Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Charter

"A key requirement for program / project governance"

RONALD KOHLMAN

Steering Committee Purpose

A STEERING COMMITTEE PROVIDES A FORUM TO ENABLE THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO INFLUENCE THE PROGRESS AND DIRECTION OF THE PROJECT.

A STEERING COMMITTEE IS NOT AN INFORMATION GATHERING FORUM BUT RATHER A DECISION-MAKING FORUM THAT ENSURES THE PROJECT OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVED.

Charter & TOR Purpose

The document outlines the core functions and responsibilities of a Steering Committee.

A Steering Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) and Charter is an essential governance document that provide a structured framework for the steering committee's operation, ensuring clarity, accountability, alignment with organisational goals, and transparent decision-making in the context of a project or program.
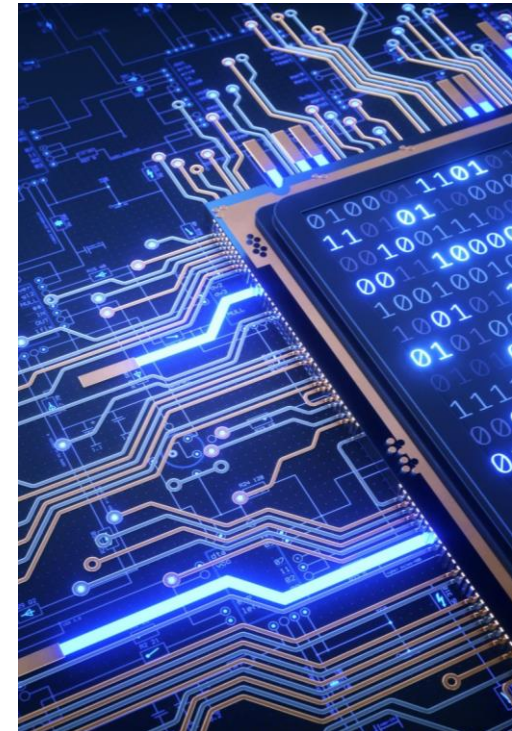
What is a Steering Committee Charter & Terms of Reference (TOR)

A Steering Committee Charter and Terms of Reference, often referred to as a "Charter," is a formal document that outlines the roles, responsibilities, functions, and operating principles of a Project or Program Steering Committee.

This document serves as a foundational framework for the committee's operations, ensuring that it governs the project responsibly.

It is a foundational document that guides the operation and governance of a Project Steering Committee.

It plays a critical role in ensuring that the committee fulfills its responsibilities effectively and aligns its actions with the organisation's strategic goals.

The Steering Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) and Charter is a document that offers you a framework for establishing the "rules of engagement" for your own program or project steering committee. The creation of a Steering Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) and Charter is crucial for several reasons:

Clarity and Understanding:
A TOR and Charter provide a clear and detailed framework for the Steering Committee's roles, responsibilities, and functions. This clarity helps ensure that all committee members and stakeholders have a common understanding of their respective roles and the committee's purpose.

Accountability:
The TOR and Charter establish clear lines of accountability. By defining the roles and responsibilities of committee members, these documents help ensure that each member knows what is expected of them and how their contributions align with the project's objectives.

Governance Structure:
They help define the governance structure for the project. The committee plays a key role in project oversight and decision-making, and the TOR and Charter outline how it fits within the organisation's broader governance framework.

Decision-Making:
The documents detail the decision-making processes within the committee. This includes how decisions are made, who has voting authority, and how conflicts are resolved. This structure ensures transparent and effective decision-making.

Alignment with Objectives:
The TOR and Charter emphasise the alignment of the committee's activities with the organisation's strategic objectives. They ensure that the project is driven by the organisation's overall mission and goals.

Resource Allocation:
They may specify how resources, including budgets, personnel, and technology, will be allocated to the project. This ensures that the project has the necessary resources to succeed.

Communication and Reporting:
The documents outline how the committee communicates with project stakeholders, senior management, and other entities. They define the reporting structure, ensuring that the right information is shared with the right people.

Transparency and Accountability:
A well-defined TOR and Charter promote transparency in project governance. They make the committee's actions and decisions transparent to stakeholders and hold committee members accountable for their roles.

Amendment and Adaptation:
The documents include procedures for amending the TOR and Charter when necessary. This flexibility allows the committee to adapt to changing project needs, organisational dynamics, or governance requirements.

Duration and Review:
They establish the duration and review process for the committee. This ensures that the committee's effectiveness is periodically evaluated, and any necessary adjustments can be made.

