Chapter 10: Project Communications Management

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the *importance of good communications* on projects and *the need to develop soft skills*, especially for IT project managers and their teams

- Review *key concepts* related to communications

- Explain the elements of *planning project communications* and how to create a communications management plan

- Describe how to *manage communications,* including communication technologies, media, and performance reporting

Learning Objectives

- List various ***methods for improving project communications***, such as running effective meetings, using various technologies effectively, and using templates

- Describe how ***software*** can enhance project communications management

Opening case

Peter 兢兢业业地工作，成为了一家大型电信公司的领导。他是一个有才华、有能力、强硬的领导者，但是新的海底光纤通信项目比他以前参与过的任何一个项目大得多、复杂得多。这个海底通信项目分为几个截然不同的项目，Peter是负责监督所有这些项目的经理。由于海底通信系统的市场不断变化，包括的项目又多，因此，沟通和灵活性对于Peter来说关系重大。如果错过里程碑和完成日期，他的公司将遭受巨大的资金损失，小项目每天损失数千美元，大项目每天损失将超过25万美元。这个项目中的许多子项目都依赖其他项目的成功，因此，彼得必须积极了解和管理这些重要的关系。

Opening case

　　Peter与向他汇报的项目经理们进行过几次正式的和非正式的讨论。他与他们以及项目实施助理Christine一起为该项目编制了一个沟通计划。然而，他还是不能确定发送信息和管理所有不可避免的变化的最佳方法。他还想给项目经理制订统一的编制计划和跟踪执行的方法，又不扼杀他们的创造性、和自主性。Christine建议他们考虑使用一些新的通信技术，使一些重要的项目信息及时更新、保持同步。尽管Peter对通信和光纤铺设知道很多，但是他不是使用IT改善沟通过程的专家。事实上，这也是为什么他要Christine做他的助手的部分原因。他们能够编制一个灵活而且容易使用的沟通程序吗？

Main Contents

1. The importance of project communications management

2. Keys to good communications

3. Planning communications management

4. Managing communications

5. Controlling communications

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

1. The importance of communications management

- **Technical skills**

- **Soft skills**

Communications

1. User involvement
2. Executive support
3. Clear business objectives
4. Project management expertise
………

Q:

1. Can you list some of the technical skills and soft skills respectively?

2. IQ and EQ, which one is more important, why?

3. Technical skills and soft skills, which one is more important, why?

1. The importance of communications management

Technical skills	**OR**	**Soft skills**

You cannot totally separate technical skills and soft skills when working on IT projects.

For projects to succeed, every project team member needs both types of skills, and needs to develop them continuously through formal education and on-the-job training.

1. The importance of communications management

- The greatest threat to many projects is a failure to communicate

- Our culture does not portray IT professionals as being good communicators

- Research shows that IT professionals must be able to communicate effectively to succeed in their positions

- Strong verbal and non-technical skills are a key factor in career advancement for IT professionals

Communication management

The ***goal of project communications management*** is to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage and disposition of project information.

- **Planning communications management**: Determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders

- **Managing communications:** Creating, distributing, storing, retrieving, and disposing of project communications based on the communications management plan

- **Controlling communications**: Monitoring and controlling project communications to ensure that stakeholder communication needs are met

Communication management — 3 main processes

Planning
Process: Plan communications management
Outputs: Communications management plan, project documents updates

Executing
Process: Manage communications
Outputs: Project communications, project documents updates,
project management plan updates,
organizational process assets updates

Monitoring and controlling
Process: Control communications
Outputs: Work performance information, change requests,
project documents updates, and organizational assets updates.

Project start   **Project finish**

2. Keys to good communications

Method of information exchange

- Written Form

- Oral Form

- Formal

- Informal

- Gesture Action

- Medium

- Wording and Phrasing

2. Keys to good communications

Classification of communication activities

- **Internal** (within the project) and **external** (customers, suppliers, other projects, organizations, the public)

- **Formal** (reports, minutes, briefings) and **informal** (e-mail, memos, impromptu discussions)

- Hierarchical communication: **upward** communication; **Downward** communication; **Horizontal** communication

- **Official** (newsletters, annual reports) and **unofficial** (private communication)

- **Written** and **oral**, as well as oral language (tone change) and non-verbal language (body language)

2. Keys to good communications

Several important concepts can help, such as:

- Focusing on group and individual communication needs

- Formal and informal methods for communicating

- Distributing important information in an effective and timely manner

- Setting the stage for communicating bad news

- Determining the number of communication channels

2. Keys to good communications

Focusing on group and individual communication needs

- People are not interchangeable parts **(The Mythical Man-Month)**

- As illustrated in Brooks' book *The Mythical Man-Month*, you cannot assume that a task originally scheduled to take two months of one person's time can be done in one month by two people

- Nine women cannot produce a baby in one month!

