By Bright Quill Team



Want to learn how to write a project charter that sponsors actually sign? You're in the right place. A project charter is a short formal document that gives a project official permission to exist. It records the sponsor, the project manager, the goals and the budget in one place. Most beginners treat it as paperwork. They shouldn't. It isn't. It's the agreement that protects the project manager when priorities change. It answers five plain questions: why the project exists, what it will deliver, who's involved, when it must finish and what it may cost. Our project management writing team checks charters against these standards on every order, so you'll see what markers and sponsors expect in this template.

What a Project Charter Is and Why Projects Need One

The charter is the first document written for a project. It's usually drafted by the project manager together with the sponsor. It doesn't replace the project plan. That's the detailed instruction manual that comes later. The charter is a short authorising document, two to five pages. The charter matters for three reasons. First, it gives the project manager real authority to assign work and spend budget. Second, it locks in the high level goals before anyone starts work, which stops the quiet scope creep that ruins projects. Third, it names the sponsor who resolves disputes, so everyone knows where final decisions come from. A project that starts without a charter is one nobody officially owns.

The Project Charter Template: 7 Sections Every Charter Needs

A complete project charter template always covers the same seven sections. This order works for beginners. Start with the project name and one paragraph of background explaining why the project exists. Next, state the objectives as measurable outcomes, not activities. Third, define the scope: what's in and what's out, in

plain sentences. Fourth, list the key stakeholders with their roles, especially the sponsor. Fifth, set the milestones with target dates and the overall deadline. Sixth, record the approved budget and any funding limits. Seventh, note the major risks, assumptions and constraints. Don't close without a signature block for the sponsor. Keep every section short. A charter that fits on two pages gets read. A ten page charter gets ignored.

How to Write the Objectives and Scope Sections

Objectives and scope are where most beginners trip up, so give them extra care. Write objectives as measurable outcomes with a deadline. For example: reduce average customer support response time to under two hours by the end of March. Don't write vague objectives like improve support. Nobody can tell whether the project succeeded. For scope, list three to five deliverables the project will produce, then list what's explicitly out of scope. That second list is the one beginners skip and the one sponsors value most. If a website redesign is in scope but the mobile app is out, say so plainly. Our business plans service applies the same discipline: every plan states what it covers and what it doesn't, so expectations stay clear from day one.

A Worked Project Charter Example for Beginners

The fastest way to understand the template is a short example. Project name: Northwind CRM Rollout. Background: the sales team tracks customers in spreadsheets, which causes duplicate entries and lost follow ups. Objectives: migrate all 4,000 customer records to a single CRM within twelve weeks, and train all 25 sales staff on the new system. Scope in: data migration, staff training, basic reporting. Scope out: marketing automation, custom software development. Key stakeholders: the sales director as sponsor, the IT lead as technical advisor. Milestones: data audit by week 3, migration complete by week 9, training finished by week 12. Budget: 48,000 approved. Major risks: sales staff resist the new system, data quality delays migration. Approval: sponsor signature and date. Notice how concrete every line is. That's the standard. Copy this pattern with your own details and your charter will beat most.

How to Get Your Charter Approved and Signed Off

A charter has no power until the sponsor signs it. Until then it won't protect you, and getting that signature is a skill in itself. Present the charter in a short meeting, not by email, so you can answer questions on the spot. Walk the sponsor through the objectives, the out of scope list and the budget first. Those are the lines sponsors challenge. If the sponsor asks for extra scope, add it to the document with the cost and date impact written next to it, or decline it in writing. Don't accept verbal additions without recording them. Unwritten scope is how projects drift. Once everyone agrees, collect signatures and store the signed charter where the whole team can find it. From that moment the charter is your shield. Any change request must pass through it.

Five Project Charter Mistakes Beginners Should Avoid

First, writing the charter alone and skipping the sponsor review. A charter the sponsor hasn't read is just a wish list. Second, vague objectives instead of measurable ones, which makes success impossible to prove. Third, a blank out of scope list, which invites endless additions later. Fourth, hiding the risks instead of naming them, which kills trust when a risk becomes real. Fifth, skipping the signature block and treating a draft as final. Students make the same mistakes in project management assignments. Our business plans team reviews every charter and plan against this exact checklist before delivery, so the same discipline protects coursework and real projects alike. Fix these five and your charter will stand up to any sponsor. It's that simple.

Learning how to write a project charter comes down to one habit: say exactly what the project will do, what it

won't do, and who approved it. Keep it short, make every objective measurable, name your risks honestly, and get the signature before work begins. Need a professional to review your charter or your full project management assignment? You're not alone. Our team can help. Reach us any time through the contact page .

Key visual, in brief:

Every charter needs: purpose, objectives, scope, stakeholders, timeline, budget, and approval signatures.