



IT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Problem: Wasted time. You kill hours every day answering the same question over and over and over. It'll drive you mad. At least, it drives us crazy, and because we're writing the book, we've listed it here at the top of the list.

Four blue curved lines are located in the bottom right corner of the slide, arranged in a diagonal pattern.

Solution: Take the time to communicate your plans with the stakeholders and then make those plans available through a Web site. You can save so much time if you use the technological tools available to you. We recommend creating an FAQ (frequently asked questions) for your project and posting it on a project Web site. Include the Web address of the FAQ as part of every e-mail you send. When folks ask the same old question answer the e-mail by directing them to the FAQ for a whole list of project questions and answers. Add new questions and answers to the FAQ as they arise.



Problem: Wasted money. Of course, when you waste time, you're going to be wasting dollars, but this fact also translates to your programmers. Software creation is time intensive; if the programmers on the project team are creating the wrong stuff based on miscommunications, you're not going to be happy. You might as well throw money in the gutter — it's essentially what you do when programmers waste time on useless code and must start over.



Solution: Require the programmers to e-mail you weekly status reports that include “accomplishments for the week.” Hold regularly scheduled team meetings with a standing agenda item of progress and issues. Over time, lost time and money have a negative impact on programmers’ morale, confidence in you as a project manager, and desire for accuracy. When people race to meet deadlines, they make mistakes.

Problem: Frustration. Communication breakdowns, whether they're your fault or not, frustrate you, your project team, stakeholders, and the end users. When these people get frustrated, they're going to vent, steam, and grumble about the project. This, of course, leads to more complaints, gripes, and general unrest.

Solution: You can never completely stamp out frustration, but you can manage it. Be proactive by being aware of morale problems and frustrations before they get out of hand. Never assume that people will just get over whatever issue they may have. If you see a problem, address it immediately so that mole hills don't become mountains.

A blurred background image of a business meeting. Several people in professional attire are gathered around a table. One person is holding a white coffee cup, and another is gesturing with their hand. A tablet or laptop screen is visible on the table, showing some data or charts. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

Knowing the six things
every communication
plan needs

- **Communication explanation:** The communication documents are reports, e-mails, or scheduled meetings that you need. They may not be documents only, however; communication at meetings (such as status meetings) counts, too.
- **Purpose:** For each communication document you list in your plan, you need a brief explanation of the documents or meeting's purpose. You want to answer why the communication is needed and under what conditions.
- **Frequency:** By writing down the expectations, you ensure that all stakeholders understand how often communication is needed.
- **Modality:** The modality is the format for the communication pieces. Some stakeholders may expect a paper status report, while other information, such as schedule updates, may be preferred via e-mail. There's no right or wrong way to present information, but the preferences and reasons for the modality have to be documented in your plan.

- **Duration:** Not all stakeholders need project information throughout the entire project — you don't want to bog people down with information that's not relevant to them. The duration defines how long, and when, the stakeholders will need to participate in project communications.
- **Responsibility:** One common misunderstanding is that the project manager is responsible for every piece of communication. That's just not true. The project manager is responsible to ensure that communication takes place, but you can't be responsible for the actual communicating.

The communication responsibility matrix:

Table 4-1		Sample Communication Responsibility Matrix			
<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Java Jan</i>	<i>Network Ned</i>	<i>Contractor Chuck</i>	<i>C# Chaz</i>	<i>PM Gayle</i>
Java Jan		X	X	X	X
Network Ned	X			X	X
Contractor Chuck	X				X
C# Chaz	X	X			X
PM Gayle	X	X	X	X	

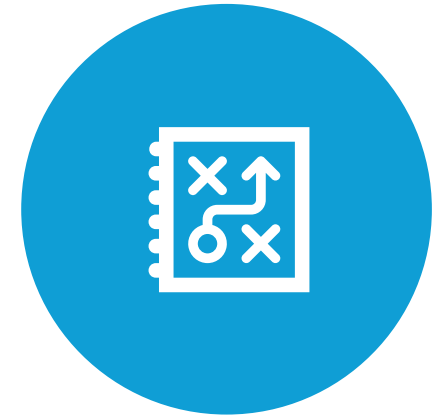
Setting up ten-minute meetings



WHAT DID YOU GET DONE
YESTERDAY?



WHAT MUST YOU GET DONE
TODAY?



WHAT ISSUES OR PROBLEMS ARE
PREVENTING THE PROJECT FROM
MOVING FORWARD?

