

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

BUSINESS OPERATIONS SERIES

Operational Management – RASCI: Who does what?

RASCI - RASCI is a chart (i.e. model or framework) that is used to help identify all the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder on a project. A RASCI Chart clearly defines who is working on a specific subtask of a project. As an organization grows, or new projects are undertaken by a team of people, the work is often divided. Using a RASCI approach clarifies the individual role of team members on a project and enables the tasks to be done efficiently.

RASCI Charts provide clarity around “who does what”, “who can help with this task”, and “who’s responsible for this task” on a wide range of business functions.

By using RASCI business leaders and their teams can:

- Quickly resolve project conflicts within groups

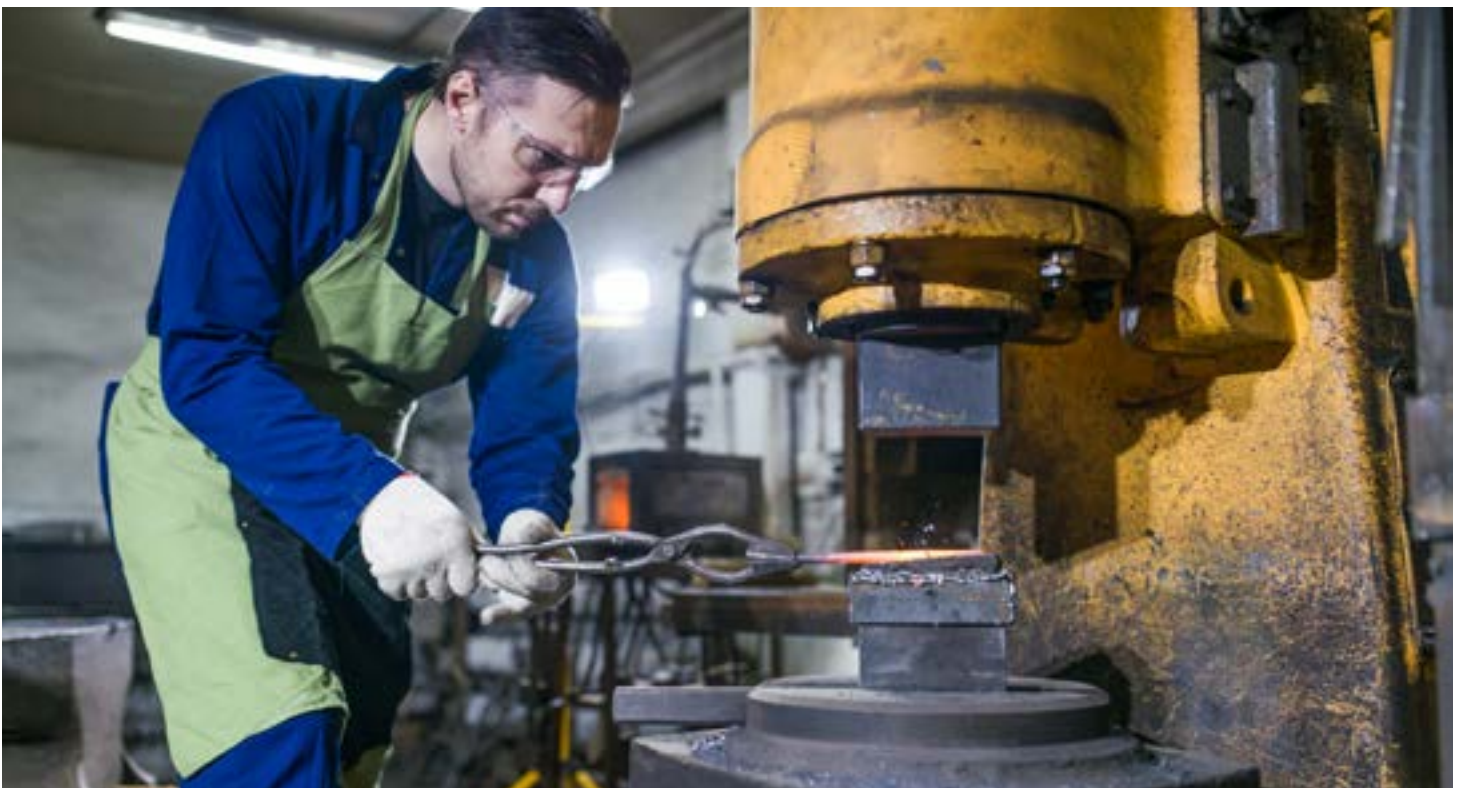
- Efficiently manage projects
- Eliminate confusion by assigning specific tasks to each project group member
- See that all project responsibility is documented and distributed properly
- Identify if any one individual is overburdened with task assignments
- Provide clarity by establishing the organizational project hierarchy

