

The PRACI matrix: Your blueprint for realisation of a project's objectives¹

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The PRACI matrix is a simple yet effective means of communicating to project team members who is accountable and who is responsible for completing specific tasks while at the same time conveying to those: who are required to participate in their preparation; who will be consulted; and those that are simply to be informed. The PRACI matrix is an indispensable expansion of the pan industry RACI chart that has been in existence for several decades.

Benefit

Having supported projects in multiple industries in the UK, South Africa, Malaysia, the UAE and Qatar over the last 12 years, the creation and use of the PRACI matrix has proved to be an invaluable communication and collaboration tool. It removes confusion and ambiguity. Its construction forces a team to consider all of the tasks required to complete an activity and who should be involved. It provides transparency, visibility and lucidity. It avoids the ownership of activities 'falling through the cracks' where one team member has incorrectly assumed someone else is undertaking a specific task. It avoids the discovery of the need to carry out additional activities at the 'eleventh hour', robbing team members of ample warning of new tasks to be completed. PRACI charts can prevent reputations being tarnished when milestones are missed. Project reviews of failed projects pinpoint activities that were not identified, specialist consultants who were engaged late in a programme or stakeholders that were not consulted. Time and time again it is not until a PRACI chart is commenced that a consensus is established across a project as to the tasks to be completed and the appropriate accountabilities and responsibilities.

Documented

The adoption of a PRACI matrix has proved to be an aid to establishing project governance and the implementation of project controls. The introduction and use of a PRACI matrix is described within the text "The rules of project risk management, implementation guidelines for major projects, second edition" published by Routledge in 2020, in both New York and Oxfordshire in the UK. The text advocates that "Leadership must ensure that it is made explicit who within the project team is accountable and who is responsible for all of the primary risk management activities". The same tenet applies to all of the other project disciplines.

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Definition

The PRACI matrix is a project role and responsibility assignment chart that describes the tasks to be completed for a specific objective and assigns which roles are *Accountable* and *Responsible* for each task, which project team members are required to *Participate* and who needs to be *Consulted* or *Informed*. The acronym PRACI stands for the five roles that project team members play in completing activities that contribute to a collective goal.

P: Participate

Those who assist and support those who are Responsible for the completion of the task.

R: Responsible

The individual who is Responsible is subordinate to the individual who is Accountable. Those who are Responsible are those that 'do the work' to achieve the task. There is typically (but not always) one individual assigned to a task who is Responsible, to avoid confusion as to which individual should deliver. A Responsible person may be responsible for completing multiple tasks.

A: Accountable

Those who are ultimately responsible for the correct and thorough completion of a project deliverable or task. Accountable individuals will be responsible to the Project Director (if the person noted as 'Accountable' is not the Project Director himself/herself). An Accountable person must brief, supervise and approve the work undertaken by the individual who is Responsible. Success requires there must be only one Accountable person specified for each task or deliverable. An Accountable person must readily accept 'the buck stops here'.

C: Consulted

Those whose opinions are sought, typically subject matter experts and with whom there is two-way communication. A task cannot be completed until those identified as being required to be consulted have been contacted and their input obtained.

I: Informed

Those who are kept up-to-date on progress, often only on completion of the task or deliverable; and with whom there is just one-way communication. These are individuals that need to be 'kept in the picture'. They do not contribute to the completion of a task and they do not need to be consulted.

Applicability

A PRACI chart can be used to support any number of activities such as a sub-task, task, project stage or phase, stage gate, stakeholder analysis, approval sequences or handover process, depending on what level of granularity is required and the stage that a project has reached.

Construction of a PRACI matrix

The simple process for creating a PRACI matrix includes the following eight steps:

1. Identify all the tasks involved in delivering the element of the project under examination and list them on the left-hand side of the chart in the order that they are to be completed.
2. Identify all the project team members (as well as the consultants and stakeholders) that will be involved in the completion of the tasks and list them along the top of the matrix.
3. Complete the cells of the matrix in collaboration with team members identifying who has accountability and responsibility, who will participate and those that will be consulted and informed for each task.
4. Ensure every task has an individual that is accountable and one that is responsible.
5. Ensure no tasks have more than one individual that is Accountable.
6. Colour code cells that contain an 'A' and those that contain an 'R' so it is abundantly apparent if these roles have been filled.
7. Sense check the completed matrix to ensure that it contains all the tasks necessary to complete the project element and that all named individuals have confirmed acceptance of their role. Remove the chance of unpleasant surprises.
8. Ensure the matrix is accompanied by explanatory notes which include how the matrix is to be used. It should be revisited on a regular basis to ascertain progress.

Example of a simple matrix composed of 4 tasks

Project Name and Task Name						
Sequence No	Task	Director	Project Manager	Commercial Manager	Planner	Project Controls Manager
		Name	Name	Name	Name	Name
1	Task A	A	R	P	I	C
2	Task B	I	C	A	P	R
3	Task C	I	A	R	I	C
4	Task D	A	R	P	I	C

Conclusion

The PRACI matrix has proved to be a simple yet effective means of communicating to project team members who is accountable and who is responsible for completing specific tasks while at the same time conveying to those: who are required to participate in their preparation; who will be consulted; and those that are simply to be informed. From experience, the construction of a matrix forces a project team to consider all of the tasks required to complete an activity and the logical sequence in which they should be carried out. In addition, it requires those responsible to complete a task to consider (prior to task commencement) who do I need to call upon to participate in its preparation, do they currently sit within the team, what is their availability and who do they need to coordinate with. Often there are multiple individuals supporting the completion of a single task. The PRACI develops the RACI to make it a more practical tool for the project and risk manager alike.

About the Author



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Dr Robert J Chapman is an international risk management specialist. He has provided risk management services in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Holland, UAE, South Africa, Malaysia and Qatar on multi-billion programmes and projects across 14 different industries. He is author of the texts: 'The SME business guide to fraud risk management' published by Routledge, 'Simple tools and techniques for enterprise risk management' 2nd edition, published by John Wiley and Sons Limited, 'The Rules of Project Risk Management, implementation guidelines for major projects' 2nd edition published by Routledge and 'Retaining design team members, a risk management approach' published by RIBA Enterprises. He holds a PhD in risk management from Reading University and has been elected a fellow of the IRM, CIHT, APM and ICM and is a former member of the RIBA. Robert has passed the M_o_R, APM and PMI risk examinations. In addition, he has provided project and risk management training in Scotland, England, Singapore and Malaysia. Robert has been an external PhD examiner. Dr. Chapman developed the PRACI matrix and successfully deployed it for multiple organizations. It effectively ensured that those project team members and stakeholders, upon whom those responsible for a task were reliant, were identified and communicated with from the outset of an activity.