Defining Who Needs What Information

- **Executive:** Executives set the vision for the organization.
- **Functional management:** Managers determine the functions, tactics, and strategies for the entities within the organization.
- **Operations:** The workers perform activities to support the endeavors of the organization, satisfying the tactics set up by functional management, and supporting the vision of the organization, set up by the executives.



What executives want to hear



Keep it simple and quick. Executives want to hear what's happening with a project, but they don't want all the details, and they don't want to spend a lot of time. Don't belabor anything; say what you need to say and move on. These are busy people, and they want summations. If they want or need more detail they'll let you know.



Follow your plan. Your communication to executives may also be controlled by the flow of communications as described in your communication management plan. It may not be your place at all to discuss the project with the executives unless they ask you for information directly. Always follow the flow of communication just as you'd expect your project team to do.



Be direct. When you speak with executives about your project, you want to be, as with everyone you communicate with, direct. If the project's going great, tell 'em. If the project is bleeding cash, let 'em know. Don't sugarcoat anything. Chances are executives will have heard bad news already from the functional layer of the company.



Set up project summary reports as needed. Your communication management plan should define what types of reports executives receive, if any. Some organizations require project managers to complete project summary reports or dashboards, one-page snapshots of a project's health. These reports summarize

- A project's scope
- The impact of the project
- The cost variance of the project
- The schedule variance of the project
- Milestones achieved and pending

What functional managers need to hear

- When you'll need their resources to work on your project
- How their resources will contribute to your project
- How their employees are performing on the project
- Whether your project is performing to expectations.

You may often complete projects for functional management. In these instances, managers are stakeholders and want to focus on project performance. Your communication in these instances centers on

- Overall project performance
- Milestone reporting
- Cost variances
- Schedule variances
- Scope verification

What your project team needs to hear

What activities are pending: You need to let them know what work is pending and where the project should be now.

What activities are lagging: You must address issues with your project team when they are late. We all get behind from time to time, and without someone (namely you) urging programmers back to duty, activities will continue to slide, and your project won't be completed on time.

What risks are looming: You need to track risks that are in play or pending in the project and keep the project team informed.

What issues are being resolved: Throughout your project, issues may pop up to wreak havoc. Some issues include the quality of the project work and complaints from customers

Recognition: When your project team members are doing a good job, give them kudos.

What you need to hear



Progress: Your staff needs to trust you enough to report honest assessments on their work so you can get a heartbeat on the project progress.



Issues: Your project team sees the issues and problems in the project work before you do.



Risks: Risk identification is an iterative process. Your project team is closest to the work, so your programmers will identify risks that affect the project before you.



Change orders: Instruct your team and the stakeholders on the proper method to ask for changes to the project scope.



Encouragement and recognition: You need some encouragement. Your stakeholders, project team, and project sponsor, may not realize this.

Defining When Communication Is Needed

Creating a communication schedule

- Team member performance reviews.
- Milestone reports.
- Meetings.
 - Planned Sessions.
 - Risk Management Meetings.
 - Procurement management meetings.
- Cash flow forecasting.

Hosting team and stakeholder meetings

Here's the first rule of a successful meeting: Set an agenda. All participants in the scheduled meeting should receive a meeting agenda before the meeting begins. Ideally, the agenda is distributed via e-mail with enough time to enable meeting participants to add items to the agenda.

- Purpose of the meeting
- Scheduled start and finish time, as well as the location of the meeting.
- Participants of the meeting
- Items to be discussed in the meeting
- Review of action items.

Hosting a key stakeholder meeting

- **Stakeholder analysis meetings.** In this type of meeting, you need to figure out what the goal of the project is, get to the root of a problem, and so on.
- **Scope management meetings.** Scope management meetings start from the beginning of the project and enable the key stakeholders to sign off on your requirements or to add things to the project scope statement before the project execution begins. Scope management also enables you to prevent scope creep, or unnecessary changes.
- **Training sessions.** If you create a swell piece of software, but no one understands how to use it, frustration begins.
- **Status reporting.** Your stakeholders want to know about the overall health of the project, what issues have arisen, whether certain risks have come to fruition, and so on.
- **Scope verification meetings.** After the project has completed some work, typically at the end of a phase or milestone, you should present the work to the stakeholders for approval.

Defining Communication Modalities

Modalities for formal communication



PRESENTATIONS.



REPORTS.



CONFERENCE/PHONE
CALLS.



EMAILS

Modalities for informal communication



E-MAIL.



AD-HOC MEETINGS.



INSTANT MESSAGING
AND TEXT MESSAGING.



COFFEE TALKS.

Latest Communication Tools

MS
Teams

Skype

Google
Chats

Jira

SLACK

DISCORD