2. Keys to good communications

Personal Preferences Affect Communication Needs

● *Introverts* like more private communications, while *extroverts* like to discuss things in public

● *Intuitive* people like to understand the big picture, while *sensing* people need step-by-step details

● *Thinkers* want to know the logic behind decisions, while *feeling* people want to know how something affects them personally

● *Judging* people are driven to meet deadlines while *perceiving* people need more help in developing and following plans

2. Keys to good communications

Importance of Face-to-Face Communication

- Research says that in a face-to-face interaction:

  - *55 percent* of communication is through body language.

  - *38 percent* of communication is through how the words are said.

  - *7 percent* of communication is through the content or words that

    are spoken

- Pay attention to more than just the actual words someone is saying

- A person's *tone of voice* and *body language* say a lot about how he

  or she really feels

2. Keys to good communications

Encouraging More Face-to-Face Interactions

- Short, frequent meetings are often very effective in IT projects

- Stand-up meetings force people to focus on what they really need to communicate

- Some companies have policies preventing the use of e-mail between certain hours or even entire days of the week

2. Keys to good communications

Distributing Information in an Effective and Timely Manner

- Don't bury crucial information

- Don't be afraid to report bad information

- Oral communication via meetings and informal talks helps bring important information—good and bad—out into the open

你心里想的	100%
你嘴上说的	80%
别人听到的	60%
别人听懂的	40%
别人行动的	20%
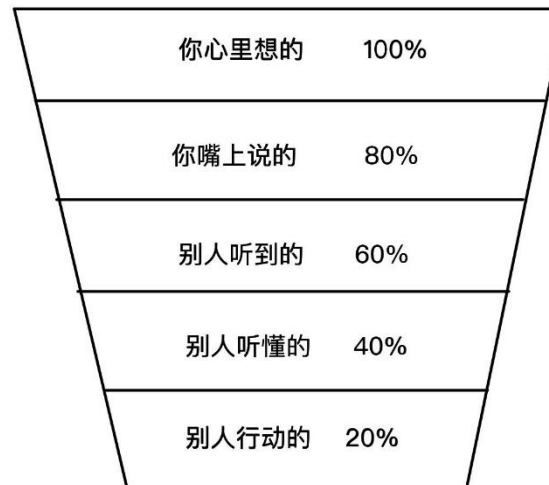
2. Keys to good communications

Other Communication Considerations

- Rarely does the receiver interpret a message exactly as the sender intended

- Geographic location and cultural background affect the complexity of project communications

  - Different working hours

  - Language barriers

  - Different <u>cultural</u> norms

2. Keys to good communications

Setting the stage for communicating bad news

Dear Mom and Dad, or should I say Grandma Grandpa,

Yes, I am pregnant. No, I'm not married yet since Larry, my boyfriend, is out of a job. Larry's employers just don't seem to appreciate the skills he has learned since he quit high school. Larry looks much younger than you, Dad, even though he is three years older. I'm quitting college and getting a job so we can get an apartment before the baby is born. I found a beautiful apartment above a 24-hour auto repair garage with good insulation so the exhaust fumes and noise won't bother us.

I'm very happy. I thought you would be too.

Love, Ashley

P.S. There is no Larry. I'm not pregnant. I'm not getting married. I'm not quitting school, but I am getting a "D" in Chemistry. I just wanted you to have some perspective.

