



Guiding the Healthy Work Participatory Project: The Steering Committee Creation Tool

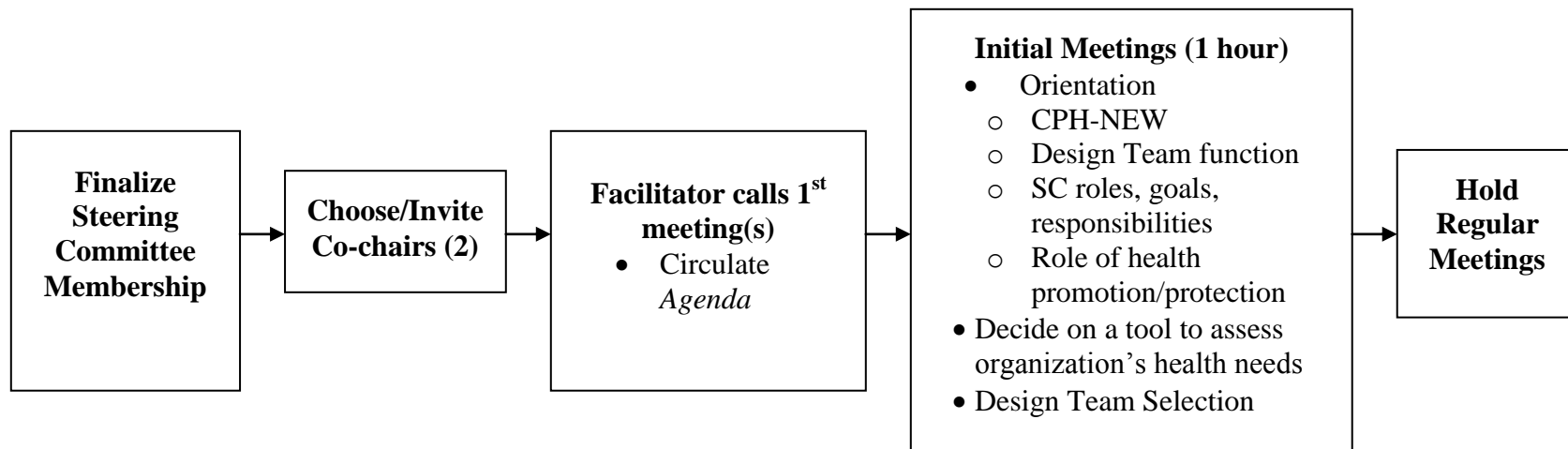
Many workplaces have initiated programs that encourage labor management cooperation. This is a guide for the creation of a group to oversee workplace health projects that include both job health and safety and personal wellness. There are basic goals:

- A Steering Committee must have trust and commitment from senior management and a commitment to its longevity.
- A Steering Committee must be sufficiently independent so that it can make decisions in a timely way that will be followed through.
- It is useful to have a structure so that the Steering Committee can survive reorganizations, lay-offs, promotions, and short-term economic conditions.
- A Steering Committee should be sufficiently flexible to maintain its activities during working hours while still being able to be responsive to other shifts or facility locations.

This guide provides a sample approach to setting up a Steering Committee. Workplaces are very different in size, type of work activities, levels of authority, and skills of personnel (for example a public agency and a small machine shop), and so you may want to modify these steps based on your particular needs and resources.

The following flowchart will help in both the creation and selection of the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee Early Development Process





Guidance on the Early Development Process

The following text accompanies the above flowchart:

1. *Obtain/Create Organizational Chart*

Either ask your primary contact/wellness champion or upper management for a current organizational chart, or sit down with your primary contact/wellness champion and create one. The chart can help you identify key people, positions, or divisions/units to include in the Steering Committee.

Make a list of first choices, as well as a list of alternatives. A Steering Committee will typically have 6-8 members, with more or less depending on the size of the company.

2. *Apply Selection Tool for SC Members*

After you have identified possible candidates, apply the **selection tools for SC members** (see Tables 1 & 2) to ensure that your SC includes:

- Individuals of who occupy different levels and roles within the organization
- Individuals who are knowledgeable, or interested, in the area of health promotion/protection
- Individuals that have authority to authorize programs and funding as needed
- Individuals that represent and have the respect of a large number of the workforce
- Individuals who would be able to coordinate activities of the Healthy Workplace Project with standing committees such as EHS.

3. *Discuss with Champion*

Bring your preliminary list of candidates to your primary contact/wellness champion. The wellness champion may have more insight into whether your list is exhaustive, whether the individuals you have chosen will work well together, etc. Discuss the list, and finalize your top candidates.



