

Easy stages guide to Team Charters

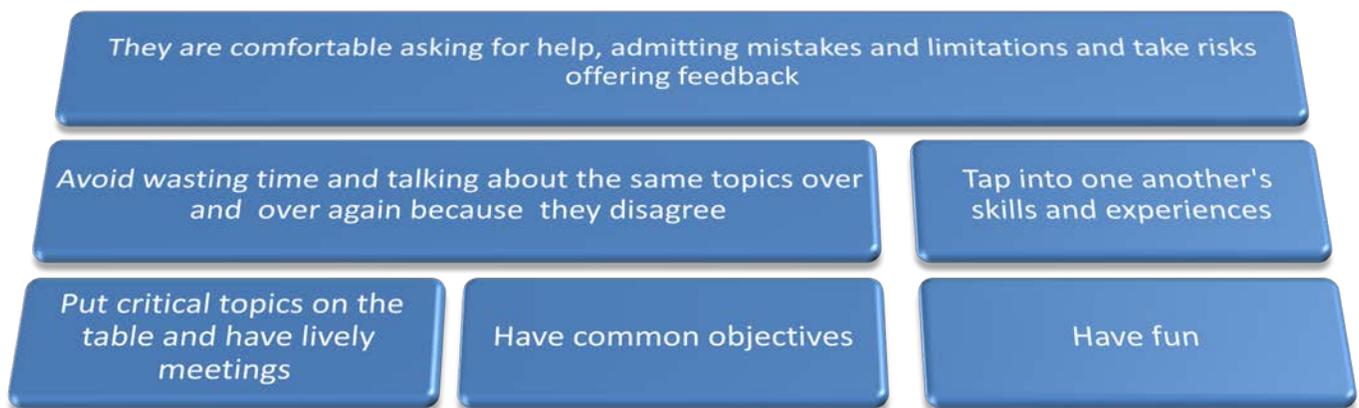
What is a team charter?

Call them what you will – team charters, meeting norms, team agreements, rules of engagement, or conditions for success – when it comes to effective meetings, it's best practice to set up a few ground rules before you get started.

Soroptimism is about working together and putting fun and friendship at the heart of what we do. However, like it or not, when any group of people get together it can have the potential to go awry. Committees, who wish to avoid the natural human tendencies that can plague their effectiveness, set up a team charter and agree the way they will work together.

The charter should be developed in a group session to encourage understanding and buy-in

When a committee is working well

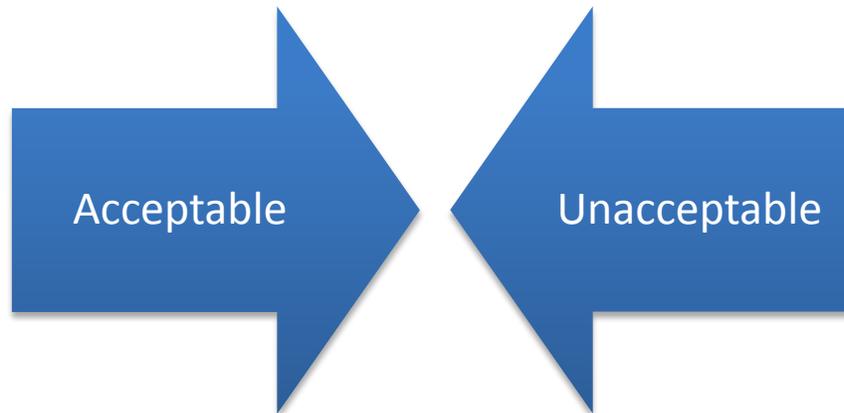


When a team is going wrong..

People can feel it is not safe to disagree. The need to avoid interpersonal discomfort prevents team members from challenging another person's idea as it may be taken personally or they may feel they would be on the receiving end of an aggressive response. Most of the time when bad manners surface it is unintentional, but if people are bruised by someone else's rudeness once too often, you risk losing them.. Poor manners can be quickly absorbed into cultural norms, especially when no one stands up and demands courteous and polite behaviour.

Team charters and ways of working charters are tools that can be used to set up team members to work well together.

Creating the team charter



The committee members work individually to begin with and write down what for them would be an acceptable way of operating and what would be unacceptable.

All the ideas are gathered together under two headings 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' behaviours.

Members explain how the positive or negative behaviours affect them. The group agrees or reaches consensus on the ground rules that will guide their behaviour when working together.

These commitments are then written up and read out at the start of each meeting. The chair can use them to guide the meeting and if necessary draw attention to any unacceptable behaviour during the meeting.

Suggested Sample

Each committee could develop or review a list of ground rules at the beginning of each year. The list below provides sample ground rules that various committees have used. Your committee may wish to incorporate some of these or develop new ones.

- Start / end our meetings on time
- Members will read materials, minutes etc. and be prepared to discuss at meetings.
- Stay on task; no side conversations
- Listen to others and don't interrupt.
- We will follow an agenda
- Operate on consensus – seek general agreements all can "live with."
- Make decisions based on clear information.
- Bring closure to decisions
- Identify actions that result from decisions
- Committee members will support committee recommendations
- Agree on what information goes "out" and what stays in the group.
- Accept the fact that there will be differences of opinion.
- Show mutual respect
- We will honour brainstorming without being attached to our own viewpoint.
- We will keep our own notes of the meetings
- Use Meeting Summaries (Includes Agenda Items & Minutes)
- Check egos at the door.