Faculty of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences

Project Management & Engineering Practice
(GENG 5505)

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Communication management: Matching intent with outcome (Ch 9)

(Week 5b) – 28th March, 2024

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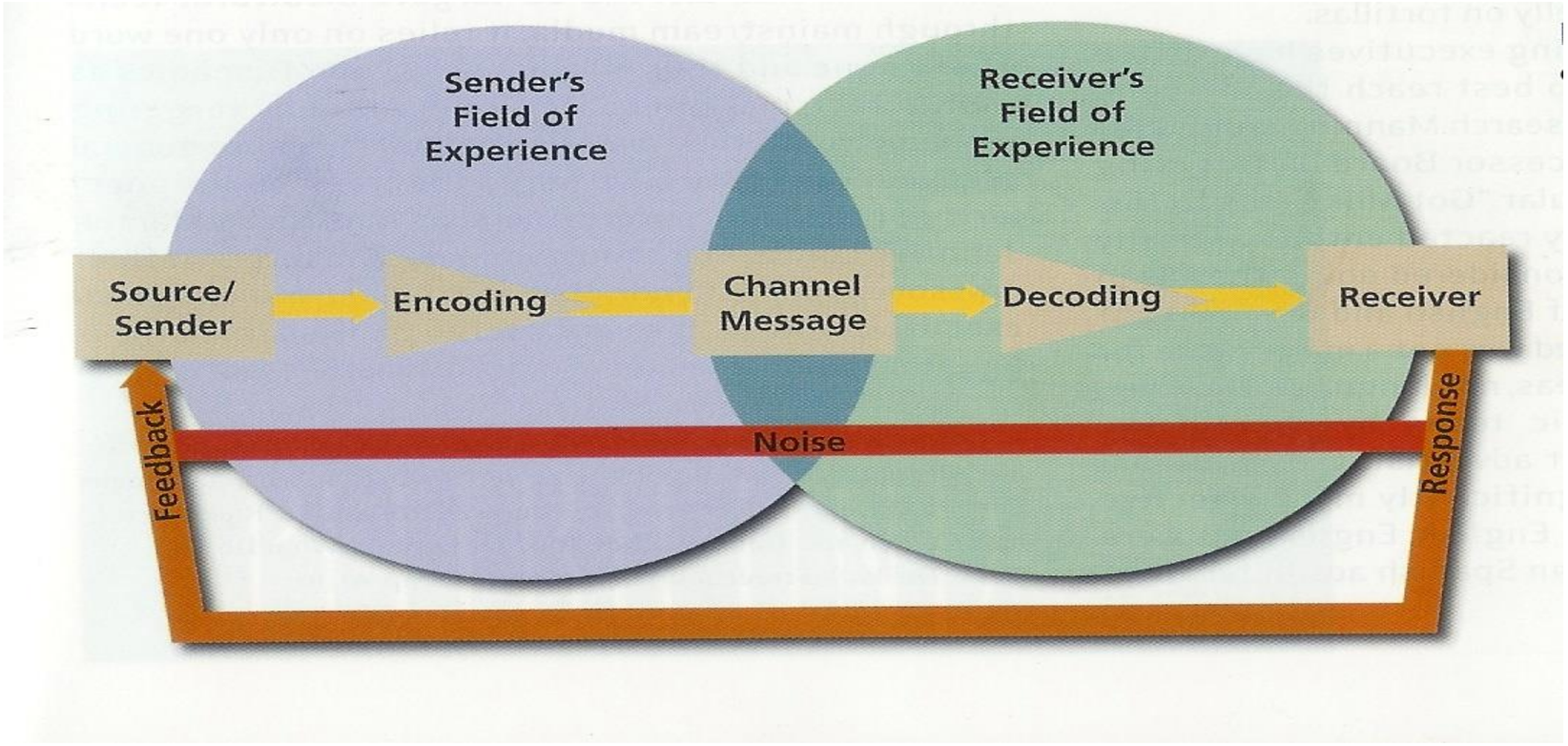
Planning communications management

- 75-90 percent time spent communicating (writing, reading, talking and listening);
- Poor communication continues to frustrate and undermine the workplace (problems, issues and misunderstandings);
- Information should be provided in the right format, at the right time, to the right audience and with the right impact.

