Role & Responsibility Charting (RACI)

By Michael L Smith and James Erwin

See RACI Template too.
By Sandra Diaferio

OVERVIEW

Definition

Responsibility Charting is a technique for identifying functional areas where there are process ambiguities, bringing the differences out in the open and resolving them through a cross-functional collaborative effort.

Responsibility Charting enables managers from the same or different organizational levels or programs to actively participate in a focused and systematic discussion about process related descriptions of the actions that must be accomplished in order to deliver a successful end product or service.

Approach Definitions

Responsibility Charting is a way of systematically clarifying relationships pertaining to:

1. Communication or actions required to deliver an acceptable product or service
2. Functional roles or departmental positions (no personal names).
3. Participation expectations assigned to roles by decisions or actions.
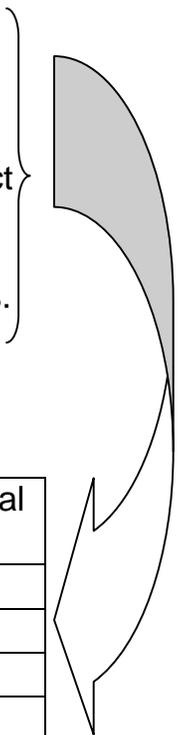
Process Model	Functional Role	Functional Role	Functional Role	Functional Role	Functional Role
Decisions or Actions					

THE RESPONSIBILITY CHARTING THEORY

Managers and supervisors are not accountable for everything in their organization. Responsibility charting ensures accountability is placed with the person who really can be accountable for specific work. Often this results in accountabilities for actions being *moved down* to the most appropriate level.

Everyone has some process role in their job. Because of differing perceptions, one person's view of their role may be quite different than another's. Role perceptions held today will change tomorrow even though the job activities remain the same. There are three (3) basic assumptions in any role. They are:

1. ROLE CONCEPTION: What a person thinks his/her job is and how the person has been taught to do it. His/her thinking may well be influenced by many false assumptions (e.g., misleading titles, training received from a predecessor during his or her last week on the job, etc.)

2. ROLE EXPECTATION: What others in the organization think the person is responsible for, and how he/she should carry out those responsibilities. Others' ideas may also be influenced by incorrect information (e.g., the way it was at a former job, priority changes, assumptions, inconsistent messages from leadership, etc.). The role expectation is usually based on the output of results expected from the role.

3. ROLE BEHAVIOR: What a person actually does in carrying out the job.

Responsibility charting reconciles ROLE CONCEPTION with the ROLE EXPECTATION and thus, ROLE BEHAVIOR becomes more predictable and productive!. Ideally, what a person thinks his or her hob is, what others expect of that job, and how the job is actually performed are all the same. The "RACI" process is a tool to lock all elements in place. Working with other "process providers" provides a *real time* consensus that clarifies "who is to do what, with whom and when. This is of great benefit for overall process performance.

A substandard product or process can often be tracked back to a fault in the chart. Common faults in the chart include: an *action not included* on the chart (that *should* be), a position *failing to perform as assigned* or a *missing* or *misapplied responsibility code.* The highly visible and collaborative nature of the charting process promotes rapid and effective updates/corrections as well as better understanding by those involved in the work.

DIAGNOSING THE NEED

The need for managers and supervisors to *clarify* roles and responsibilities does not end after the Responsibility Charting process is complete; *it must be an ongoing activity*. Managers need to acquire a *"sixth sense"* so they can recognize the symptoms of role confusion and determine when the process needs to be repeated. Perception *"drift"* is natural. The identification and <u>elimination</u> of *"drift"* is important to the company's overall well being as it relates to cost, service and quality.

The symptoms of role confusion are:

- Concern over who makes decisions
- Blaming of others for not getting the job done
- Out of balance workloads
- Lack of action because of ineffective communications
- Questions over who does what
- A "we-they" attitude
- A "not sure, so take no action" attitude
- Idle time
- Creation of and attention to non-essential work to fill time
- A reactive work environment
- Poor morale
- Multiple "stops" needed to find an answer to a question

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
CHARTING DEFINITIONS

___

RESPONSIBLE….."R"
"The Doer"

The "doer" is the individual(s) who actually complete the task. The "doer" Is responsible for action/implementation. Responsibility can be shared. The degree of responsibility is determined by the individual with the "A".