2. Keys to good communications

- Determining the number of communication channels
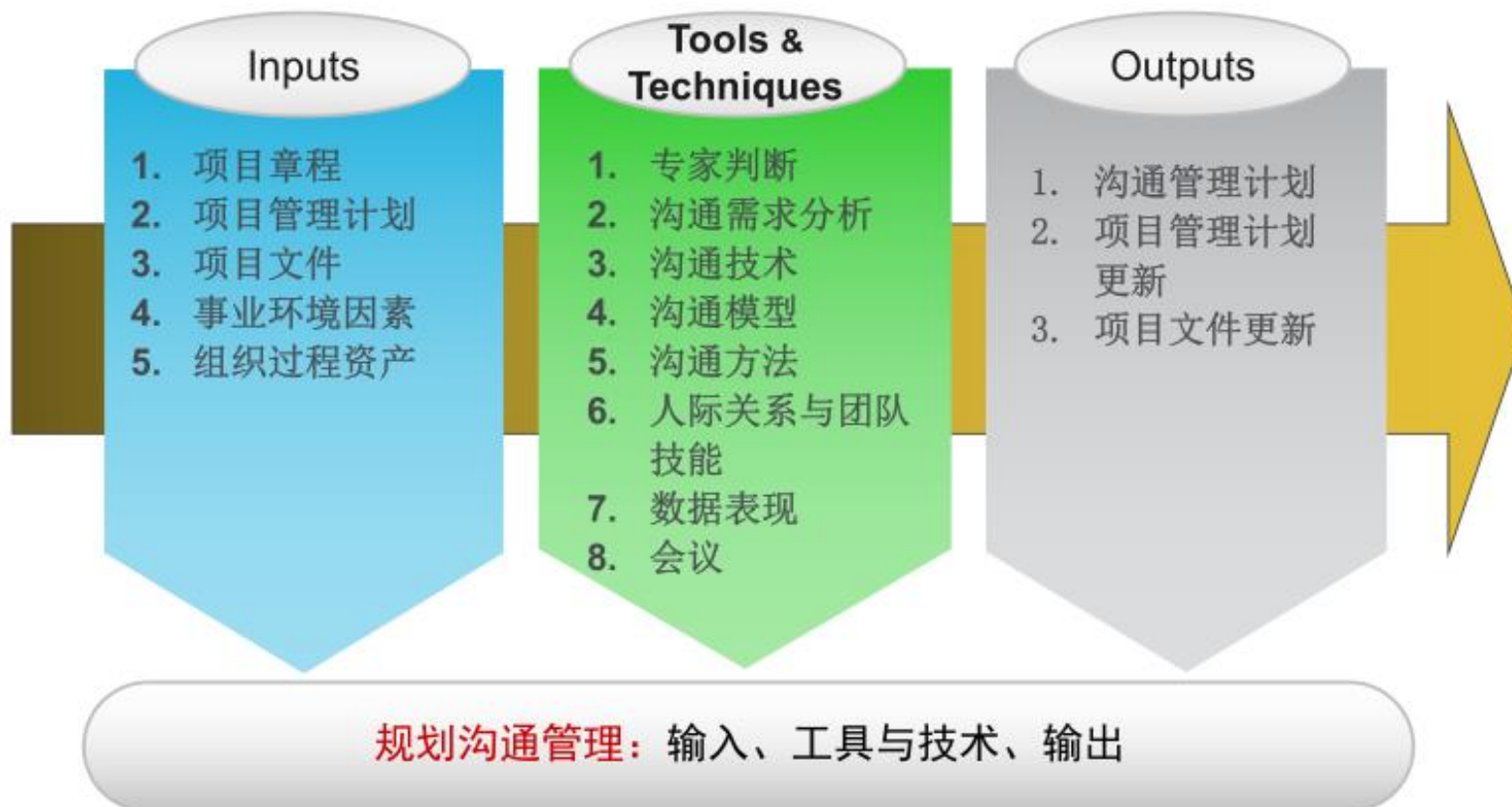
Number of communication channels = n(n-1)/2
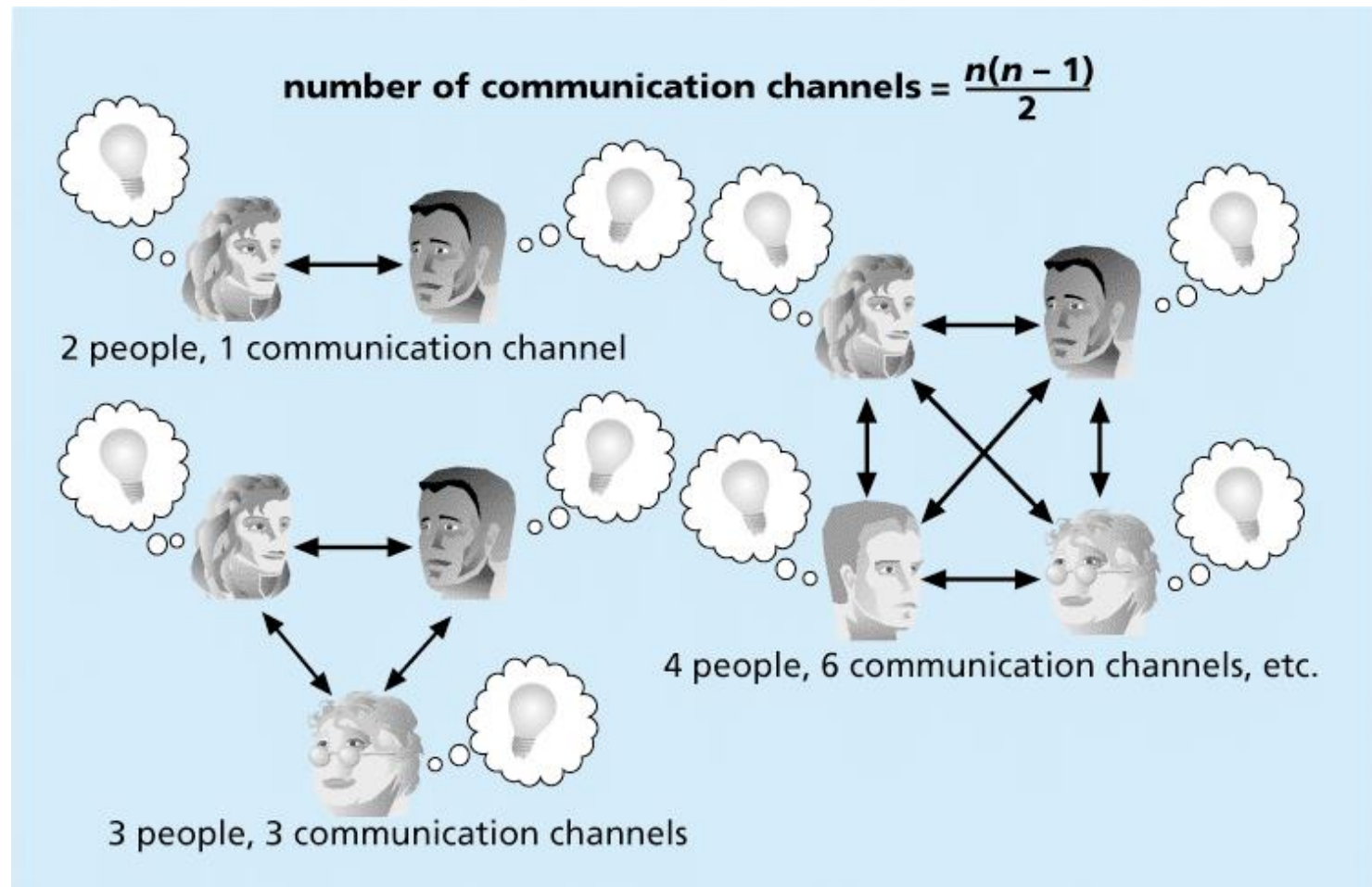
2. Keys to good communications