Communicating effectively with stakeholders: The Communication Process Model

Source: Belch & Belch, 2004



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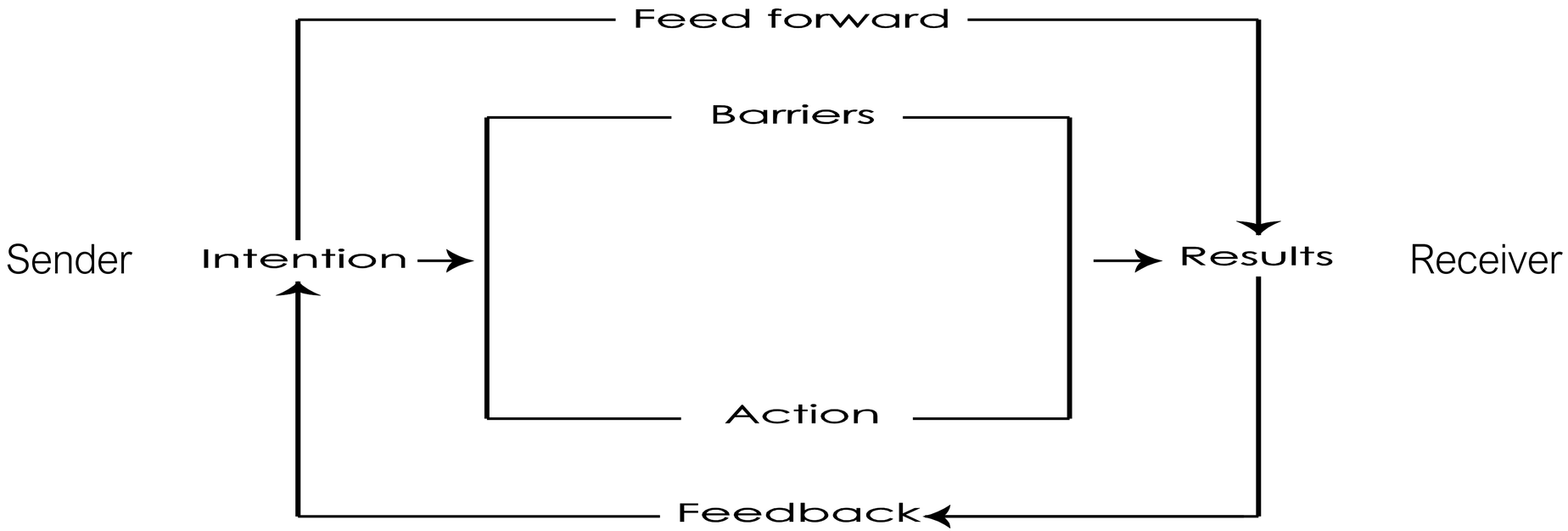
The communication process



Communication barriers

- Lack of client involvement;
- Poorly informed stakeholders;
- Lack of meetings and/or too many meetings leading to little action;
- Lack of reporting requirements;
- Poor and incomplete documentation;
- Frequent scope change;
- Changing project personnel;
- Lack of auditing the project to identify the lessons learned;
- ....

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Managing project communications

Timely and appropriate planning, collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, control, monitoring, and disposal of information;

Fact—indisputable, objective truth accepted by everyone;
Fantasy—someone's opinion or interpretation;
Folklore—rumour, gossip or hearsay;
Feelings—intuition, ego or emotion;

Communication works best when you work at communication.

Project meetings

Upwards of 85 percent of time in meetings:

- How much of this time is spent wisely, efficiently and effectively?
- How many of the meetings result in actionable outcomes?
- What percentage of meetings include stakeholders who make the required decisions?
- How much constructive information is presented at the meetings?
- How participative are the meetings?
- How many meetings are poorly managed?
- How many meetings are held to ratify what has already been decided?
- How often do meetings go back over ground already discussed at previous meetings?