ACCOUNTABLE….."A"
"The Buck Stops Here"

The accountable person is the individual who is ultimately answerable for the activity or decision. This includes "yes" or "no" authority and veto power. **Only one "A" can be assigned to an action**.

CONSULT……"C"
"In the Loop"

The consult role is individual(s) (typically subject matter experts) to be consulted prior to a final decision or action. This is a predetermined need for two-way communication. Input from the designated position is required.

INFORM….."I"
"Keep in the Picture"

This is individual (s) who needs to be informed *after a decision or action is taken.* They may be required to take action as a result of the outcome. It is a one-way communication.

Responsibility Chart
The 5-Step Process

1. **Identify work process**
   Start with high impact areas first
   - **Don't chart process that will soon change**
   - **Work process must be well defined**
     - **Fewer than ten activities implies the definition is too narrow**
     - **Greater then 25 activities implies definition is too broad**

2. **Determine the decisions and activities to chart**

   - **Avoid obvious, generic or ambiguous activities, such as:**
     - **"Attend meetings"**
     - **"Prepare reports"**
   - **Each activity or decision should begin with a good action verb**

Evaluate	**Schedule**	**Write**	**Record**	**Determine**
Operate	**Monitor**	**Prepare**	**Update**	**Collect**
Approve	**Conduct**	**Develop**	**Inspect**	**Train**
Publish	**Report**	**Review**	**Authorize**	**Decide**

3. **Prepare a list of roles or people involved in those tasks**

   Roles can be individuals, groups or entire departments

   - **Can include people outside your department our outside the company**

     - **Customers, suppliers, etc.**

   - **Roles are better than individual names**

- **RACI chart should be independent of personal relationships so the chart would still be valid if all new people filled the roles tomorrow**

4. **Develop the RACI chart**
   As a general rule, first assign R's then determine who has the A, then complete C's and I's

   - **For larger groups or more complex issues, an independent facilitator is required**

   - **Meeting time can be significantly reduced if a "straw model" list of decisions and activities is completed prior to meeting**

   > **The ideal group size is four to ten people**

5. **Get feedback and buy-in**

   - **Distribute the RACI chart to everyone represented on the chart but not present in the development meeting**
   - **Capture their changes and revise chart as appropriate**
   - **Reissue revised RACI chart**
   - **Update as necessary on a on-going basis**

   > **A follow-up meeting may be necessary if significant changes are made**

RACI CHARTING
An Example

	Mother	Father	John	Sally	Mark	Kids*
Feed the dog	A	C	R			
Play with dog	I	I	A			R
Take dog to vet	R	A/R				C
Morning walk	C		A/R	R		
Evening walk	C		A/R		R	
Wash dog	C		A/R			
Clean up mess	C	A	R			

DEVELOPING THE ACTION LIST

An important element of Responsibility Charting is developing the actions to be charted and agreed upon. The lists can be developed in several ways. One effective way to gather information on functions, decisions, or activities is in a one-on-one interview. This interview is an analytical questioning process and ranges from broad questions such as "what are the department's objectives?" or, "what must the team accomplish?" to very specific questions involving inputs and outputs of work, to and from the participant.

An alternative to the interview is a group "brainstorm" or idea generation technique with representatives from the "process participant" departments. A facilitator would record the actions which then could be fine-tuned in subsequent group meetings.

R A C I Chart Review
Vertical Analysis

Finding	**Possible Interpretation**
Lots of R's	Can this individual stay on top of so much?
No empty spaces	Does the individual need to be involved in so many activities?
Too many A's	Can some of the accountability be "pushed down" in the organization?
No R's or A's	Is this a line position? Could it be expanded or eliminated?
Overall pattern	Does the pattern fit the personality and style of the role occupant? Does it go against the personality type of the role occupant? (i.e., either too much or too little involvement, etc.)