When preparing the communication plan, the project manager determined 10 stakeholders. After that, two of the stakeholders left the project. What will happen to the number of communication channels?

A. Reduce 17

B. Add 2

C. Add 17

D. Reduce 2

3. Planning communications management

Inputs	Tools & Techniques	Outputs
1. 项目章程 2. 项目管理计划 3. 项目文件 4. 事业环境因素 5. 组织过程资产	1. 专家判断 2. 沟通需求分析 3. 沟通技术 4. 沟通模型 5. 沟通方法 6. 人际关系与团队技能 7. 数据表现 8. 会议	1. 沟通管理计划 2. 项目管理计划更新 3. 项目文件更新

规划沟通管理：输入、工具与技术、输出

3. Planning communications management

Communication management plan is a document that guides project communications.

- For small projects, the communications management plan can be part of the team contract

- For large projects, it should be a separate document

- The project manager shall record in the communication plan the methods of *effective* and *efficient communication* with stakeholders

3. Planning communications management

It should address the following items:

- Stakeholder communications requirements
- Information to be communicated, including format, content, and level of detail
- Who will receive the information and who will produce it
- Suggested methods or technologies for conveying the information
- Frequency of communication
- Escalation procedures for resolving issues
- Revision procedures for updating the communications management plan
- A glossary of common terminology

3. Planning communications management

Table 10-1. Sample Stakeholder Analysis for Project Communications

Stakeholders	Document Name	Document Format	Contact Person	Due
Customer management	Monthly status report	Hard copy and meeting	Tina Erndt, Tom Silva	First of month
Customer business staff	Monthly status report	Hard copy	Julie Grant, Sergey Cristobal	First of month
Customer technical staff	Monthly status report	E-mail	Li Chau, Nancy Michaels	First of month
Internal management	Monthly status report	Hard copy and meeting	Bob Thomson	First of month
Internal business and technical staff	Monthly status report	Intranet	Angie Liu	First of month
Training subcontractor	Training plan	Hard copy	Jonathan Kraus	November 1
Software subcontractor	Software implementation plan	E-mail	Najwa Gates	June 1

Comments: Put the titles and dates of documents in e-mail headings and have recipients acknowledge

3. Planning communications management

- It is important to know what kinds of information will be distributed to *particular* stakeholders.

- Have stakeholders review and approve the stakeholder communications analysis to ensure that the information is correct and useful.

- It should be noticed that different groups or stakeholders have different communication needs.

- Information about the content of essential project communications comes from the WBS.

