



UNIVERSITY
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OTAGO
Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND

Developing a Team Charter



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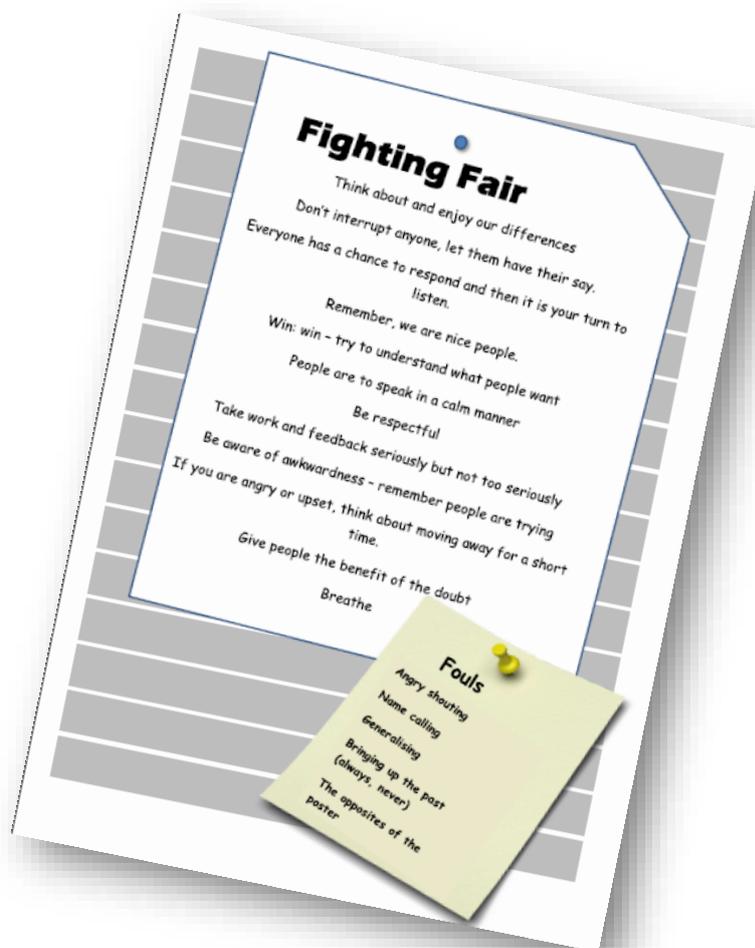
How will your team work together?

Joining a new team can initially seem a daunting prospect, not least if you are the team's new manager. In addition to tackling the day-to-day challenges of a management role, you are also required to build effective working relationships with team members and earn their trust and respect.