A RASCI Chart can also help you understand the full process of one area or even the entire company and confirm that the right people are working on the right tasks, that they are collaborating with everyone they should to make the best decisions, and they inform others in the organization who need to know what they did or decided.

Reviewing this can confirm at a high level that all the right processes are happening at the appropriate time, and that all the people who need to be involved or need to be informed are in the loop. Like company processes, the RASCI Chart needs to be updated as staff changes or processes are modified.

Getting Started:

The first step is to outline the steps of the process (or processes) important to your business operations (e.g., financial management, sales, onboarding new employees). If one person does a few tasks to get one thing done, it’s best to name the overall group of tasks rather than listing out in detail each individual task. If that person needs to check in with others throughout the process, it is best to list out the tasks individually so that the one task that requires more input is noted.



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There are two approaches to documenting a process. If you have a process document already, you can start with that. If not, gather the people involved with the process together and list the tasks needed to complete the process. Once a draft of the process has been created, make sure everyone involved has a chance to review it and confirm it has all the necessary steps documented for completion.

The next step is to assign the people needed to get a task done. This is where the RASCI Chart helps to flesh out who can perform a task on their own, where input from others is required, and what happens next after the task is complete. While one person can detail the preliminary RASCI assignments, it is important that all involved review any draft. It's often useful to schedule a meeting to discuss and confirm that the RASCI listing of tasks accurately represents what happens now or what should happen if you are attempting to improve the process, communications, overall quality, etc. Team discussion about the RASCI is the most valuable part of this tool, since it helps everyone understand the full scope of the process, how others are involved and what impact certain tasks have upon the overall team and process.

What does RASCI stand for?

R = Responsible: Think of this person as the project owner - or the position that performs the work. There should be one person responsible for a task and if help is needed, they may ask a supportive member(s) to assist. There must be one "R" in every row, no more and no less.

A = Accountable: The person or position ultimately accountable for the work or decision being made and who has the final control over a project task and the resources associated with it. They generally assign and delegate project work responsibilities. It is highly recommended to assign only one person as accountable to one task. Use this letter when appropriate, but not to excess - only when an important decision or task is at hand. There can be from zero to one "A" in each row, but no more than one.

S = Supports: Anyone who supports the responsible person, typically a backup person for the role or someone who assists. Supportive people are able to provide resources to the Responsible project team members and are actively involved in working with the Responsible person to see the project through to completion. Supportive persons and Responsible persons both have the same

goals to achieve. There can be as many "S's" as appropriate.

C = Consulted: Anyone who must be consulted prior to a decision being made or a task completed. A "C" is typically a subject matter expert or a functional leader who brings valuable subject matter expertise to the project and whose team will be affected by the decision/action. Responsible persons will use Consulted persons for advice, opinions, help, or experience relevant to the project. There can be from zero to multiple "C's" in each row as appropriate.

I = Informed: These are people who need to be kept in the loop during key points of the project life-cycle and after a decision is made or work is completed. There can be as many "I's" as are appropriate in each row.

You can also add in a task for decisions - this can help confirm who is responsible to make a decision, who needs to be part of the conversation to make that decision, and who needs to know what the decision was.