4. Managing communications

- Managing communications is a large part of a project manager's job

- Getting project information to the *right people* at *the right time* and *in a useful format* is just as important as developing the information in the first place

- Important considerations include the use of technology, the appropriate methods and media to use, and performance reporting

4. Managing communications

Some useful methods for managing communications:

- Using technology to enhance information creation and distribution

- Selecting the appropriate communication methods and media

  i. Interactive communication

  ii. Push communication

  iii. Pull communication

- Reporting performance

  i. Status reports

  ii. Progress reports

  iii. Forecasts

名称	定义/关键字	优点	缺点	PMBOK例子
交互式沟通	在两方或多方之间进行的实时多向信息交换	实时、有反馈、最好的方式	不能进行大量沟通	会议、电话、即时信息、社交媒体和视频会议
推式沟通	向需要接收信息的特定接收方发送或发布信息	确保发出	不保证接收;不保证能理解	信件、备忘录、报告、电子邮件、传真、语音邮件、博客、新闻稿
拉式沟通	适用于大量复杂信息或大量信息受众的情况	自行访问;信息量大;信息复杂	同上	门户网站、企业内网、电子在线课程、经验教训数据库或知识库

CSDN @83Dillon
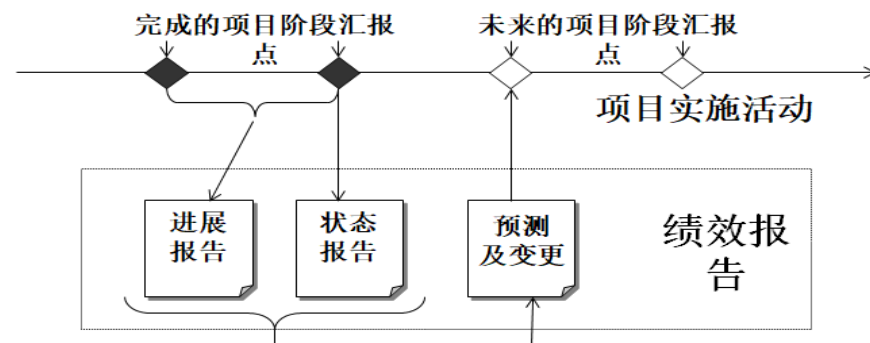
4. Managing communications

Table 10-2. Media Choice Table

HOW WELL MEDIUM IS SUITED TO:	HARD COPY	TELEPHONE CALL	VOICE MAIL	E-MAIL	MEETING	WEB SITE
KEY: 1 = EXCELLENT			**2 = ADEQUATE**		**3 = INAPPROPRIATE**	
Assessing commitment	3	2	3	3	1	3
Building consensus	3	2	3	3	1	3
Mediating a conflict	3	2	3	3	1	3
Resolving a misunderstanding	3	1	3	3	2	3
Addressing negative behavior	3	2	3	2	1	3
Expressing support/appreciation	1	2	2	1	2	3
Encouraging creative thinking	2	3	3	1	3	3
Making an ironic statement	3	2	2	3	1	3
Conveying a reference document	1	3	3	3	3	1
Reinforcing one's authority	1	2	3	3	1	2
Providing a permanent record	1	3	3	1	3	1
Maintaining confidentiality	2	1	2	3	1	3
Conveying simple information	3	2	1	1	2	3
Asking an informational question	3	2	1	1	3	3
Making a simple request	3	3	1	1	3	3
Giving complex instructions	3	3	3	2	1	2
Addressing many people	2	3	3 or 1*	2	3	1

Galati, Tess. Email Composition and Communication (EmC2) Practical Communications, Inc. (www.praccom.com) (2001).
*Depends on system functionality

4. Managing communications

Problem

- **Noise** is any factor that may interfere with or hinder the transmission of information.

- Communication **disorders** are delays or misinterpretations of information.