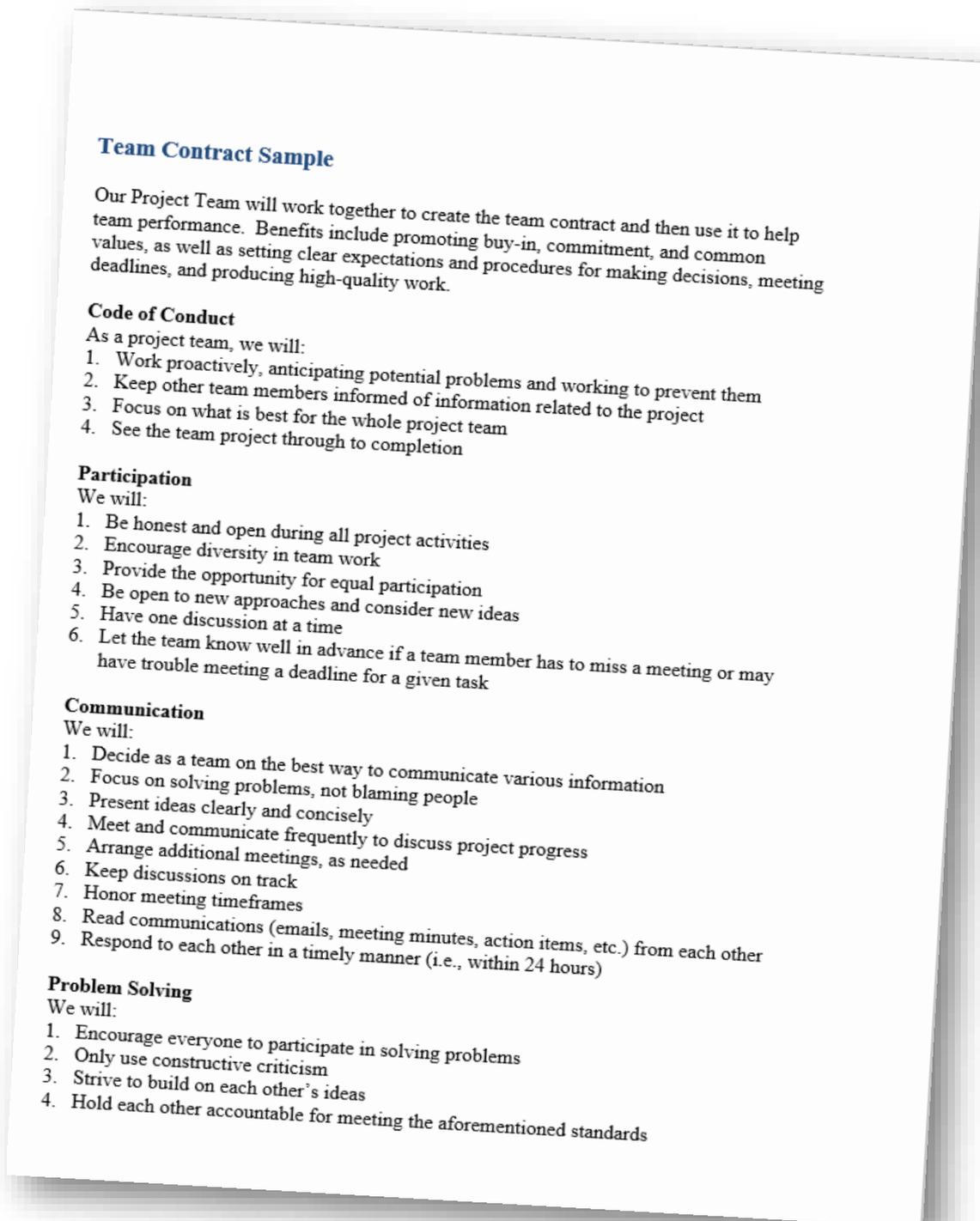
Working in a team has two elements: what we do and how we relate to team members as we do it. The second part can be referred to as the team culture. Team norms exist in all teams but these may have been created over time and not be coherent. The creation of a team or social contract allows the establishment of broad agreed principles for how a team will work together – the ground rules.

A team contract is a set of basic principles and standards for working together in a supportive and productive way. It can vary in formality depending on your team.

Here is an example of one created by a team that wanted to build effective conflict strategies.



Here is a more formal document designed for a project team. (1)



Both are designed to outline how people will work together and they provide agreement on processes, obligations and responsibilities within the team. You will probably find that your team charter tends towards the first example rather than the

How to create a team charter – new team

You can create a team contract with your staff as part of the initial meeting with them or as part of a team building event.

This booklet has some tips and templates to assist you in building an agreement about how you and your team will work and engage with each other. Some topics that could be included are:

- What is important to us, as a team?
- What values about how we interact underpin our actions?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- How do we address conflict with each other?
- How do we want to be recognised as individuals?
- What do we want to put in place to support us in times of high pressure?

Brainstorming ⁽³⁾

Ask the team to think of the answers to the questions above as individuals first.

Divide the team into smaller groups of about 3-5 and have them share their answers and come up with a group set of answers.

Combine the groups to decide what the charter will include.

Ask the group what they think is the purpose of this charter and include that in the first section.