Roles / People

Decisions/ Activities							
	C		A		C		I
	A	R		C	I	C	
		C	I			R	A
			R			A	
		I		A	C		
		A	I			R	C
			A	C	R		I

R A C I Chart Review
Horizontal Analysis

Finding	**Possible Interpretation**
Lots of R's	Will the task get done? Can activity or decision be broken into more specific tasks?
Lots of C's	Do all these individuals really need to be consulted? Do the benefits of added input justify the time lost in consulting all these individuals?
Lots of I's	Do all these individuals really need to be routinely informed, or could they be informed only in exceptional circumstances?
No R's	Job may not get done; everyone is waiting to approve, be consulted, or informed; no one sees their role as taking the initiative to get the job done.
No A's	No performance accountability; therefore, no personal consequence when the job doesn't get done. **Rule #1 in RACI charting: There must be one, but only one, "A" for each action or decision listed on the chart.**
No C's / I's	Is this because individuals/departments "don't talk"? Does a lack of communication between individuals/departments result in parallel or uninformed actions?

Roles / People

Decisions/ Activities							
	C		A		C		I
	A	R		C	I	C	
			C	I		R	A
						A	
		I		A	C		
		A	I		R		C
			A	C	R		I
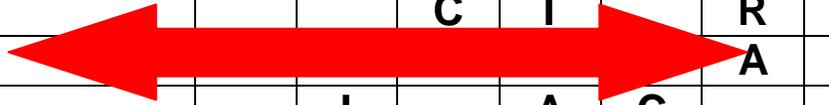
R A C I Closing Guidelines

1. **Place Accountability (A) and Responsibility (R) at the lowest feasible level.**

2. **There can be only one accountable individual per activity**

3. **Authority must accompany accountability**

4. **Minimize the number of Consults (C) and Informs (I)**

5. *All roles and responsibilities must be documented and communicated*

6. *Discipline is needed to keep the roles and responsibilities clear. "Drift" happens. RACI has to be revisited periodically, especially when symptoms of role confusion reappear e.g.,*

   - Concern over who makes decisions
   - Blaming of others for not getting the job done
   - Out of balance workloads
   - Lack of action because of ineffective communications
   - Questions over who does what
   - A "we-they" attitude
   - A "not sure, so take no action" attitude
   - Idle time
   - Creation of and attention to non-essential work to fill time
   - A reactive work environment
   - Poor morale
   - Multiple "stops" needed to find an answer to a question

When To Use Responsibility Charting

- **To improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities around work process**

    § **"As Is"**
    § **"To Be"**

- **To improve understanding of roles and responsibilities within a department**

- **To define the roles and responsibilities of team members on a project**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CHARTING

Trying to get work done without clearly establishing roles and responsibilities, is like trying to parallel park with one eye closed.

What about role behavior? The RACI chart shows who does what at a high level and their RACI role. If more specificity is needed, and it often is, you can use process maps or list the steps/decisions and document the specifics of what is done.

You can go from process maps to RACI or RACI to process maps
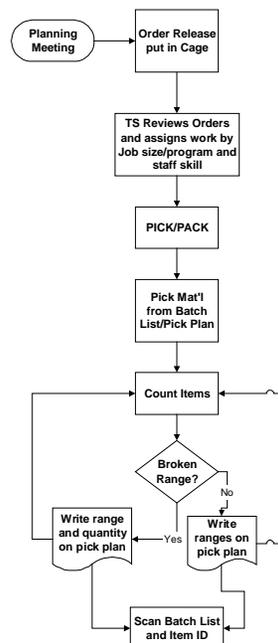
Or, you can document your understanding of the role behavior by taking the list from the RACI chart and listing the steps/decisions and documenting the specifics of what is done. It's as simple as who, what, when, inputs and outputs. You can expect more resistance clarifying the roles this way than just with RACI. We now know who is to do what with whom, and when in such a way that each person is truly accountable for their part of the overall process.

Task / Decision	RACI	Who	What	When	Inputs from	Outputs to