Conflict Resolution:
The TOR and Charter may include mechanisms for resolving conflicts or disputes within the committee, which is essential for maintaining a harmonious and productive decision-making process.

Project Success:
Ultimately, the TOR and Charter are critical for ensuring that the Steering Committee operates efficiently and effectively. When the committee functions well, it contributes to the success of the project by providing oversight, guidance, and governance.

Audience

The Charter & TOR document is to be issued to all parties that have been assigned responsibilities in program or project governance. This includes, but is not limited to for example:

☐ Project/Program Manager

☐ Business Sponsors

☐ Business Stakeholders

☐ Business Executive

☐ Technology Executive

Content Coverage

Project Background

Current Situation
Need for Change
Scope of Project
Key Project Deliverables
Timeline

Charter Purpose and Terms of Reference

Purpose & Definition
Ownership
Key functions
Membership
Leadership
Meetings & Communications
Decision Making
Reporting Structure
Budget and Resources
Roles & Responsibilities
Amendment process
Duration and Review
Conflict Resolution
Project Status Reporting

Primary Functions of The Steering Committee

Role of Steering Committee
Role of Steering Committee Members
Responsibilities
Membership
Stakeholders
Membership selection
Committee size
Convenor / Chair
Agenda Items
Meetings & Communications
Minutes & Meeting Papers
Frequency of Meetings
Member absences
Proxies to Meetings
Quorum Requirements
Review Timetable
Dispute Resolution

Charter Agreement

Steering committee members are required to formally acknowledge and consent to their roles and responsibilities, as delineated in this Charter.

The Program/Project Manager is responsible for retaining all Committee acknowledgments as part of the project's documentation, serving the purpose of future quality reviews, Post Implementation Review (PIR), and auditability.

Useful Tips to steer by...

The most significant risk to the success of a steering committee is the potential for micromanagement, where there's a risk of losing sight of the critical distinction between guiding the work effort from a visionary standpoint and managing the work effort to achieve specific results.

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Achieving success with a steering committee is a collaborative effort.

| It necessitates recognition by the project manager, team, and customers that steering committees are responsible for "steering." | This implies that all governance directives must be acknowledged and embraced. | The project manager and team should ensure they keep the committee well-informed and engaged, seeking guidance when necessary and appropriate. |

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The cornerstone of steering committee success lies in cooperation, collaboration, and trust, which commences with a clearly defined mission embraced by all stakeholders.

| Trust is cultivated over time but can be swiftly eroded. | Transparency, objectivity, timely issue escalation (as opposed to ambush), are crucial in building and maintaining trust. |

Summary

❑ A deployment management framework is a structured and comprehensive approach to planning, executing, and controlling the deployment of IT changes within an organisation. It encompasses various processes, strategies, and best practices to ensure that deployments are successful, efficient, and aligned with business goals.

❑ Key components of a deployment management framework include clear objectives, alignment with business strategies, stakeholder engagement, risk assessment, resource planning, documentation and reporting, testing and quality assurance, compliance, communication strategies, continuous improvement, scalability, security, sustainability planning, vendor and supplier management, performance metrics, cultural considerations, and strong leadership and ownership.

❑ This framework helps organisations manage the deployment of new software, hardware, or changes while minimising risks, ensuring quality, and maintaining compliance with regulations.

About Ronald

Ronald is a highly experienced and knowledgeable IT professional in the field of program and test management.

He has had many roles working across transformational initiatives and complex enterprise technology solutions.
- Leadership in Transformational Programs
- Global Experience and Cross-Continental Team Leadership
- Governance Frameworks and Tools
- Delivery of Complex Technology Solutions
- Executive-Level Engagement and Consulting

He has been writing and publishing technology industry specific documents for several years. Imparting his practical working experience within these documents.

You can purchase his technology & project books on Amazon:

Vulnerability Management – Empowering Security Through Strategic Vigilance
You've had a Cyber Attack - Now what?
Securing Tomorrow, Today: Navigating Cyber Security Risks with Strategic Precision
How to Create a Cyber Security Roadmap: A necessity for your organisation
Program Management Plan: A usable Template for you
Business Case Template: An approach to documenting your next IT business case
Successfully Delivering User Acceptance Testing for your project
IT Deployment Management Framework
Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Charter
UAT Planning & Execution Guide
Defect Management Plan
And others…

Thank You

COGNICIONS.COM

COGNICIONS PTY LTD

MELBOURNE

+61 (0) 402 448 050

INFO@COGNICIONS.COM

ABN 83 611 219 642

PO BOX 125, OLINDA, VICTORIA 3788