Draft the charter, place it in a shared space, and encourage your team to add to it for the next week using Post It notes. At the end of the week, finalise it, present it to the team for agreement/commitment and publish the final version to be placed in a team area.

We have attached a template on the next page.

Notes:

- Make it simple and short
- Have your team include what they think is important
- Commit to it yourself – as the manager, you need to role model these behaviours
- Have fun creating it

Our Team Charter Template

Purpose of the charter

The elements of the charter

How to create a team charter – existing team

This activity is designed for a team that has been together for a while.

Resources required

- Post-it notes
- Pens
- Large sheets of paper
- Whiteboard

Tasks

1. Ask the team to think about what they like best about working in this team. Provide each member with a Post It note and ask them write one thing on the note and place on whiteboard, wall or chart.
2. Ask the team to consider a time when the team was working really productively – the ‘humming’ stage when there is lots of energy.
 - Who can think of a time?
 - What did it look like?
 - What was it like for you as an individual?
 - What contributed to this?

As the facilitator, list the behaviours on the white board or chart.

Ask the group to consider the following. *“If you could plan for this to happen all the time in, what would we need to do?” “In order to achieve the team you all want – what behaviours do you want to agree to?”*

List these on the whiteboard or chart.

3. The team will need to plan for contingencies as well – every workplace has times when it is not such a happy place and you need to think about how the team will deal with these. How will they:
 - disagree with each other
 - deal with their own bad moods
 - deal with other people’s bad moods
 - provide feedback

List these on the whiteboard or chart. You now have three lists to use in building your team contract.

Our Team Charter Template

When we are working really productively as a high performing team, we notice that:

To achieve this we will:

Fair and Foul behaviours activity

Team citizenship behaviours are those elements that are found outside of formal job descriptions and describe the expectations around the way you work together. For instance – one expectation might be that, as a team, you will encourage others to present a different view from yours.

This activity looks at behaviours in terms of 'fair and fouls' – behaviours that build a sense of being part of a team and those that destroy that sense.

*Note: We have used the terms Fair or Fouls but you could amend this to any suitable pairing. Other options might be **Positive and Negative** or **Build up and Knock down**.*

Resources required:

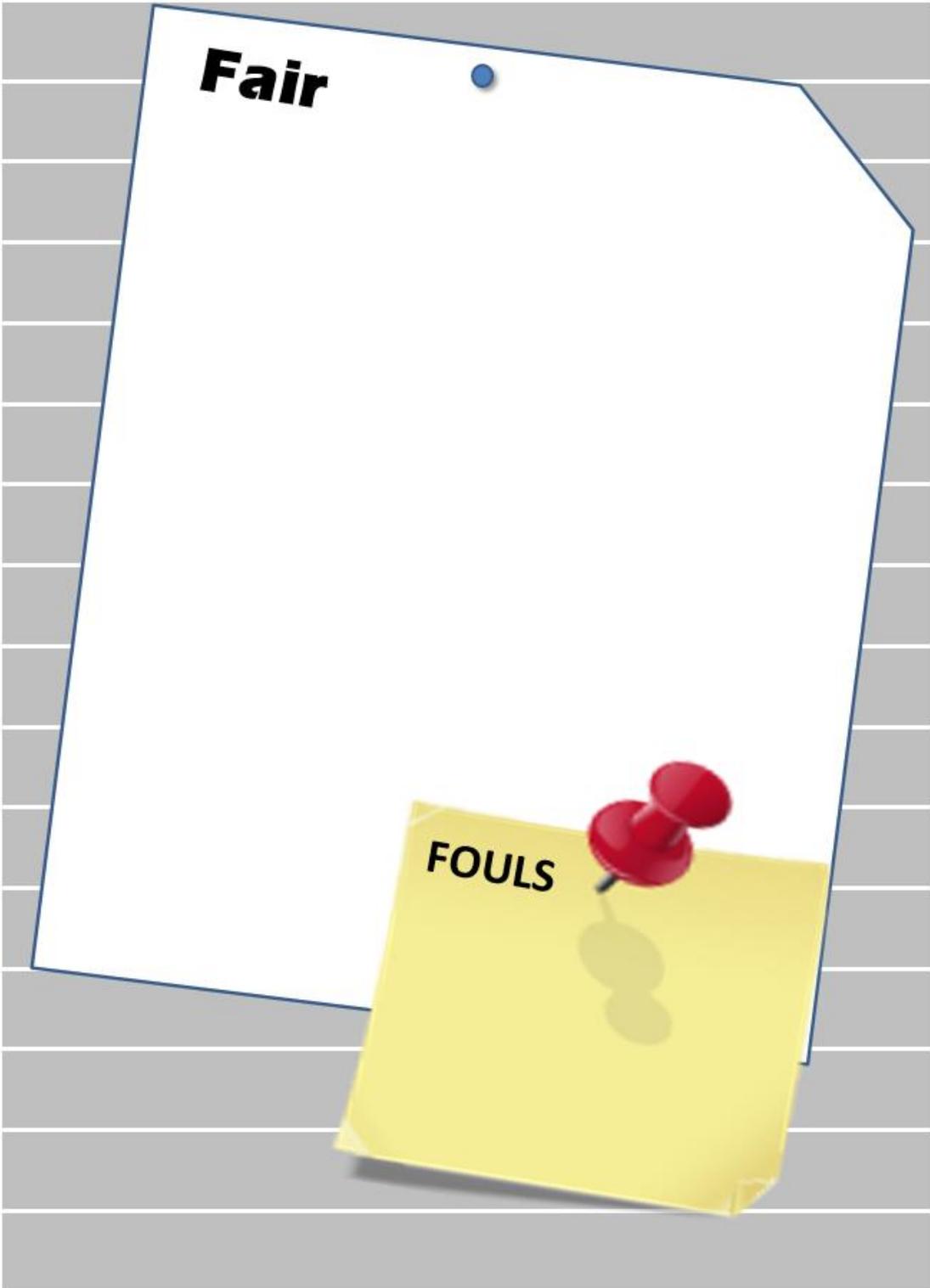
- Pens
- Post it notes
- Large sheets of papers
- Fair or Foul template

1. Ask the team about “what are some expectations that you might have around the way you work together.”

Provide each person with 5 Post It notes and ask them to list on each a behaviour that builds the team. Write up on a large sheet of paper.

2. Then look at the fouls. Ask the team members to think about their five pet peeves in terms of working with other people. Provide each person with 5 post it notes and ask them to list on each a behaviour that damages the team. Write up on a large sheet of paper.
3. Talk about the two posters and summarise so that you have one collation. Provide each person with two more Post It notes – they can decide whether they will use them for fair or fouls or a mixture, but they are used to add two additional ideas to the poster.
4. Write up on large sheet of paper and transfer the information to a poster.

We have attached an image that we have used.



References

1. University of San Diego, School of Leadership and Education Sciences.
2. <https://www.mercianlabels.com/who-we-are/>
3. <https://www.lynda.com/Business-Skills-tutorials/Creating-team-communication-contract/132718/148678-4.html>

Useful websites – team building

Some really interesting activities designed to get people talking to each other can be found at <https://www.huddle.com/blog/team-building-activities/>

This website has trust activities, some of which require resources but others don't. <http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/team-building-activities/>

This is a great site for more physical activities.

<http://wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>

<http://vorkspace.com/blog/index.php/13-top-team-building-activities/>

Useful books – team building

The following books can be found in the University's Central Library.

- **101 of the best corporate team-building activities we know** by Simon Priest and Karl Rohnke
- **Quick team-building activities for busy managers : 50 exercises that get results in just 15 minutes** by Brian Cole Miller

The following books can be found in the University's Robertson library.

- **50 activities for team building** by Parker, Glenn M, and Kropp, Richard P.
- **The big book of team-building games : trust-building activities, team spirit exercises, and other fun things to do** by John W. Newstrom; Edward E. Scannel

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