



Process Improvement Project Charter

Use this fill-save charter to plan and communicate key elements of a **process improvement project**. Start by entering the information you know right now. Add more info as your planning unfolds.

Date this charter was created
mm/dd/yyyy

Date of most recent revision
mm/dd/yyyy

1. BACKGROUND

What process is this project aiming to improve?

Why is this project being undertaken?

What are the top three goals for this project?

2. PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Project Sponsor(s)
Projects that involve two or more major areas are often co-sponsored
Team Leader(s)
Typically 1-2 people
Facilitator(s)
Typically 1 person, but can be 2 or more depending on the extent of the project

Team Members

Subject Matter Experts
People the team might call on to provide info, react to ideas, offer suggestions, etc

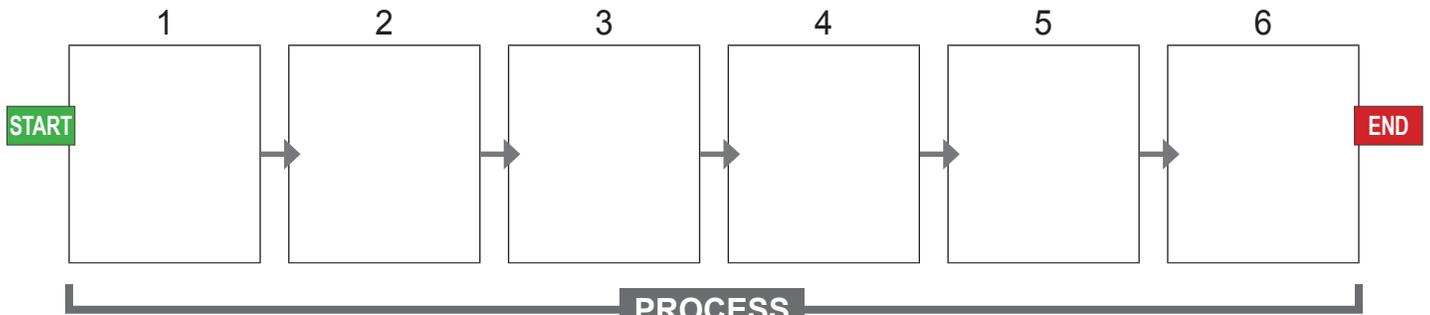
3. TIMELINE TARGETS*

First team meeting	
Complete Discovery Phase	
Complete Possibility Phase	
Complete Planning Phase	
Team Presentation	
Begin Implementation	

*See the last page for a project roadmap

4. PROCESS OVERVIEW

A **SIPOC diagram** provides a high-level, beginning-to-end view of the process – showing the relationships between suppliers and inputs, and outcomes and customers. When developing a SIPOC, start by developing a macro flow chart with a maximum of six steps, with each step phrased as a verb-noun action statement. (Use the template below.) Next, identify the outputs, customers, inputs, and suppliers – in that order. This will help scope the project while uncovering factors that feed into and flow out of the process



PROCESS			
<i>...and the suppliers fourth</i>	<i>Identify inputs third...</i>	<i>Identify outputs first...</i>	<i>...and customers second</i>
SUPPLIERS	INPUTS	OUTPUTS	CUSTOMERS*
Who supplies key inputs for the process?	What are the key inputs?	What is created by the process?	Who uses what this process creates?
			Primary customer: Other customers:

SIPOC (pronounced SIGH-pok) is a memory-jogging acronym for **suppliers, inputs, high-level process, outputs, and customers**.

* **Customer** is used here as a general term for the people and offices who use outputs from the process

Notes:



5. DATA

Optional but recommended • Be selective • Gather data only if it will likely be useful to the project team

It can be helpful to gather select data before the team begins its work. This gives teams a jumpstart in gathering baseline data, plus, numbers can sometimes underscore the need for improvement.

Below is a variety of measures and metrics, some of which will be applicable and useful. Included are basic counts that are fairly easy to determine – and measures specific to process improvement that take more time to calculate, such as start-to-finish process time. Use this template to record key data gathered as part of the chartering process.

