



## **Healthy Workplace Participatory Program Guide to Creating a Steering Committee**

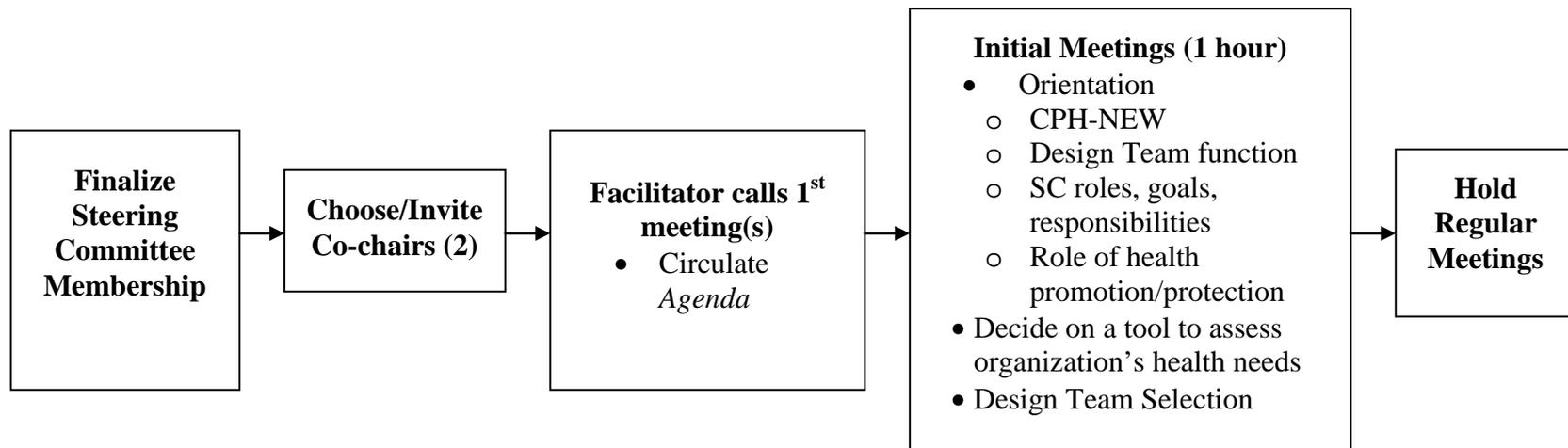
Many workplaces have initiated programs that encourage labor management cooperation. This is a guide for the creation of a group to oversee workplace health projects that include both job health and safety and personal wellness. There are basic goals:

- 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**

### **Healthy Workplace Participatory Program Description of the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee consists of senior and mid-level managers and other key personnel who can marshal organizational resources.

The Steering Committee guides and supports the Healthy Workplace Participatory Program. The committee primarily supports the Design Team, but can also initiate interventions, particularly if they are aimed at the level of supervisors and management. Specific roles are outlined below.

#### **At the start of the program, the Steering Committee:**

1. Collects baseline data on workplace health
2. Nominates non-managerial employees to serve on the Design Team
3. Informs the organization at large about the program

#### **Throughout the program, the Steering Committee:**

1. Meets regularly to consider the Design Team's proposals
2. Provides timely feedback on the Design Team's proposals
3. Selects which of the Design Team's proposals to implement
4. Implements the Design Team's proposals by:
  - o Changing organizational policies
  - o Directing organizational resources towards implementation
  - o Where possible, involving the Design Team in the implementation process
  - o Creating linkages with key personnel and relevant work units
5. Regularly updates the organization at large on the program's status, goals and achievements

#### **After implementing a change, the Steering Committee:**

1. Periodically evaluates the benefits and effectiveness of each implemented change



## 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.

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



**Table 2**

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

<b>Category</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Line Worker</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>EHS</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Representative Name(s)</b>					