

Developing a Quality Charter for the Training in a Small or Medium-Sized Enterprise

Objective	Agreement between all actors involved in vocational training on aims of training, required organizational conditions, methodological standards and forms of cooperation with the objective of the documentation of the results in a quality mission statement for vocational training.
Target group/ Field of application	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trainees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training staff (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> facility, <input type="checkbox"/> vocational school, <input type="checkbox"/> third-party learning venues) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professionals with training responsibilities (e. g. skilled workers, journeymen) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executives (e. g. heads of departments, company management, principals) <input type="checkbox"/> Representations of employees and trainees (e. g. works council) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Others: Consultants
Type of instrument	<input type="checkbox"/> Work document (check list, questionnaire, feedback sheet, etc.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hand-out (e. g. instructions, process descriptions) <input type="checkbox"/> Others:
Time required	Development and introduction of the Quality Charter: about 2-6 hours
Content	<p>A quality charter referring to vocational training enables an agreement of all actors involved in vocational training on aims, conditions, approaches and cooperations of the apprenticeship.</p> <p>It creates a helpful basis and provides a common reference framework for the further development of quality during the apprenticeship. The guideline will describe practice-oriented and step-by-step the process of the development of a mission statement for vocational training.</p>
Background/ tips for application	The guideline is suitable for single trainers who want to develop a quality charter with their apprentices as well as for groups of up to 15 people, e.g. of business management, skilled workers with task of training and apprentices.
Developed in a pilot project	Grassroots Quality Development and Assurance (Graswurzel QES)
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1 Why do we need a quality charter – who will develop it and how long will it take?

1.1 Rationale and objective:

What is the use if trainees, training journeymen, and the owner of a small company jointly develop a quality charter for the training? - Insight into the viewpoints of the respective parties, clarification and understanding. A quality charter will help all parties involved to agree in a simple and respectful manner on goals, the procedure, and cooperation in training. The work on the quality charter includes everyone at the company who is involved in training. It inspires the parties to think about their own ideas on training and allows everyone involved, the trainees, the trainers, and management to learn, understand, and negotiate the different viewpoints, expectations, and priorities. The finished quality charter is a helpful basis and joint frame of reference for the further development of quality in training.

1.2 Target groups:

Among the target groups for this tool, we see the management of the company, people responsible for training, specialist trainers at the workplace and third-party consultants that advise small enterprises on their quality development activities.

We present a slim, tested procedure here. It can be used by an individual trainer who wishes to follow these steps to develop a quality charter together with his trainee. But it will also leads to success for groups of about 15 people consisting, for example, of management, specialist trainers, and the trainees. Moderation requirements rise with the size of the group.

1.3 Participants:

It is ideal if all parties involved in the training can participate in this process. If this does not work, a small group of representatives of trainees, specialist trainers, and the management can develop a quality charter that is later discussed with the others. In this case, it is important that everyone knows that a quality charter is being worked out.

1.4 Time required:

Developing central ideas for training takes between one and three hours, depending on the size of the group. After that, another one to two hours will be needed to transform the ideas into well-worded sentences. If not all people involved in training can participate, it is best to plan another hour in which the charter is discussed with the trainees and journeymen who could not be included in creating it.

1.5 Material:

Ideal are a flip chart, thick felt-tip pens, coloured moderation cards or copy paper in various colours; pin walls and pins or tesakrepp masking tape to fasten the finished flip chart sheets onto the wall; paper and pen for every participant to take notes.

Such moderation material is not available in every small company. In that case, the moderator will have to improvise.

1.6 Flowchart

Time	Content	Material
01:00 p.m.	Welcome, introduction Parties introduce themselves to the others, if required	Overview presented on flip chart
01:15 p.m.	Introduction to the Quality charter topic: What is a quality charter and what do we benefit from it?	Most important items on the flip chart
01:25 p.m.	Working out the quality charter: 1 st Step: Clarify training goals: What is to be achieved at the end of the training?	Task on hand presented on flip chart Flip chart for noting down contributions
02:10 p.m.	2 nd Step: What are the priorities of our training? Work out quality criteria for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites and structures • Procedure and methods • Cooperation 	Task on hand presented on flip chart; Sheets or moderation cards, thick pens, pin wall and pins, or tesakrepp tape
02:30 p.m.	Break	
02:40 p.m.	Continued work on the quality criteria	
03:15 p.m.	Summary of the results; outlook: what is next, what is planned? Brief evaluation of the work	
03:30 p.m.	End	

2 Detailed description of the flow and moderation:

2.1 Introduction to creating the quality charter:

The work on the quality charter starts with a brief introduction. A prepared flip chart can help in this step.

