Team Norms and Ways of Working Charter

Teams that perform consistently well don't happen by accident. They agree, explicitly and early, how they'll communicate, make decisions, handle disagreement, and support each other. This charter is designed to be completed together as a team, ideally in a 60 to 90 minute working session.

How to use this template: Work through each section as a facilitated team discussion. The goal is genuine agreement, not a document no one looks at again. Once complete, share it with the whole team, revisit it when someone joins, and review it every 6 months.

OUR TEAM

TEAM NAME

DATE AGREED

REVIEW DATE

TEAM PURPOSE (WHAT WE EXIST TO DO, IN ONE SENTENCE):

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Discuss: What channels do we use, and when? What response time is expected? How do we communicate when something is urgent versus non-urgent?

FOR QUICK UPDATES AND MESSAGES, WE USE:

FOR DECISIONS, STRUCTURED UPDATES, AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION, WE USE:

EXPECTED RESPONSE TIME FOR NON-URGENT MESSAGES:

OUTSIDE WORKING HOURS, OUR NORM IS:

WHEN SOMETHING IS TRULY URGENT, WE:

HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

Discuss: Who decides what? What types of decisions can individuals make alone? What needs the team? What needs sign-off?

DECISIONS INDIVIDUALS CAN MAKE WITHOUT INVOLVING OTHERS:

DECISIONS THAT NEED TEAM INPUT BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE:

DECISIONS THAT REQUIRE MANAGER OR SENIOR APPROVAL:

ONCE A DECISION IS MADE, WE COMMIT TO IT BY:

HOW WE RUN MEETINGS

Discuss: What meetings do we actually need? What are the norms we hold ourselves to? What do we do about meetings that run over or drift off topic?

OUR STANDING TEAM MEETINGS ARE:

EVERY MEETING MUST HAVE:

- ☐ A clear purpose
- ☐ An agenda shared in advance
- ☐ A clear decision or output
- ☐ Documented actions and owners

IN MEETINGS, WE COMMIT TO:

- ☐ Being present (phones away)
- ☐ Starting and ending on time
- ☐ Challenging ideas, not people
- ☐ Protecting one voice at a time

WHEN A MEETING ISN'T NEEDED, WE'LL USE:

HOW WE GIVE FEEDBACK

Discuss: Are we honest with each other? Do we give feedback in the moment? What makes feedback land well in this team?

WE COMMIT TO GIVING FEEDBACK:

☐ In the moment where possible ☐ Privately before publicly ☐ On behaviour, not on the person

☐ With a specific example ☐ With a clear impact statement

WHEN SOMEONE RECEIVES FEEDBACK, WE EXPECT THEM TO:

OUR FORMAL FEEDBACK RHYTHM IS (E.G. QUARTERLY, PROJECT RETROSPECTIVES):

HOW WE HANDLE DISAGREEMENT

Discuss: What do we do when we genuinely disagree? What's not acceptable when things get heated?

WHEN WE DISAGREE, WE COMMIT TO:

- ☐ Raising the disagreement directly with the person involved first, before involving others
- ☐ Separating the idea from the person
- ☐ Listening to understand, not just to respond
- ☐ Committing to decisions once made, even if we disagreed
- ☐ Telling our manager if a disagreement can't be resolved between us

WHAT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN THIS TEAM WHEN THERE IS DISAGREEMENT:

HOW WE MANAGE WORKLOAD PRESSURE

Discuss: What do we do when someone is overloaded? How do we ask for help? What happens when deadlines conflict?

WHEN SOMEONE IS STRUGGLING WITH WORKLOAD, WE AGREE THEY WILL:

WHEN DEADLINES CONFLICT, WE RESOLVE THEM BY:

WE PROTECT EACH OTHER'S CAPACITY TO DO FOCUSED WORK BY:

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS

Each team member writes one personal commitment to the team. This creates visible accountability.

NAME	MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THIS TEAM

Make it live: Pin this charter somewhere visible. Share it when someone new joins. Review it every 6 months and ask honestly: are we living by it? The teams that revisit this document are the ones that continue to use it.

Want help putting this into practice?

Growth Performance builds the human advantage in an AI-driven world, with people, teams and leaders.

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