Profiling the meeting

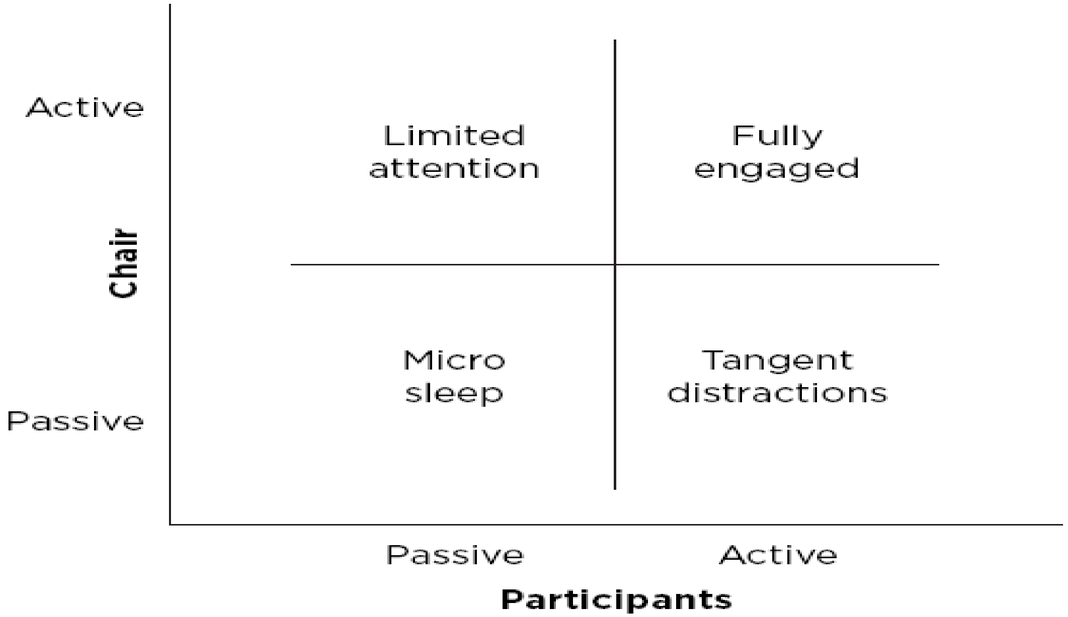

Figure 9.2 Profiling the meeting

Kick-off meeting

- Detailing the project objectives, expectation, deliverables, outcomes and benefits;
- Meeting the client or their representative;
- Reviewing all the scope inclusions and exclusions;
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of executive, project, operational, technical, team and/or other support members;
- Explaining the project management methodology (or framework) to be followed;
- Walking through the project management plan (and any subsidiary plans);
- Discussing different views between the stakeholders and/or team members;
- ….

Kick-out meeting

- This is the meeting that formally brings the project to a close;
- Projects can close at any time, completed or not;
- Final meeting ensure that all aspects of the project are formally closed out prior to the team being disbanded;
- ….

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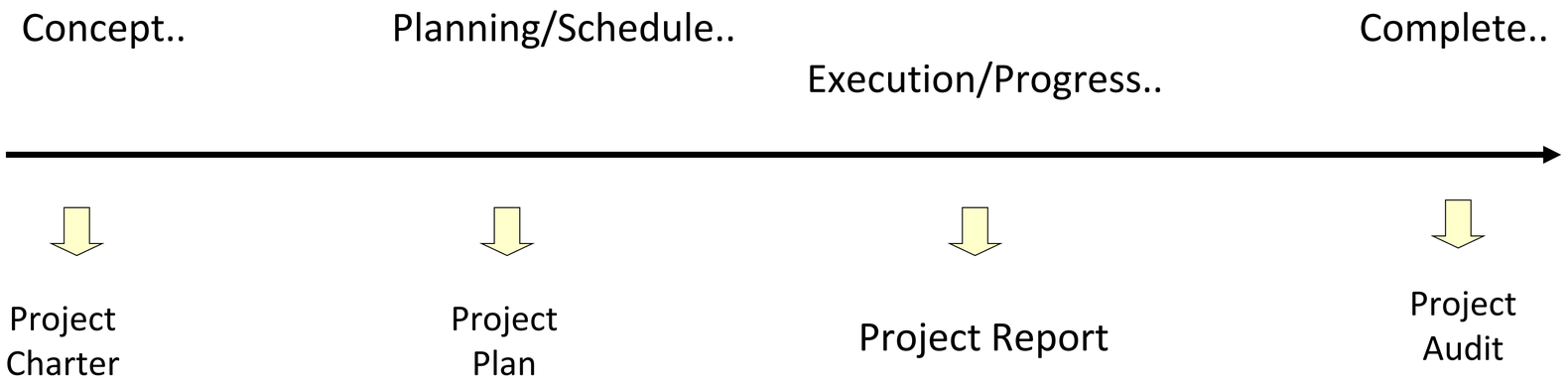
Project performance reports

Reports can often lead to an impressive work of fiction (at worse), or a concise and honest summary of the project's progression, status and likely conclusion (at best).