Quality charter for training:

- What is a quality charter?
- Of what use is it to us?
- What is our focus today?

Potential introduction:

“What is a quality charter for the training?”

A quality charter contains detailed statements on how we would like to handle training at our company and what we put emphasis on. It says what goals we want to have achieved at the end of the training, what we view as important organizational prerequisites, what methodology we would like to follow in our training, and what we value about our cooperation in training, e.g. between trainees and journeymen and between myself as the owner of the company and the trainees.

Of what use is it to us?

A quality charter helps us to reach a common basis on what is important to us in training such that we all pull together. It gives us the chance to discuss our respective ideas about training and is a good start for the further development of training quality at our company.

What is our focus today?

Today, our focus will be on jointly creating the central ideas on the quality of our training, and we will take a close look at the training proper (on the building site, at the workplace, ...) and won't address such topics as “selection of new trainees”, “cooperation with the vocational school”, or the like.

2.2 Creation of the quality charter in 2 steps

1st Step: Goals to be achieved at the end of the training.

Intro:

“When creating the quality charter, we start at the end, namely, the end of the training. Perhaps the one or the other of you has thought about what we should have achieved at the end of the training, what the goals of the training at our company are.”

(This is typically answered in the negative. If someone has an answer, the moderator can use it as an example right away) Next:

“Now we will all think about what goals are of particular importance for you, from your role and position.”

The task will again be written on a flip chart:

Our goals for the training at Elektrotechnik
Fitz Meier GmbH & Co KG

What are your most important personal goals
that should be achieved at the end of the
training?

What are you striving for as

- trainee
- journeyman, installer,

My goals as company manager

“I suggest that we all think about it for a few minutes and make notes.”

If the moderator feels that it is difficult for the participants to find answers, he or she can support the process by providing an example.

“Let me give you an example: If you are a journeyman, it could be important for you that the trainees can stand on their own two feet at the end of the training, and if you are a trainee, it may be important for you to pass your exam with a good mark.”

The moderator may also suggest that trainees and journeymen work in pairs or groups of three where they whisper among one another and think about their goals that they want to see achieved at the end of the training.

The thought process will typically come to an end after 5 to 10 minutes. If the participants work in groups, they will take somewhat longer than when working by themselves, but they will also inspire one another.

If there is no external moderator and the management or the responsible trainer act as moderators, the time to think about the goals should be granted to them as well. But they may also think about their answer to this question in advance and bring their notes.

Collecting the results:

Now the results are collected and written onto a flip chart. The following method is particularly time-saving.

“Now we will collect the goals you find important, and I will write them onto this flip chart. One of you will name a goal that is important to him or her. Then all others who have noted down a similar goal will add their statements to it.”

Example: A journeyman's goal: "It is important to me that the trainees pass their exams well."

This goal is written onto the flip chart, and the moderator asks: "Does anyone have a goal that fits in here?"

The respective answers are added to the flip chart

Our goals for the training at Elektrotechnik Fitz Meier GmbH & Co KG

- Trainee to pass exam well
- Should have the skills (s)he will need later
- Should have a wide range of basic skills
- ...

Typically, not all participants will make equal contributions. Trainees often have to be encouraged to speak. Ask those who won't say anything by themselves:

"Mr. Kenzer, can you add something to this item?" or "Ms. Markl, what do you think about this?"

After all participants have contributed matching goals to this first item, the moderator may add one of his or her own that fits. (This does not apply to third-party moderators, of course.)

Before a next participant brings up a new goal, the moderator should ask: "Do we have all the goals that fit to this item?"

If so, a next participant will name one of his or her goals. Example: "Social competence, the trainee should have social competence"

Our goals for the training at Elektrotechnik Fitz Meier GmbH & Co KG

- Trainee to pass exam well
- Should have the skills (s)he will need later
- Should have a wide range of basic skills
- Social competence

If the goals are worded in such a general manner, it is important to ask for more details:

"What exactly is important for you in this respect?"

Write the addition down and proceed as described above. Ask who else has ideas on social competence goals and note these down. Ask participants who do not contribute anything directly and invite them to add something or say what they think. As an in-house moderator, contribute your own goals on the topic last and ask around if everyone has mentioned their goals on this item.

Then another participant will name another goal that is important to him or her.

Proceed along these lines until all goals have been collected and written down on the flip chart.

At the end of this working step, review the goals collected and ask if everyone agrees or if goals are disputed.