- **Filtering** is the loss of information in the process of top-down or bottom-up communication.
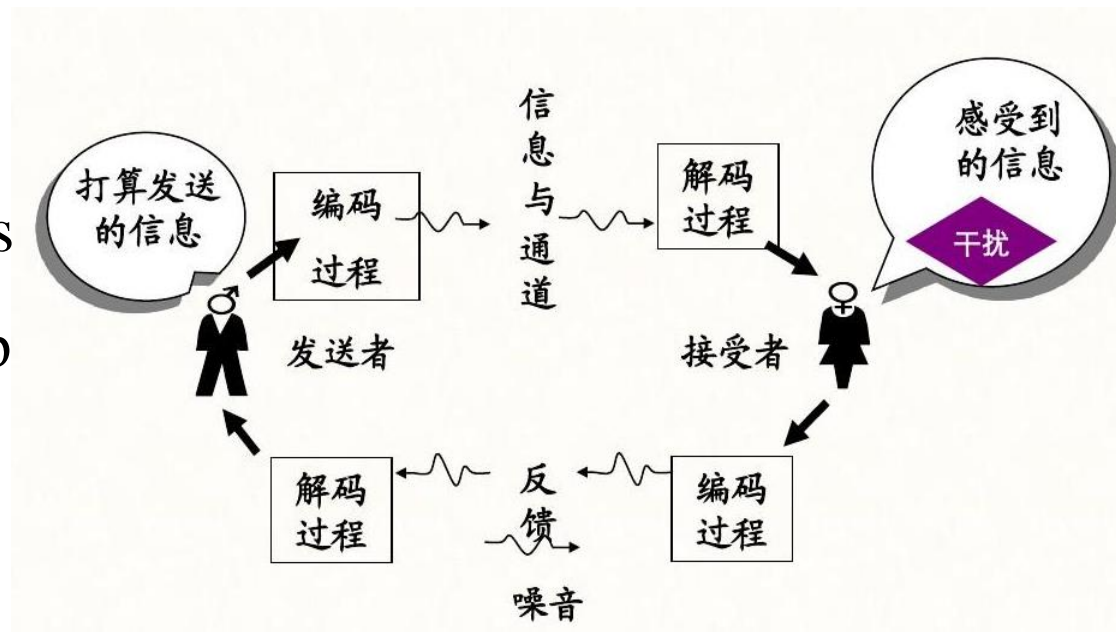
5. Controlling communications

The main goal of controlling communications is to ensure the *optimal* flow of information throughout the entire project life cycle.

Inputs: Project management plan, Project communications, Issue logs, Work performance data, and Organizational process assets

Outputs: Work performance information, Change requests, Project documents update, and Organizational process assets updates.

5. Controlling communications

- The project manager and project team should use their various *reporting systems*, *expert judgment*, and *meetings* to assess how well communications are working.

- If problems exist, the project manager and team need to take action, which often requires changes to the earlier processes of *planning and managing project communications*

It is often beneficial to have a facilitator from outside the project team assess how well communications are working.

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

- Developing better communication skills

- Running effective meetings

- Using e-mail, instant messaging, texting and collaborative tools effectively

- Using templates for project communications

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Developing Better Communication Skills

- Most companies spend a lot of money on technical training for their employees, even when employees might benefit more from communications *training*

- Individual employees are also more likely to enroll voluntarily in classes to learn the latest technology than in classes that develop soft skills

- As organizations become more global, they realize they must invest in ways to improve communication with people from different countries and cultures

- It takes leadership to improve communication

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Running effective meetings

a. Determine if a meeting can be avoided

b. Define the *purpose* and *intended outcome* of the meeting

c. Determine who should attend the meeting

d. Provide an agenda to participants before the meeting

e. Prepare handouts and visual aids, and make logistical arrangements ahead of time