Here's a sample format of a RASCI Chart

Department	Task	Sales Manager	Salesperson	Customer Service Manager	Customer Service 1	Customer Service 2	Shipper
Sales	Generate Sales Plan	R	C		I	I	
Sales	Present Product	A	R				
Customer Service	Enter Order			A	R		
Customer Service	Process Order for Shipping			A		R	I
Shipping	Ship Order			I			R

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Once the RASCI Chart is made for the current process, it can be used to define a future state. This could be when a new employee is added to the mix or if a process needs to change for some reason (e.g., new tool or problem to be addressed). The RASCI Chart helps people more quickly see the areas of the process that need to be changed or updated, without forgetting about the way this specific process fits into others in the company.

RASCI and RACI - Is There a Big Difference?

With many RASCI and RACI Charts out there, it can get a bit confusing when differentiating between them.

Both terms are used interchangeably quite often. While in all practicality, they do mean the same thing, there is of course a marked differentiator with the "S" in RASCI (meaning Support).

Organizations that choose to use RACI, may do so because an "S" is identified

as part of the "C" (Consulted) by team members.

What makes the biggest difference of including the "S" in RASCI is that it acknowledges the fact that those identified as a Supporter to the project are a resource that is a cost to the project and the Supporter's time. Even though they are not directly responsible to the project task, they are involved providing experience, knowledge, technical skills etc. that have a cost attached to it, be it time, compensation or an activity of some sort.

What makes the biggest difference in including the "S" in RASCI as a Supporter? There is a distinction between a "S" and "C" resource. A "C" Consulting resource is needed to provide experience, knowledge, technical skills etc. to the "R" Responsible person. The "S" Supporter role is a needed resource to support the "R" Responsible person to get the job done. Using the "S" clearly shows that there may be a group of unaccounted for project team members providing

resources without responsibilities that are of critical impact to the project. While the "C" Consulting role is providing needed information or insight so the "R" person can get the task done, the "S" Supporter role is a helper, providing their time to help the "R" Responsible person get the job done. For example, in preparing for a sales meeting, the Sales Manager is responsible for the event, but is getting "C" help from Product Development to make sure the presentation is correct. The "S" Support person is assuring that all the material for the sales meeting (as designated by the "R" Responsible Sales Manager) is produced correctly for the meeting.

As another example, a sales manager may be accountable for a software development RFP, while the sales rep is responsible for completing the RFP. At this point clarifications are needed from the information technology team. The IT engineer who is not in any way connected to sales, provides information in order to complete the document consulted. The



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engineer is not responsible to complete the RFP nor are they accountable that it goes out-on-time and on-cost, however, the engineer's experience and input is critical to the success of quality of the RFP responses and estimates.

By identifying the "S" in a project, it brings a more focused recognition to the specific involvement of project team members and helps to define the expectations and deliverables of each individual role.

The Impact of Not Following RASCI

If your project is complex, involving many team members and a significant number of tasks then not using a RASCI Chart could result in an eventual negative impact both on the project team members and overall, on a variety of project outcomes.

Teams or even individuals are less likely to be working in harmony. Blame will be passed around; accountability is not enforced and decisions will be made without involvement or knowledge of other team member areas. Or worse yet, even the smallest of decisions won't be made, holding everything else up.

Without proper assignment of duties, the possibility of time being wasted and team members being less productive is very high. While on the other hand, certain team members may feel overwhelmed as they have been handed too much work to complete. Demotivated teams never deliver 100%.

RASCI Tips

There is a fine line when creating your tasks in a RASCI Chart. If your RASCI is too high-level, steps may slip through the cracks, making the entire exercise pointless. Yet by going too far into detail,

you've just promoted yourself to that of a micro-manager.

A good way to look at deciding what goes into the matrix would be to think of the process itself as opposed to one-off individual tasks. So for example, a new product feature needs to be in the matrix and tagged to the project manager as well as to the designers doing the development, the sales team promoting the feature, the finance team evaluating the product costs, etc. As for whether a button should be green or red, square or rounded, that can be left to the team and not as part of the RASCI Chart.

RASCI Charts are extremely helpful as they create a highly efficient mechanism for task distribution while eliminating any ambiguity within the project hierarchy of tasks or the role of employees to a process.



Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at [VSJF.org](https://www.vsjf.org)



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