Other tips on moderating this and the following steps:

Ask for concrete examples:

Sometimes participants use highly abstract terms like “social competence” or “professional behaviour”. It is important to ask what the participant really means and if he or she can name examples, behaviours. These should be written down as well. Such detailed examples make the charter more vivid and better suited for everyday work routine

Keep the focus, “goals to be achieved at the end of the training” in mind.

Always be aware that these should be **goals to be achieved at the end of the training**. It makes working much easier if the moderator stays focused on this. Participants often bring up behaviour or procedures that are important to them during training, such as: “a good working atmosphere”. A good working atmosphere is not a goal to be achieved at the end of the training but it is an important contribution to the next working step. If participants bring this up while you are collecting goals, note it down somewhere for the next working step.

Pick up the language the participants use:

We found it to be good practice to copy the participants' language as best as possible. The statements in the quality charter should be meaningful to those who are to work with it. This primarily means that the statements should be as detailed and vivid as possible and should not sound “stilted” in the ears of those affected.

How to handle conflicts:

Statements that others do not agree with will be discussed right away. Try to find out if it is the statement itself that a participant takes exception to, the intention behind the statement, or the wording. A journeyman in a SME suggested when the quality charter was created that the trainees should devote time to their profession after work as well. When the trainees were asked how they viewed that suggestion, they initially felt it was unreasonable. The journeyman explained what he meant with his statement: that it was essential for an installer to keep abreast with the fast technological progress in the field, and that this cannot all be done during working hours. This resulted in an interesting discussion, and it was finally clarified that he did not mean additional learning but take an interest in technological innovations in one's own field.

If a settlement or agreement cannot be reached fast, it helps to exclude disputed statements for the time being. The moderator can try to reach agreement once again at the end. If this is not successful, the statement will not be included in the quality charter. It is by no means useful to argue at length over a conflict and jeopardize the outcome of the entire work.

2nd Step: Working out the criteria required during training in order to achieve these goals

The next task will again be written onto a flip chart for all to see:

What are the priorities of our training?

e.g. with respect to

- organizational or other prerequisites
- procedure, methods
- our cooperation, mutual relations, behaviour, etc.

Intro:

“Now we have clarified the goals that we all strive for, and we have got a few hints already as to what the training should be like. Let us look further into this now. What are the priorities of our training, that is, during the training period? We can think into various directions here. Example: What organizational and other prerequisites must be met, what training methods we value, and how we would like to work together and to behave.”

If statements on these three items were made before, when the goals were discussed, e.g. “good working atmosphere” or “often face new requirements”, the moderator can bring them up here.

The procedure of working out quality criteria for these three topics can be the same as that of working out the goals.

Each participant should think about organizational and other requirements that are important to him or her. If the participants cannot think of anything, having them work in small groups will often help. Examples of what could be meant by these questions may also help.

For a change, the participants should write their statements down on cards or sheets themselves. Where participants are inhibited to write themselves, the moderator should do it for them.

The statements will be collected using the same method as described above: One of the participants raises an item important to him or her, the others contribute if they have similar statements. The moderator can repeatedly ask “Is this statement correct in your view?”, “Does this express your opinion?” If not, everyone should work to find a wording that meets with general agreement.

All three topics can be worked through in this way.

Organizational or other prerequisites

- Keep in mind that training takes time
- and recognize where this time can be found
- Trainees should be assigned to journeymen in a way that makes sense
- Trainee and journeyman have an overview of the entire task
-

Procedures and methods in training

- Again and again face new requirements as a trainee
- In the 1st year of training:
- Get to know the materials and tools
- Create the conditions for specialist communication
- Trainee should have frequent contact with customers
- Journeyman should set an example of how the work should be done
- Trainee should have a chance to try new things himself/herself, not just watch
- ...

Our cooperation, mutual relations, behaviour, etc.

- Good working atmosphere, e.g. by encouragement and support, especially in the 1st year of training
- Ask and listen
- Be patient as a journeyman, even if they ask four times
- Constructive criticism of work and behaviour (do not give them a roasting)
- Show presence as a journeyman and check on the trainee frequently
- Find the right measure of praise and acknowledgement
-

Conclusion of the joint work

When all statements have been collected, ask once again if all statements are agreeable. If very many statements have been collected, the moderator may ask the participants to mark the statements they think are particularly important for each item (they may check these, for example).

At the end, the moderator should review the process with the participants, ask them how they liked the work, what was interesting for them, what surprised them, what they would like to say in general about this work. You will often hear such statements as “I hadn't thought of that before”, “it's good to clarify what one wants with the training”, “I liked it”, “I liked that we talked about it together”, “it's a pity colleague XY couldn't be here”.