f. Run the meeting professionally

g. Set the ground rules for the meeting

h. Build relationships

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Running effective meetings
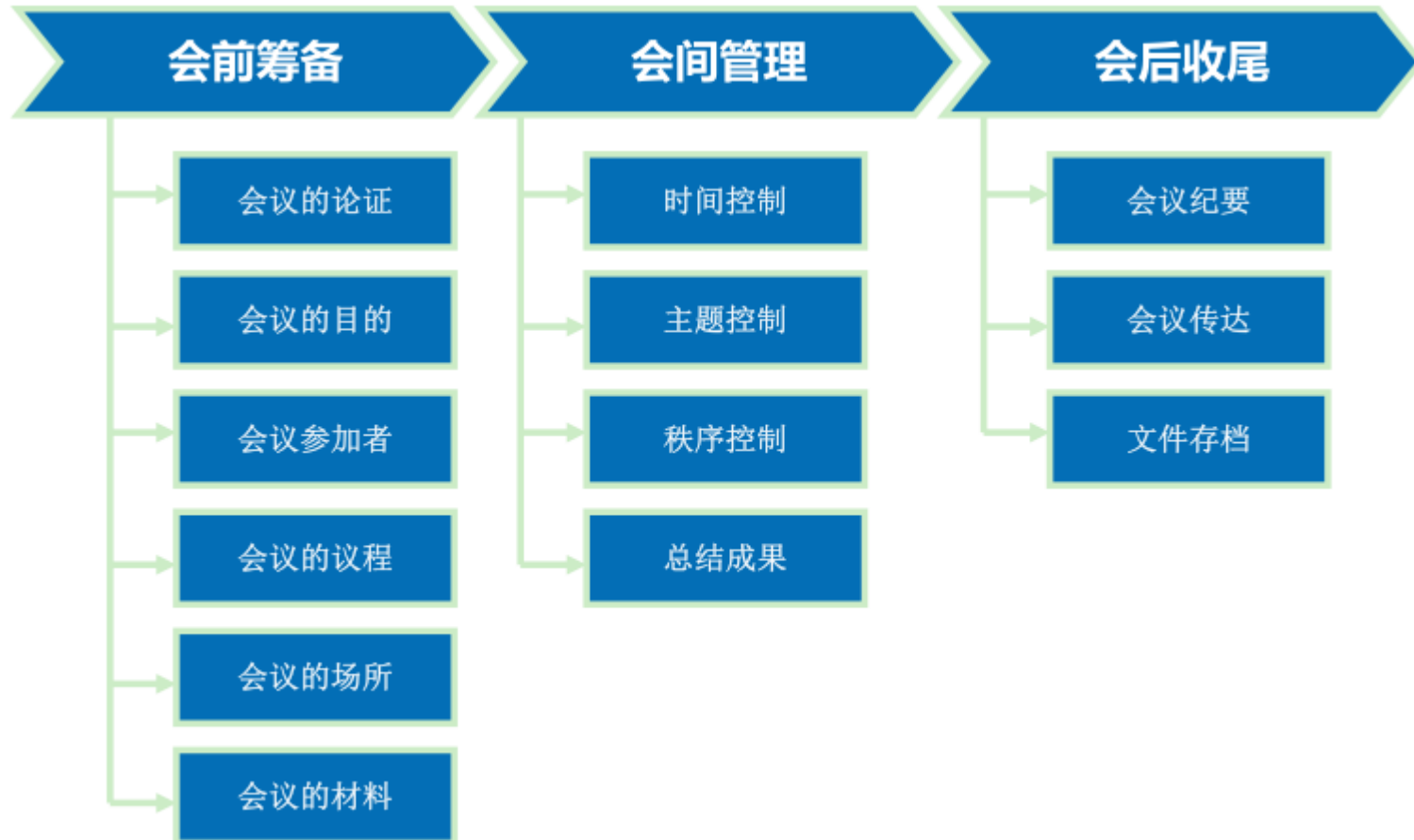
6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Sample Collaborative Tools

- A **SharePoint portal** allows users to create custom Web sites to access documents and applications stored on shared devices

- **Google Docs** allow users to create, share, and edit documents, spreadsheets, and presentations online

- A **wiki** is a Web site designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify Web page content

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Using E-Mail, Instant Messaging, Texting, and Collaborative Tools Effectively

- Make sure that e-mail, instant messaging, texting, or collaborative tools are an appropriate medium for what you want to communicate

- Be sure to send information to the right people

- Use meaningful subject lines and limit the content of emails to one main subject, and be as clear and concise as possible

- Be sure to *authorize the right people* to share and edit your collaborative documents

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

5C principle of written communication

- Clear Purpose

- Correct Expression

- Concise Expression

- Coherent Logic

- Controlling Ideas

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Using templates for project communications

- Many technical people are afraid to ask for help

- Providing examples and templates for project communications saves time and money

- Organizations can develop their own templates, use some provided by outside organizations, or use samples from textbooks

- Recall that research shows that companies that excel in project management make effective use of templates

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Using templates for project communications

Project X Descripton

Objective: Describe the objective of the project in one or two sentences. Focus on the business benefits of doing the project.

Scope: Briefly describe the scope of the project. What business functions are involved, and what are the main products the project will produce?

Assumptions: Summarize the most critical assumptions for the project.

Cost: Provide the total estimated cost of the project. If desired, list the total cost each year.

