Principles, norms – Quick guide

Helpful tips to create principles, supporting norms, standards
and related action plans

What Do We Mean by Team Norms?

Principle:

An overarching statement that reflects the team's values and beliefs related to a particular aspect (or "domain") of teamwork

Team Norms:

A set of agreements about *how* members will work with each other and how the group will work overall. These agreed-upon behaviors allow the team to *increase its collective performance through healthy debate and clarity of purpose and roles*. – *Harvard Business Review*

A *set of rules or guidelines that a team establishes to shape the interaction of its members*

Priority areas – Examples

Team communication channels

– which, when, and why

Information sharing

Formal, informal channels

Document sharing

Uploading, accessing, editing, approving, sharing

Inclusion of all team members

Giving all members an equal opportunity to contribute, regardless of location or time zone
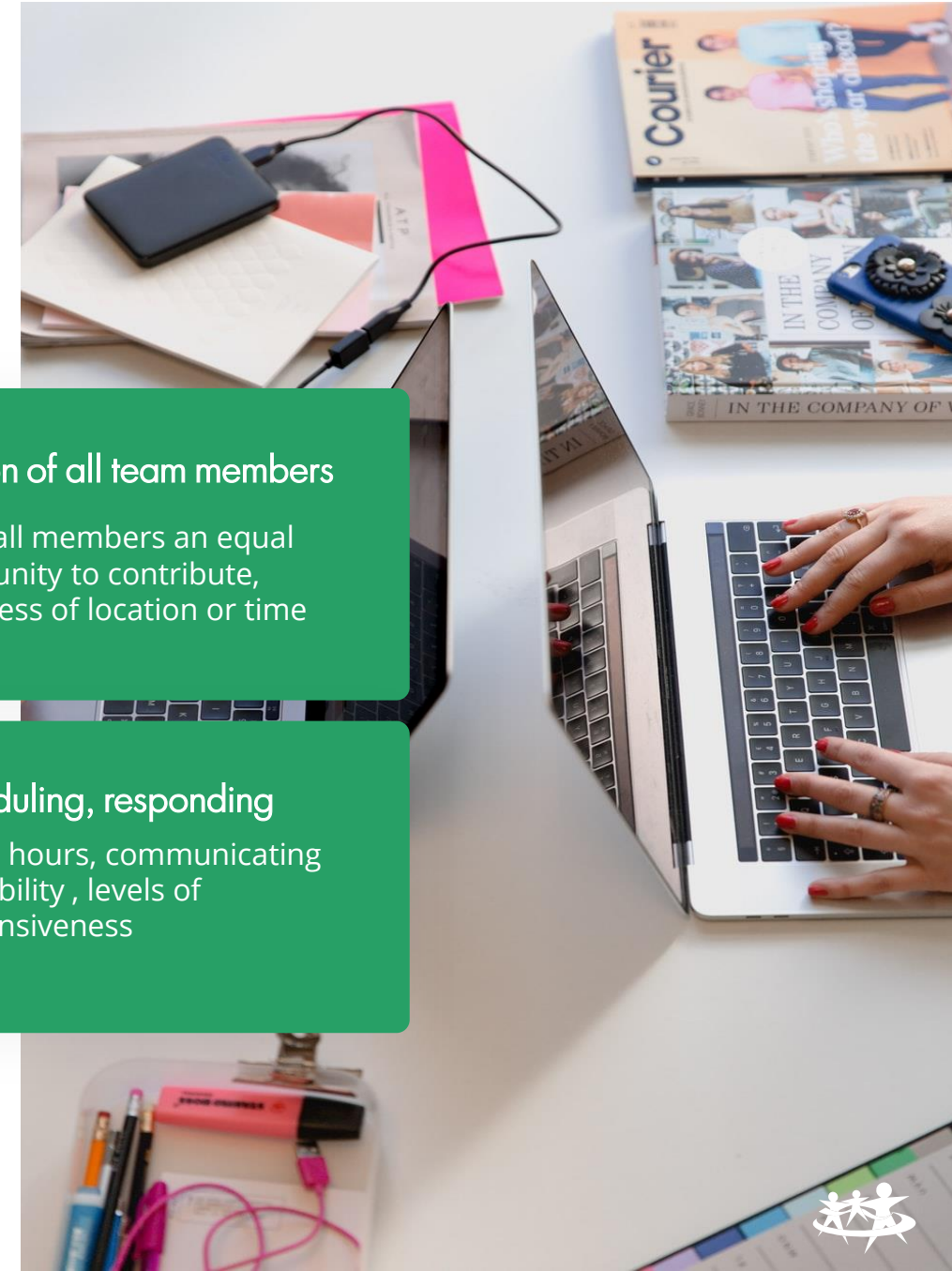
Team meetings

Use, expected participation, participant selection, use of video, level of engagement, etc.

Decision making

Process, criteria, roles, methods, communicating

Scheduling, responding

Office hours, communicating availability , levels of responsiveness

Characteristics of Strong Team Norms

Not all norms have all of these characteristics, but most will have at least a few

Reflects the team's values, principles	Describes the what vs. the "how"	Framed as a positive statement
Support/reinforces the culture	Calls for specific behaviors, actions, changes to uphold	Simple, clear, unambiguous
Helps guide the creation of shared standards		Worded in the present

Principles, Norms, Standards, Actions - Example

Principle – All team members have the right to access the information they need to do their jobs at any time

Norms:
- All team members have *easy, quick access to* the *relevant information* they need to do their jobs
- We have *one central repository* that team members will use to store, update, edit, review and distribute project documents
- The repository is *logically structured and intuitive to navigate*

Standards:

- Documents will be available 24x7, from any approved system/device
- We will create an area in MS Teams/SharePoint as our repository
- All documents will use a consistent naming convention
- All documents will have a revision date in the footer

Implications/actions:

- We need to agree on the definition of "relevance" by project type, team member profile, or some other way
- We need to create a migration strategy for existing documentation
- We need to agree on the criteria for selecting the best location/system for our repository
- Document owners will move existing documents

Creating Team Norms – Continuous Process vs. Event

Assign pairs/triads to draft norms for an agreed-upon priority area

Share/present with team – modify, discuss implications, needed actions, accountabilities

Finalize wording, share widely

Everyone – start practicing norms, hold each other accountable

Validate, test, refine

Identify priority areas and repeat process at any time