

MEMORANDUM: A GUIDE TO RACI

Introduction

Developing a RACI Chart is, at its core, a method for building shared agreement about how roles will collaborate in a given process, project, etc. This note brings out best practices for how to consistently implement RACI.

1. Commit to consistent use of RACI

As a team, commit to using RACI as an iterative methodology for clarifying roles and responsibilities. This means ensuring appropriate policies, procedures and projects have RACIs agreed on by all involved and communicated to all those impacted by the activities.

2. Once a general sense of the topic emerges, the first step in any RACI is identifying the R

The R is responsible for the initiative's success as an outcome and for the relationships between those involved. We say the R is accountable for the what and the how. The R can either self-identify or the team can identify them. The R is only finalized once the A has accepted the R.

3. The R's first steps are to clarify the RACI and work with all those involved

The R role's first actions are:

1. **Define the Topic.** Defining the topic to be charted helps gain more specific agreement to the RACI.
2. **Identify the A (Approval).** The team/unit/committee holds the A for everything s/he has not officially delegated, so the R works with the leader to identify the A. The first question is: Does the R keep the A and become the A/R, or is it appropriate to have the A and R role separate? The decision varies depending on the RACI topic. In general, we recommend the R begin by ruling out keeping the A/R. The R then makes a recommendation to the leader who makes the decision about the A.
3. **Identify the C and I Roles.** Negotiate with the r's, C's, and I's so accountabilities are clear. Their input and work are crucial to the success of the initiative. Key expectations of the RACI are the C and R roles are the team that moves the initiative forward and they share information freely.

A few recommendations to the R about nurturing the r and C roles:

- a. Be sure the C's and r's feel valued, heard, and are kept in the loop. When first negotiating the RACI, it is a good idea to find out how the C's and r's would like to be communicated with.
- b. The R is responsible for developing the relationship between the RACI roles if it furthers the work; there are situations when this is not necessary.

- c. Remember when the decision is made, especially if the decision did not go in the direction recommended by the r or C, make sure to let them know the reasons why the decision went the way it did.

4. General Recommendations

- a. In ongoing projects, remember to allow time to check in on the RACI implementation and make any changes necessary.
- b. Remember, to be sparing with who is involved in the RACI. The R can speak with anyone at any time about the initiative, these folks do not need a role in the RACI.

4. The r role

The r is responsible to support the R in agreed upon specific aspects of the RACI. They will often even be an R for sub-RACIs. It is a good idea to make sure the r understands how their piece of the project fits into the whole, and the expectations of their contribution, including timelines, are clear and agreed to.

5. The C role

Remember going against the C's input is possible, but it is a big deal. For this reason, think of the R having at least 3 conversations with the C:

- Contract and establish the expectations of the C's role
- Gain the C's input into the content of the initiative or decision
- Update the C as to the final decision/outcome so they understand the rationale for the decision

Of course, the conversation can be more iterative than the above.

Some best practices for the C role:

- Consider designating a C who is not intimately involved in the initiative so they can provide 'outside eyes,' possibly even a C who has done something similar in another area of the organization.
- Make sure to provide the C time to reflect and respond.
- Be sure to agree on the best ways to communicate: written, in person, etc.
- The C has the obligation to bring issues to the R's attention as needed.
- Once the C gives input, it is crucial they learn how their input contributed to the decision, whether or not the decision followed their input; not doing so erodes trust.
- In the C role, expect your input to be considered, but know it is not determinant of the final decision.

Summary

The R is responsible for the RACI's success, so it is up to the R to build the relationship with the C's and r's. The R, the C's, and the r's work as a team, building trust and transparency by communicating information relevant to forwarding the project.