

Rethinking Traditional Committees: The Case for Core Teams

Traditional committees, while well-intentioned, often present significant challenges that hinder efficiency and broad engagement. Their large size and bureaucratic processes tend to slow decision-making, creating bottlenecks that delay progress on key university initiatives. Meetings can become more about procedure than action, leaving many participants feeling that their time is wasted. Additionally, traditional committees frequently involve only a limited group of individuals, unintentionally excluding others who could offer valuable input but may not have the time or opportunity to participate in lengthy discussions.

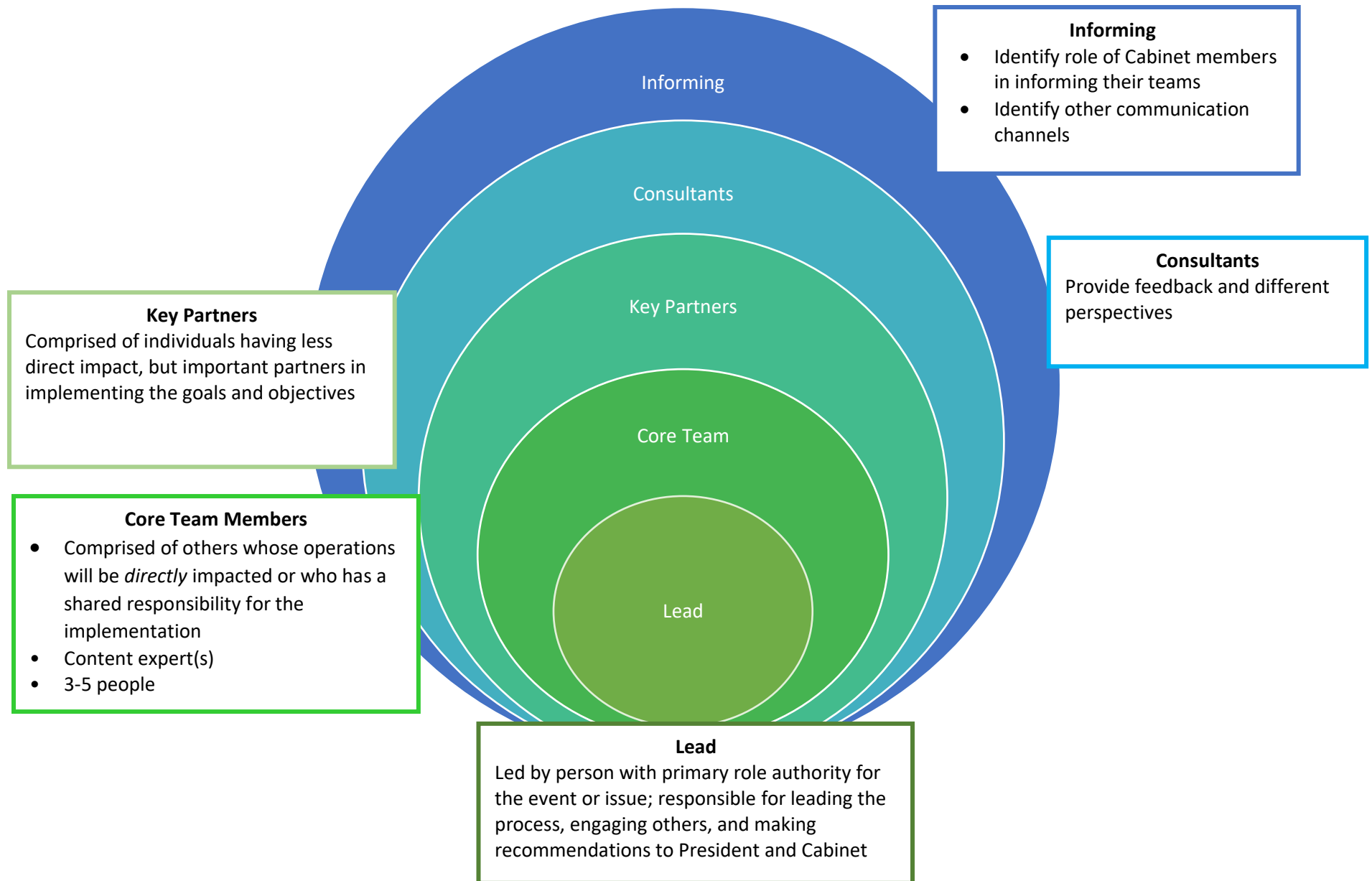
To address these inefficiencies, **Wacker Core Teams** provide a dynamic alternative that enhances collaboration without the sluggishness of a traditional committee structure. Core Teams are **small, agile groups** composed of individuals directly responsible for implementing goals and objectives. By focusing on **systemic thinking, shared responsibility, and rapid response**, Core Teams offer several advantages:

- **University-Wide Perspective:** By drawing input from key partners, consultants, and communication channels, Core Teams ensure that more people and governance groups are involved in decisions and decisions are made with a **broader institutional viewpoint**, fostering alignment with university goals.
- **Increased Inclusivity Without Time Waste:** Instead of requiring a broad group to sit through (yet another!) meetings, Core Teams involve more people and governance groups across the university by **seeking input through consultation and strategic communication**. This ensures that voices are heard without forcing unnecessary participation in lengthy committee sessions.
- **Efficiency in Decision-Making:** With a smaller, more focused group, Core Teams can make quicker, more informed decisions without the delays often associated with large committees.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Core Teams operate with well-defined leadership and participation roles, ensuring that **everyone involved has a specific function** rather than contributing to the ambiguity that often plagues traditional committees.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Unlike rigid committees, Core Teams are **formed as needed** to address specific events or issues. This structure allows the university to remain responsive and proactive in addressing challenges and opportunities.

For example, we created **Commencement Core Team** under this model. The core team leaders meet and create a draft outline of our commencement program. They then involve other key stakeholders in a structured way that is more respectful of their time. Rather than relying on a large committee that meets bi-weekly, the Core team creates **feedback loops moments with content experts, and key partners** to refine and coordinate the event often taking advantage of meetings that already exist (e.g., Provost Council, Faculty Senate, etc.).

By shifting from traditional committees to Core Teams, universities can **streamline operations, foster greater engagement, and ultimately make better, faster decisions**—without burdening faculty and staff with unnecessary meetings. This model not only respects everyone's time but also strengthens institutional collaboration, ensuring that more voices are heard and that initiatives are executed with precision and effectiveness.

Wacker Core Team Concept - Building teams to effectively lead the organization



Commencement Core Team

CORE TEAM GOALS

The goals of the commencement experience (from a student's declaration to attend the ceremony to end of the ceremony) are:

- to have a coordinated university approach to commencement
- to convey the importance of this event to our graduates, their family and friends.
- provide a feeling of celebration, pride and accomplishment.
- to provide a positive image about our university
- to professionally produced with high quality audio and video
- to involve a significant number of faculty and staff
- to foster a lifelong relationship with our university

COMMENCEMENT CORE TEAM MEMBERS AND ROLES

Co-Lead or Lead: *[Led by person with primary role authority for the event or issue; responsible for leading the process, engaging others, and making recommendations to President and Cabinet]*

Director Jackson & VP Woods – VP for Strategic Enrollment & Student Affairs

Core Team Members: *[Comprised of others whose operations will be directly impacted, who have a shared responsibility for the implementation or major role in implementation]*

Provost and President

Key Partners: *Comprised of individuals having less direct impact, but important partners in implementing the goals and objectives*

Deans, AVP University Communications

Consultants: *Individuals who can provide feedback and different perspectives; have we missed anything?*

Other cabinet members, Alumni Director, Athletic Director, Student Government, faculty senate, staff council

Informing: *Share the information with campus community*

Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Cabinet share with their employees, University News, Social Media

TIMELINE

Prelaunch Meeting

Consulting

Key partner conversation(s)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

[Identify relative to goals – report to cabinet]