4. Obtain Management and Union Approvals

Next, bring your list of potential SC members to upper management and to local union leadership in a unionized setting. You should also provide a list of the general **duty descriptions, roles, goals, and responsibilities** of the SC (see Appendix 1), so that they are knowledgeable about the general tasks of the SC. In addition to approving the list of potential SC members, management must approve the time commitment of the SC, as well. Time commitment includes frequency of meetings (most likely monthly at first, and then quarterly), as well as the duration of each meeting (most likely about an hour each).

5. Circulate General Announcement

A general announcement should be sent to each member of the organization. The announcement should include:

- The endorsement of a high-authority individual (upper management or the organizational owner) and union (where applicable)
- A general overview of what the SC does (see Appendix 1)
- A notification that a subsequent invitation will be going out to the potential SC candidates

6. Send Invitations or Talk to Candidates

Once the general announcement has been circulated, **invitations** (see Appendix Two) can be sent out to your list of SC members. If individuals decide not to participate in the SC, send out invitations to your list of alternatives. Alternately, personal meetings from the champion may be more effective at both showing the level of interest in the candidate and in answering questions about the project. When candidates (particularly non-management) say they are interested, it may be useful to discuss their participation with supervisors to ensure that they will facilitate the time needed for the project.



Appendix 1

Steering Committee Roles, Goals, & Responsibilities

Program Overview

The Steering Committee exists to provide resources (as needed) for interventions, to assess feasibility of proposed interventions, to interface with senior management, and to oversee the general viability of a healthy workplace program. It exists to develop and support the Design Team, but can also initiate interventions, particularly if they are aimed at the level of supervisors and management. The Steering Committee is a stakeholder of all interventions, whether initiated by the Design Team or Steering Committee. Interventions initiated by the Steering Committee will benefit from collaboration with the Design Team, as depicted in Diagram 1.

Goals

The goals of the Steering Committee overlap with the goals of the Design Team, but the Steering Committee also has a different set of oversight goals.

Critical Goals

- protect long term sustainability of program
- improve worker health
- develop communications between Design Team and workforce and management
- determine the appropriate use of resources (cost-effective)
- support program so they accomplish participatory goals (operational in nature)

Desirable Goals

- influence crude and sophisticated measures of productivity
- support Design Team (nurture activities, new ideas)



Appendix 2

Generic Invitation to Participate in the Steering Committee

Dear _____

Our company wishes to expand its ongoing wellness and safety efforts to address ergonomics and other work-related health topics. To that end, we will attempt to implement the Healthy Work Participatory Program over the next few months.

The program calls for a **Steering Committee** to oversee and guide program activities. The Steering Committee will be composed of managers and supervisors in key areas such as _____. You are being invited to serve as a member of the Steering Committee for this workplace health initiative.

Roles

The role of the SC is very important and will contribute to the success of this project and the sustainability of the initiative. The Steering Committee will provide resources as needed for interventions, assess feasibility of proposed interventions, interface with senior management, and oversee the general viability of the Healthy Work Participatory Program. Another vital role is to develop and support the Design Team, whose members will include _____.

Time Commitment

Initially, the SC will meet frequently (once or twice a month); then, as the project progresses, the meetings will occur quarterly. Senior management will entrust the Steering Committee to make decisions, consult with related organizational committees, and follow through in a timely way, to ensure progress toward the healthy workplace goals. Your involvement and time will be recognized by management through this invitation.

The Steering Committee and the Design Team together will strive to improve health, safety (ergonomics) and job satisfaction for all staff. Topics to be addressed include job-related equipment, procedures, and policies that directly affect employees' health, safety and performance.

I hope you will consider accepting this assignment, and make a commitment to participate for one year, beginning _____. Please indicate your acceptance by notifying your manager by _____(date). A first meeting of the Steering Committee will take place _____.

Thank you,

(Signature)



Table 1

A Steering Committee should be representative of several different entities, personalities, and positions of power throughout your organization.

Eventually, it is important to select and maintain a *balanced committee*, identifying individuals of different ranks, shifts, and levels such that the Committee is representative of the entire organization. Think about these issues as you select Steering Committee Members.

There are also a few attributes suggested to be critical to the success of a Steering Committee. In the table below, please try to identify an individual who best fits each Steering Committee Attribute, remembering to keep in mind the suggestions above regarding a *balanced and representative committee*. An individual may be named in more than one category.

Steering Committee Attribute	Is an Opinion Leader	Has an Active Interest in the Area	Gets Along Easily with Others	Other previous changes here -- committed to health, etc.	Has Fiscal Authority	Has Social or Communicative Power	Has Knowledge in the Area
Representative Name							



Table 2

Under each category below, list additional representatives who you believe would be beneficial committee members:

Category	Management	Line Worker	Human Resources	EHS	Other
Representative Name(s)					