

## Week 9

### Activity 1

- 1. What items should a communications management plan address? How can a stakeholder analysis assist in preparing and implementing parts of this plan?**

A communications management plan should address stakeholder communications requirements, information to be communicated, who will receive and produce the communications, suggested methods or technologies, frequency of communication, escalation procedures for resolving issues, revision procedures, and a glossary of terms.

A stakeholder analysis shows which stakeholders should get which written communications and in what format. Stakeholders should assist in determining this information by clarifying their specific communications needs. Stakeholders can assist by checking the quality of the plan and ensure that it follows the company's rules and policies. They also should check the items related to them and ensure that the information that they will receive is appropriate and complete.

Refer to the sample communication plan

(<http://www.pma.doit.wisc.edu/plan/3-1/how.html>).

Note: The difference between Table 10-1 (in Chapter 10) and Table 13-2 (in Chapter 13) in the Schwalbe text:

Table 10-1: This is related to the stakeholder (communication) analysis which supports the communications management plan. Stakeholders should be allowed to review and approve this stakeholder (communication) analysis to make sure that the information is correct and useful.

Table 13-2: This table is part of the Stakeholder management plan which often includes sensitive information (= potential strategies to manage different stakeholders) and should not be part of the official project documents.

- 2. How many different communication channels does a project team with six people have? How many more communication channels would there be if the team grew to 10 people?**

Number of communications channels =  $(n(n-1))/2$ . For 6 people, there would be  $(6(6-1))/2 = 15$  communications channels. If the team grew to 10 people, there would be  $(10(10-1))/2 = 45$  communications channels, or 30 more channels (45-15).

- 3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of distributing project performance information.**

Electronic communications are often useful when it is important to send information quickly to a large group of people. Face-to-face communications are important for developing relationships and trust with project stakeholders. Formal written communications are important for documenting legal and other crucial information. Verbal communications are very important for many people

who prefer to communicate verbally and ask specific questions rather than read information.

**4. Describe the type of information that is documented in an issue log. How can you avoid spending too much time documenting and tracking issues?**

An issue log often includes information like an issue number, descriptions, impact, date pre-sorted, reported by, assigned to, priority, due date, status, and comments. It is important to focus on high and medium priority issues first and to hold people accountable for resolving them.

## 5. Discuss some methods for controlling stakeholder engagement.

- Engagement involves a dialogue in which people seek understanding and solutions to issues of mutual concern
- Setting the tone right – key stakeholders should be invited to actively participate in a kick-off meeting rather than merely attending it
- The project manager should emphasize that a dialogue is expected at the meeting, including texts or whatever means of communication the stakeholders prefer.
- The project manager should also meet with important stakeholders before the kick-off meeting
- The project schedule should include activities and deliverables related to stakeholder engagement, such as surveys, reviews, demonstrations, and sign-offs.

## 6. How can software assist in project stakeholder management? Do you think social media tools are more likely to help or hinder projects?

Productivity software like word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation software can aid in creating various documents related to stakeholder management.

Communications software like e-mail, blogs, Websites, texts, and tweets can aid in stakeholder communications.

Collaboration tools like Google docs, wikis, and virtual meeting software can also promote stakeholder engagement in projects.

Social media tools can help projects if used well, but they can also waste a lot of time.

### *Activity 2*

Scenario a: face-to-face communications would be most appropriate.

Scenario b: you might try several approaches to brainstorming and developing ideas and use a polished presentation for the customer involving new or unique approaches (video, audio, actors, etc.).

Scenario c: it may be appropriate to add a FAQ section to a Website to answer similar questions or have a telephony system answer common questions.

Scenario d: you could use a mass phone call, e-mail, and or letter.

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### **Key Terms**

- **communications management plan** — A document that guides project communications
- **lessons-learned report** — Reflective statements written by project managers and their team members to document important information they have learned from working on a project

- **progress reports** — Reports that describe what the project team has accomplished during a certain period of time
- **status reports** — Reports that describe where a project stands at a specific point in time
- **expectations management matrix** — A tool that helps clarify expectations and lists project measures of success as well as priorities, expectations, and guidelines related to each measure
- **issue log** — A tool used to document, monitor, and track issues that need resolution
- **power/interest grid** — A tool used to group stakeholders based on their level of authority (power) and their level of concern (interest) for project outcomes
- **stakeholder analysis** — A technique for analysing information to determine which stakeholders' interests to focus on and how to increase stakeholder support throughout the project
- **stakeholder register** — A document that includes details about identified project stakeholders