Category	Metric	Current (baseline)
COUNTS	Customers – Number of customers per year	
	Production – Number of completed units per year	
	Backlog – Number of units that are waiting to enter the process as of <input type="text"/> mm/dd/yyyy	
	Work in process – Number of units currently being processed as of <input type="text"/> mm/dd/yyyy	
	Staff – Number of people who work in the process	
TIME METRICS	Lead time – Total start-to-finish process time, including wait time, to produce and deliver an output to a customer – as experienced by the customer. Expressed as an average; often in days.	
	Best and worst completion times – The shortest (best) and longest (worst) time to complete the process for a given time period, from the customer’s perspective. Expressed as a range.	
	Cycle time (AKA touch time) – Time to complete less waiting time and delays – i.e., time spent actually working to process the item. Compared to lead time (which is what the customer experiences), cycle time is a more mechanical measure of process capability.	
COST METRICS	Direct costs – Amounts spent annually for items and services required for the process. Examples include cost for third-party/vendor contracts, paper, printing, postage, storage, etc. List items with estimated annual cost.	
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
QUALITY METRICS	Rework rate – Percent of units in a process that need to be reworked, for a give time period	
	Voice of the customer – Qualitative or quantitative data from surveys; focus-group input; number of complaints, nature of complaints; thank-you notes; or other feedback. Describe below:	
ADD’L METRICS		



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Describe any boundaries the team needs to be aware of, such as rules, regulations, policies, laws, etc.
- If efforts have been made to improve the process over the past couple years, describe them and the results.
- Note potential roadblocks that might impede the team and the implementation of its improvements.
- Provide additional alerts, guidance, etc.



Much of our work at USC involves processes that flow through multiple functions and locations. Process improvement projects can make these key processes more efficient, effective, and user-friendly.

Roadmap for Process Improvement Projects

1. ADVANCE WORK

The first stage is about setting up the project for success. The **project sponsor** takes the lead, with guidance from the facilitator.

DEFINE THE SCOPE

Agree on the process to be improved, then further focus the scope by identifying the first and last steps of the process.

CREATE PROJECT CHARTER

The charter spells out key elements of the project. It gets everyone on track and moving in the same direction right from the start. Included:

- **Project Overview:** Background, purpose, scope, goals
- **Process Overview:** Macro map of the current process, customers, inputs, outputs
- **Data:** Initial data providing early insights into the current process
- **Participants:** Names of people who will fill key roles, including sponsor, team leader, team members, SMEs
- **Timeline:** General expectations

Facilitator Role

Guide the advance work • Ensure complete charter with clear scope

PROJECT CHARTER



A well-developed charter is essential to the successful startup of a process improvement project.

2. IMPROVEMENT SESSIONS

The improvement work gets done in a series of team sessions led by a **facilitator**. The work unfolds in the three phases described below.

1st phase: DISCOVERY

Review charter • Gather input from stakeholders • Develop map of the current process • Identify process waste and value-adding steps • Gather and study data to gain deeper insights into the process • Explore root causes

2nd phase: POSSIBILITY

Generate potential improvements: **immediate actions, short-term actions, longer-term actions** • Review in terms of effort/impact • Build consensus on go-forward improvements • Create map of the future-state process

3rd phase: PLANNING

Refine improvement set if needed • Develop implementation plans • Determine expected “before and after” impact • Finalize plans

Facilitator Role

Facilitate improvement sessions • At end, hand off to team leader (or other) to serve as project manager

TEAM BRIEFING



Teams sometimes conclude their work with a briefing for colleagues, stakeholders, and others. This adds to the forward momentum as team members go from being builders of the improvement plan to being proactive advocates.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

A **project manager** (typically the team leader or other team member) guides and coordinates implementation of the action plans.

AFTER LAST TEAM SESSION

Circulate a project summary that includes plans, future-state process map, and projected results

WITHIN 2 WEEKS

Create Gantt chart (or equivalent) showing planned improvement actions, point people for each, and time frames • Monitor progress and roadblocks • Take needed action to gain and maintain traction

+30 DAYS +60 DAYS

Convene team • Review progress relative to plan, projections, developments • Judiciously refine the plan as needed • Clarify next steps

+90 DAYS

Review progress • Discuss emerging factors that can help or hinder implementation • Review plans for the next three months

Facilitator Role

Provide implementation guidance • Be available to project manager