Schedule: Provide summary information from the project s Gantt chart, as shown. Focus on summary tasks and milestones.
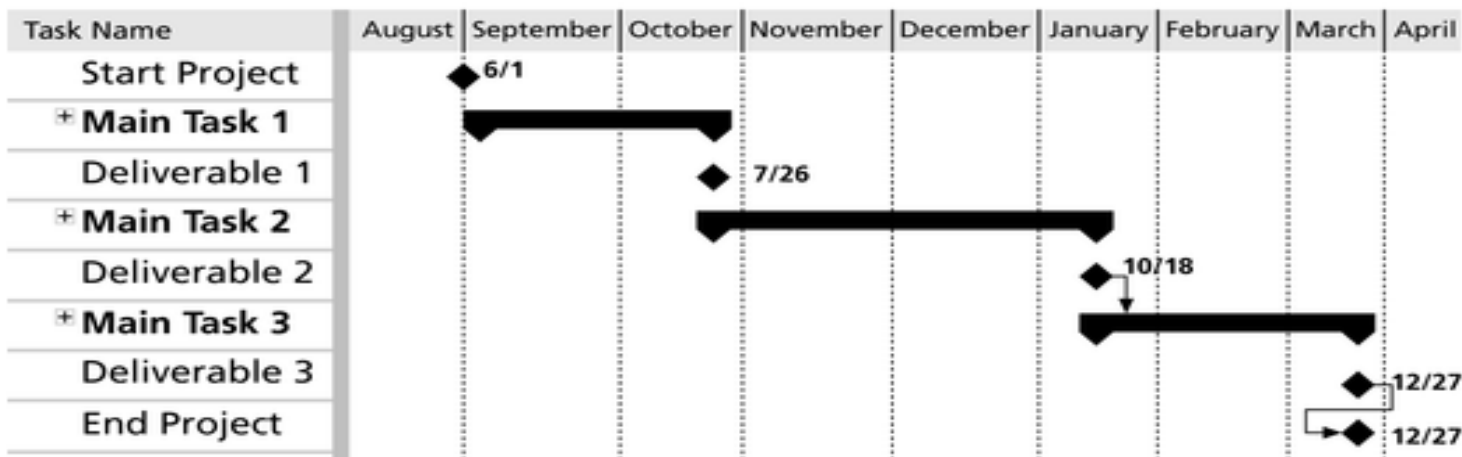
Task Name	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Start Project	◆6/1								
+ **Main Task 1**	▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬						
Deliverable 1			◆ 7/26						
+ **Main Task 2**				▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬▬	▬			
Deliverable 2						◆10/18			
+ **Main Task 3**							▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬	
Deliverable 3									◆12/27
End Project									◆ 12/27

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Using templates for project communications

I. **Accomplishments for Month of January (or appropriate month):**
- Describe most important accomplishments. Relate to project's Gantt chart.
- Describe other important accomplishments, one bullet for each. If any issues were resolved from the previous month, list them as accomplishments.

II. **Plans for February (or following month):**
- Describe most important items to be accomplished in the next month. Again, relate to the project's Gantt chart.
- Describe other important items to accomplish, one bullet for each.

III. **Issues:** Briefly list important issues that surfaced or are still important. Managers hate surprises and want to help the project succeed, so be sure to list issues.

IV. **Project Changes (Date and Description):** List any approved or requested changes to the project. Include the date of the change and a brief description.

Table 10-3. Sample Template for a Monthly Progress Report

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

I.	Project description
II.	Project proposal and backup data (request for proposal, statement of work, proposal correspondence, and so on)
III.	Original and revised contract information and client acceptance documents
IV.	Original and revised project plans and schedules (WBS, Gantt charts and network diagrams, cost estimates, communications management plan, etc.)
V.	Design documents
VI.	Final project report
VII.	Deliverables, as appropriate
VIII.	Audit reports
IX.	Lessons-learned reports
X.	Copies of all status reports, meeting minutes, change notices, and other written and electronic communications

Table 10-4. Final Project Documentation Items

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Lessons Learned Reports

- The project manager and project team members should each prepare a **lessons-learned report**

  - A reflective statement that documents important things an individual learned from working on the project

- The project manager often combines information from all of the lessons-learned reports into a project summary report

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Lessons Learned Reports

Prepared by: → → **Date:**
Project Name: → →
Project Sponsor: → →
Project Manager: → →
Project Dates: → →
Final Budget: → →

1. → Did the project meet scope, time, and cost goals? →
2. → What was the success criteria listed in the project scope statement?
3. → Reflect on whether or not you met the project success criteria.
4. → In terms of managing the project, what were the main lessons your team learned?
5. → Describe one example of what went right on this project.
6. → Describe one example of what went wrong on this project.
7. → What will you do differently on the next project based on your experience working on this project?

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Project Archives

- It is also important to organize and prepare project archives

- **Project archives** are a complete set of organized project records that provide *an accurate history* of the project

- These archives can provide valuable information for future projects as well

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Project Web Sites

- Many project teams create a project Web site to store important product documents and other information

- Can create the site using various types of software, such as enterprise project management software

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

Figure 10-4. Microsoft's Project Web Application Master Project Summary Screen

6. Suggestions for improving project communications

- There are many software tools to aid in project communications

- Today many people telecommute or work remotely at least part-time. Tech Cast at George Washington University forecasts that by 2019, 30 percent of U.S. private-sector workers could work from home

- Project management software includes new capabilities to enhance virtual communications

- While technology can aid in the communications process, it is not the most important. Far more important is improving an organization's ability to communicate, which often involves cultural change

Chapter Summary

- The goal of project communications management is to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage, and disposition of project information

- Main process include:

    - Plan communications management

    - Manage communications

    - Control communications

Exercise

Review the following scenario, and then write a paragraph for it describing what media you think would be most appropriate to use and why.

Many of the technical staff on the project come in from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., while the business users always arrive before 9:00 a.m. The business users have been making comments. The project manager wants to have the technical people come in by 9:00, although many of them leave late.