Team Principles Guidelines

MAKING THE IMPLICIT EXPLICIT FOR A HIGH-PERFORMING TEAM

Principles are the articulation of the basic beliefs and values of the organization used to settle action or make decisions. Principles can be thought of as *what* people believe without stating *how* they will be accomplished.

Norms describes a behavior or a practice that most team members will use most of the time to uphold a particular principle. Norms describe *how* a principle will be acted upon or upheld.

Implications are answers to questions like these: What steps must we take to uphold this principle and practice these norms? How will we hold ourselves accountable?

Meaningful principles should:

- Be relatively few in number. No organization can pay attention to dozens of principles

- Not merely state the obvious. They need to be specific enough to drive behavior

- Provide the "right fit" for an organization. It should not be possible for another organization to use another's set of principles

- Remain relatively stable over time. Although they need to be tested and validated up front and may need occasional tweaking, they shouldn't vary wildly over time

- Contain a single positive statement, rather than a compound set of statements

- Written in the present tense

Meaningful norms should:

- Correlate to at least one team principle, or it may stand alone

- Be clear, specific and unambiguous and not be subject to interpretation

- Take the form of a simple declarative sentence written in the present tense

- Apply to most people most of the time. Calling out exceptions dilute their power

- Typically pertain to observable behavior or practices

- Be able to be enforced by other team members

DRAFT A FEW SAMPLE PRINCIPLES

Start with the aspect of teamwork where you believe agreed-upon principles will have the greatest, most immediate benefit for your team. As part of your work, indicate the challenge or issue you believe these principles can help address.

Team challenge/ issue	Sample principles

- **Should be specific enough to drive behavior rather than a bland platitude**
- **Provide the "right fit" for an organization**
- **Remain relatively stable over time.**
- **Contain a single positive statement, rather than a compound set of statements**
- **Written in the present tense**

DRAFT A FEW NORMS FOR YOUR PRINCIPLES

Start with one of your draft principles, and list possible norms that will support each principle.

Draft Principle	Related Norms

- **Be clear and unambiguous, and not subject to interpretation.**
- **Take the form of a simple declarative sentence written in the present tense**
- **Apply to most people most of the time. Calling out exceptions dilute its power.**
- **Correlate to at least one team principle, or it may stand alone**

EXAMPLE - ISSUE, PRINCIPLE, NORMS, IMPLICATIONS

Issue/Rationale

Most team meetings are a waste of time - people are disinterested, unprepared, and very little useful work is accomplished.

Principle

Team members and meeting leaders come prepared to actively engage and contribute relevant information in every team meeting.

Norms

- Team members suggest topics for each team meeting
- Meeting leaders communicate meeting objectives, intended outcomes, agenda, required prework and other meeting information by an agreed-upon number of days prior to the meeting
- The team will make greater use of asynchronous communication channels in place of meeting time
- Only those who do the required prework/pre-reading may contribute to the conversation
- Team meetings will consist primarily of conversations; content (such as status reports) can be reviewed asynchronously outside of meeting time

Implications

- Participants need to schedule their work to allow them to fully participate in team meetings
- People who miss team meetings will need to catch up on what they missed - meetings will be recorded
- Meeting leaders may need to rotate responsibility for planning and facilitating meetings

We can help!

Many organizations find this work easier with the help of a neutral, skilled facilitator to guide them through the process. Guided Insights can:

- Help you jumpstart this process, providing activities, tools and templates to make the process scalable across your organization.
- Facilitate principles workshops for teams across your organization, and work with you to synthesize and communicate the results.
- Provide guidance and coaching to support you all along the way.

Contact me at nancy@guidedinsights.com to see how we can help.

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Helping hybrid, remote and in-person teams get important work done, faster, with less friction, from wherever they are.

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