3 Further procedure

A trainer or the owner of the company will summarize the statements on the quality charter in a timely manner. It may be structured as follows, for example:

Central ideas for the training at Elektrotechnik Fitz Meier GmbH & Co KG

Created onby

The training at Elektrotechnik Fritz Meier, GmbH & Co. KG is meant to achieve the following essential goals:

.....

In order to achieve these goals, we will ensure the following during training:

Organizational or other prerequisites:

.....

Training procedure:

.....

Cooperation between journeyman and trainee

.....

When wording the document, it is important to convert the catch phrases into sentences. This is much easier if not just key words but short phrases were noted down. Individual statements can later be assigned to another section of the document if they fit better there. Very similar statements should be merged.

The completed quality charter will then be presented to everyone involved in training. It is a proven procedure to review the charter with those who could not participate and to explain the meaning of each statement to them and give examples.

The next page shows an example of such a quality charter as it has really been worked out.

Central ideas for the training at **Elektrotechnik Fritz Meier, GmbH & Co. KG**

Created on ... 2013 by ...

The training at **Elektrotechnik Fritz Meier, GmbH & Co. KG** is meant to achieve the following essential goals:

- The trainee passes his or her training. He acquires the knowledge in training that enables him to stand on his own two feet after the training. This includes, for example: a wide range of basic knowledge and solid specialist knowledge in electrical engineering.
- The trainee has acquired good social skills. This means, for example, that he shows good behaviour towards, and can deal with, customers, that he has a friendly tone and appropriate manners. This includes that he is able to introduce the customer to the operation of installed systems and devices.
- The trainee can give advice and sell. He identifies other needs of the customer and useful additional services and can advise the customer.
- The trainee can handle the clerical work that his job involves, e.g. documentation.
- Overall, the trainee shows responsible and professional behaviour after his training with us.

In order to achieve these goals, we will ensure the following during training:

Organizational or other prerequisites:

- Company owner and journeymen are aware that training takes time and know where this time can be found.
- Trainees and journeymen know and understand the *entire* job or task (the entire project) and the place their contribution will take.
- Wherever possible, the work is to be distributed such that the trainees will perform useful operations for their training and will again and again face new requirements.
- The trainee is able to visualize things in three dimensions. The trainee should bring this ability to the training.
- He is willing to devote a part of his spare time to his profession.

Training procedure:

- Among other things, the trainee will become familiar with the materials and tools in his first year of training. This provides the basis for specialist communication.
- The trainee should be allowed as fast as possible to do something on his own, even if the task is new, rather than to just watch.
- The trainee will be given holistic tasks of an adequate scope, i.e. tasks where he will have to plan, perform, and check his work himself.
- Journeymen should set an example of how the work should be done.

Cooperation between journeyman and trainee

- Journeymen and trainees make sure that there is a good working atmosphere which inspires learning. This includes that both parties will listen to one another and ask back, build a relationship of trust, and that the journeyman can imagine to be in the trainee's shoes
- The journeyman encourages and supports the trainee. He will be patient and encourage the trainee to ask questions.
- He will give the trainee constructive feedback on his work and behaviour
- The trainee knows he can get help and will ask when he gets stumped or feels insecure
- The journeyman will show presence and check on the trainee regularly.
- The trainee should feel accepted.

4 Working with the quality charter

The following can be done to ensure that the contents of the charter won't be forgotten:

- Discuss the quality charter with the trainees and journeymen at the beginning of the training year.
- Discuss the way in which statements from the quality charter are implemented with trainees and journeymen during the training year.
 - Which of these statements work?
 - Which need improvement or don't work at all?
 - What can we change?

Other elements of joint quality work may follow, e.g. discussion of experience and in-house training on training methods, or a joint quality work group.

Comment for people interested in quality management:

The following quality dimensions are addressed when working out a quality charter:

The **quality of result or output** with the question:

What goals are to be achieved at the end of the training?

The **quality of input or structure** with the question:

What organizational and other prerequisites are important to you in training?

The **process quality** with the question:

What procedure and methods are important to you in training?

The **relationship quality** with the question:

What is important to you with respect to cooperation, mutual relations, behaviour?

5 More information:

For more information and answers to your questions on working out a quality charter in this or other contexts, please contact:

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This procedure was developed as part of the "Grass-roots Quality Development and Assurance" model test conducted by BIBB. For more information about this model test, visit: http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/01_BIBB_Graswurzel-web.pdf

We are looking forward to your feedback and reports on experience gained with this procedure.