a vision statement, the mission statement should draw an inspiring picture of a desirable future which team members are persuaded will only come to fruition if a team works together to get there. In addition, a mission statement describes the task that needs to be done.

vision statement: *We see the church of Okayama shining the light of Christ into every corner of the community.*

mission statement: *Our mission is to establish a church in Okayama that shines the light of Christ into every corner of the community.*

Question #2: Goals: "What will we do?" "During the next 6 months, what will we do to bring us closer to the completion of our mission?"

These goals should be *clear, challenging, and consequential*.

Clear: each member understands what is to be done.

Challenging: one person working alone cannot accomplish the goal.

Consequential: accomplishing the goal brings the team significantly closer to achieving the team's overall purpose.

Examples:

to begin monthly outreach activities at the local orphanage

to develop the curriculum for an evangelistic Bible study for senior citizens

to do a sermon series on the fruit of the Spirit

to complete the renovation of the community center

to start three new small groups

to create a church vision statement

to agree upon a policy for how we will rent out the center to other groups

Question #3: Roles: "How will each one of us contribute to our team?"

During team formation, members should spend extended time getting to know each other better. The team charter includes specific strengths and gifts of each team member as recognized by the rest of the team. Also, it should include the specific roles which each member commits to fulfill in the team.

These roles can include process roles--that is, how the member will support the team (e.g., roles such as *encourager, caregiver, organizer, cultural consultant, language expert, meeting facilitator, planner, prayer warrior, innovator*, etc.). This list can also include task roles--that is, what the member will do to accomplish the goals (e.g., *preaching, teaching evangelistic Bible studies, visiting, leading worship studies, cooking, serving, praying, creating a powerpoint presentation*, etc.).

Question #4: Communication: "How will we communicate with each other?"

This gives the team the opportunity to specify the frequency and duration of team meetings, and expectations regarding use of e-mail, phone, Skype, or other modes of communication. Perhaps the team wants to use an internet-based forum for team communication, or plans to have sub-meetings for task forces within the team. Each detail the team agrees upon should be included in the charter.

The final row--"At all times"--refers to the way that the team wants its communication to be characterized. Team members might include characteristics such as *respect, humility, honesty, humor, openness, kindness*, or include a Biblical verse such as Ephesians 4:29--"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Question #5: Decision-making: "How will we make decisions?"

There are four basic ways that teams make decisions, and most teams use more than one method of decision-making, depending upon the situation. Some teams decide that they will *not* use a particular mode of decision-making. If so, this should be clearly noted in the charter.

Question #6: Conflict: "How will we handle conflict?"

We usually think of *conflict* as something to be avoided or to be resolved. But it is important for teams to recognize the distinction between *healthy* conflict and *unhealthy* conflict. The team charter distinguishes between two types of conflict:

1. Conflict of *ideas* is a powerful way for teams to solve problems and create innovative ideas. Healthy conflict of ideas includes sharing personal opinions openly and honestly, listening with an open mind to the ideas of others, and talking through issues until an agreeable decision is made. Team members should agree on their commitment to practice healthy conflict engagement in the world of ideas and specify how they plan to do so in the charter.

2. Conflict of *persons* is unhealthy conflict, where someone speaks, acts or thinks against another person's character. One result of unhealthy conflict is that it shuts down the healthy conflict of ideas, and if left unresolved can undermine the unity and trust of a team. The team should spell out how they intend to handle such conflict when it arises. Will it be avoided in the hope that it will go away? When it happens, will it be acknowledged? Will team members seek forgiveness? Will they confront a teammate who has caused offense? Will they freely forgive? Team members should agree together how they will handle such conflict and write this into the charter.

Review: set a date to review the charter together. You should review the charter at least once every six months.

Signatures: each team member should sign the charter to indicate their participation and agreement.