Reports should convey:

- Accurate, complete and timely information;
- Provide an possible escape route for a mismanaged project;
- Reflect the true facts on the project's progression;
- Encourage early detection of problems;
- Enable problem-solving and facilitate decision-making;
- Track all the scope changes and revisions;
- Sustain the project momentum, energy and commitment;
- ....

Navigating the project lifecycle



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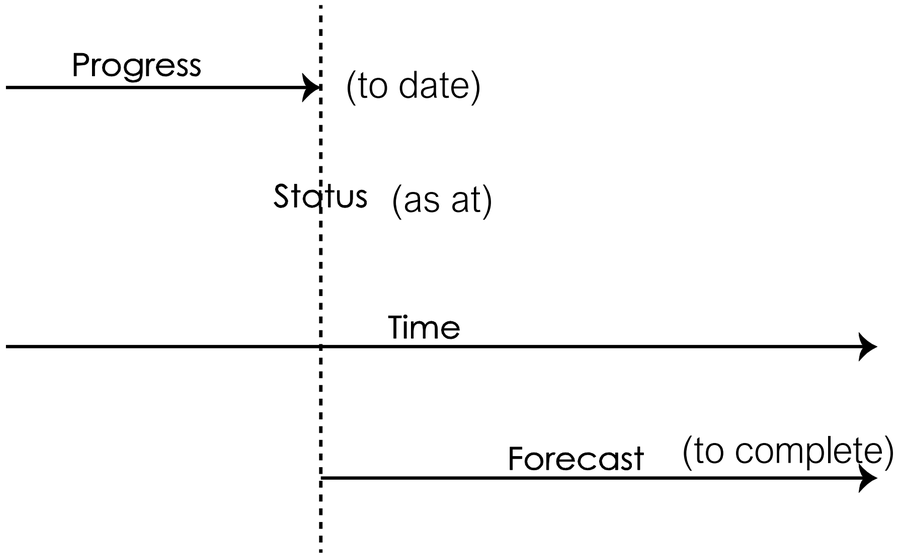
The reporting continuum



Navigating the reporting continuum: True measures of performance

Reporting requires continual monitoring, inspection, correction & reinforcement to be effective

- Progress report (time zero to present)
  - Reports information after it has happened - achievements, budget and cash flow progress, issues addressed, milestones reached, risk managed, changes adopted, approvals received, delivery accepted, etc.

- Status report (present)
  - Reports the current position of the project against the plan – on time, on budget, as specified, etc.

- Forecast report (completion oriented)
  - Reports against the original completion date, anticipated scope changes, pending risks, approvals pending, escalating issues, expected delays, projected cost over runs, etc.

Project change control

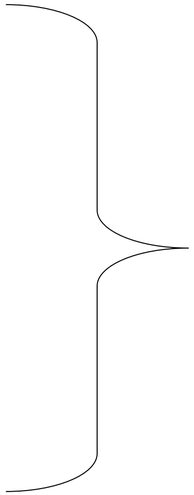
- All scope change requests are to be in writing;
- All scope changes must identify & be signed by the stakeholder initiating the change;
- All scope changes must identify the complete impact (time, cost, specification & resources, TBL) the change will have on the project;
- All scope changes must include an updated risk assessment reflecting the changes;
- All scope changes must include an updated quality assessment (and TBL) reflecting the changes;
- All scope changes must include an updated contract assessment reflecting the changes;
- All scope changes (and impacts) must be agreed, documented & communicated between all relevant stakeholders;
- All successful scope changes must be reflected in a revised project charter/scope and project schedule;

Causes of scope creep

- Poor initial definitions of requirements
- Unanswered questions on deliverables
- Lack of stakeholder involvement
- Evolving expectations and/or mentality of ‘exceeding’ expectations
- Discovery of new ‘solutions’
- Ineffective project management
- Environmental factors (external to the company)
- …

Benefits of project control

- Monitor
- Assess
- Improve
- Adjust
- Document
- Forecast
- Evaluate



Performance

Measuring ‘actual’ achievement

- Performance milestones
- Time completed
- Deliverables (including TBL)
- Level of effort
- Budget spent
- Remaining duration
- ….

- Issues resolved
- Risks managed
- Decisions reached
- Reviews conducted
- Approvals received
- Team cohesion
- Stakeholders managed

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Taking corrective action

Behind Schedule	►Accelerate ►Increase resources ►Reduce quality	Ahead of Schedule	► ... ►... ►...
Over Budget	►Reduce quality ►Narrow scope ►Accept substitution	Under Budget	►... ► ... ► ...
Outside Scope	►Renegotiate costs ►Redefine scope ►Stop project	Under Scope	► ... ►...
Consistent with TBL	► ... ►...	Inconsistent with TBL	► ... ►...

Effective project control

The steps:

- Establishing the standards which will become the measurement benchmark
- Monitoring the standards through regular inspections & related activities
- Measuring performance against the standard
- Taking corrective action to correct deviations (if required) and/or reinforce compliance

The tools (refer also to additional templates on LMS)

- Milestone charts
- Budget charts
- Control charts
- Earned value reports
- Action plans
- Change request register
- Contingency plans
- Risk management register
- ….

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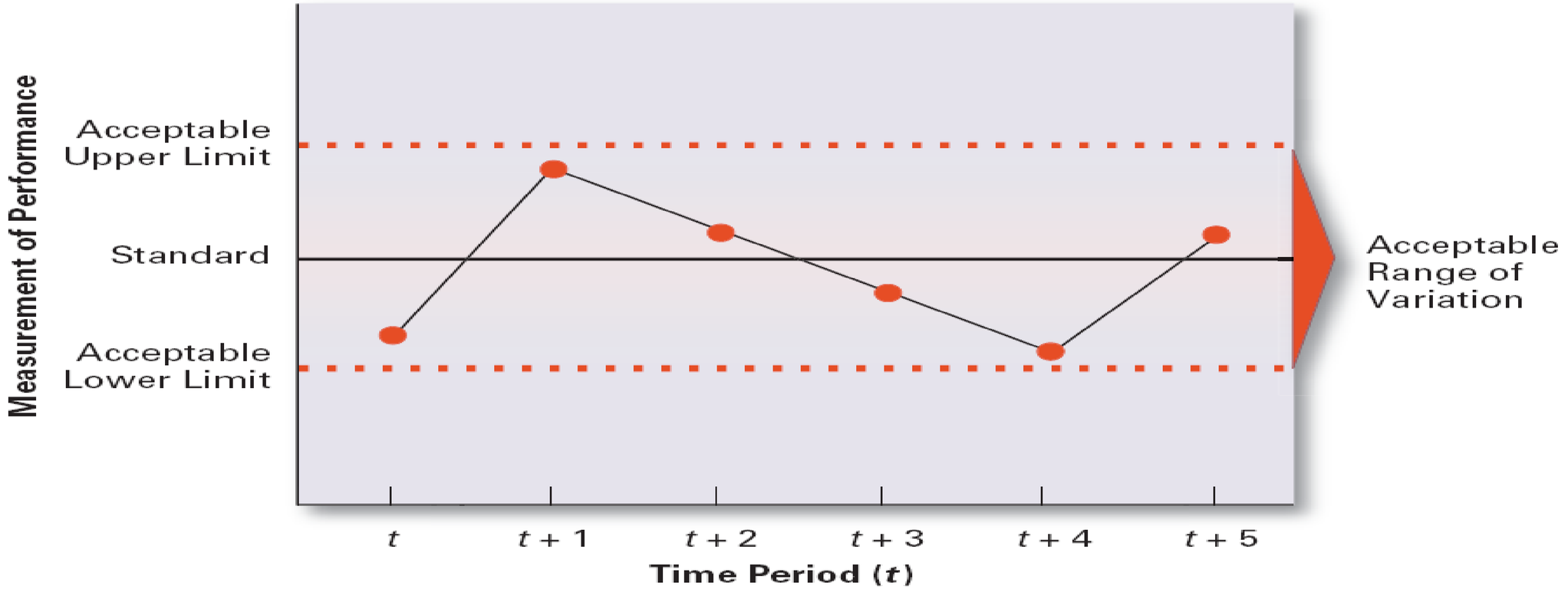
Defining the acceptable range of variation (Robbins et al, 2009)



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Project control