
Overview

Understanding the communication process is the first step in communication planning. Consider these five factors:

- ▶ Who is involved in the communication process — the identified stakeholders, such as Project Team Members, project management and staff, customer management and staff, and external stakeholders.
- ▶ What is being communicated — the message; the information being communicated.
- ▶ When the information is communicated — weekly, monthly, quarterly, as needed, or as identified.
- ▶ How the information is distributed— in a meeting, a memorandum, an email, a newsletter, a presentation, etc.
- ▶ Who will provide the information being communicated.



For more information about the roles of the customers, Deputy District Director for Program and Project Management (DDPPM), and District Director, see the Project Management Handbook.

Develop the Communication Plan

Preparing the project communication plan assists the project team in identifying internal and external stakeholders and enhances communication among all parties involved in the project. The project manager leads the project development team to prepare a communication plan to ensure that an effective communication strategy is built into the project delivery process. The plan is a framework and should be a living, evolving document that can be revised when appropriate. The communication plan is part of the project management plan. Figure 2 shows the steps in the development of the communication plan.

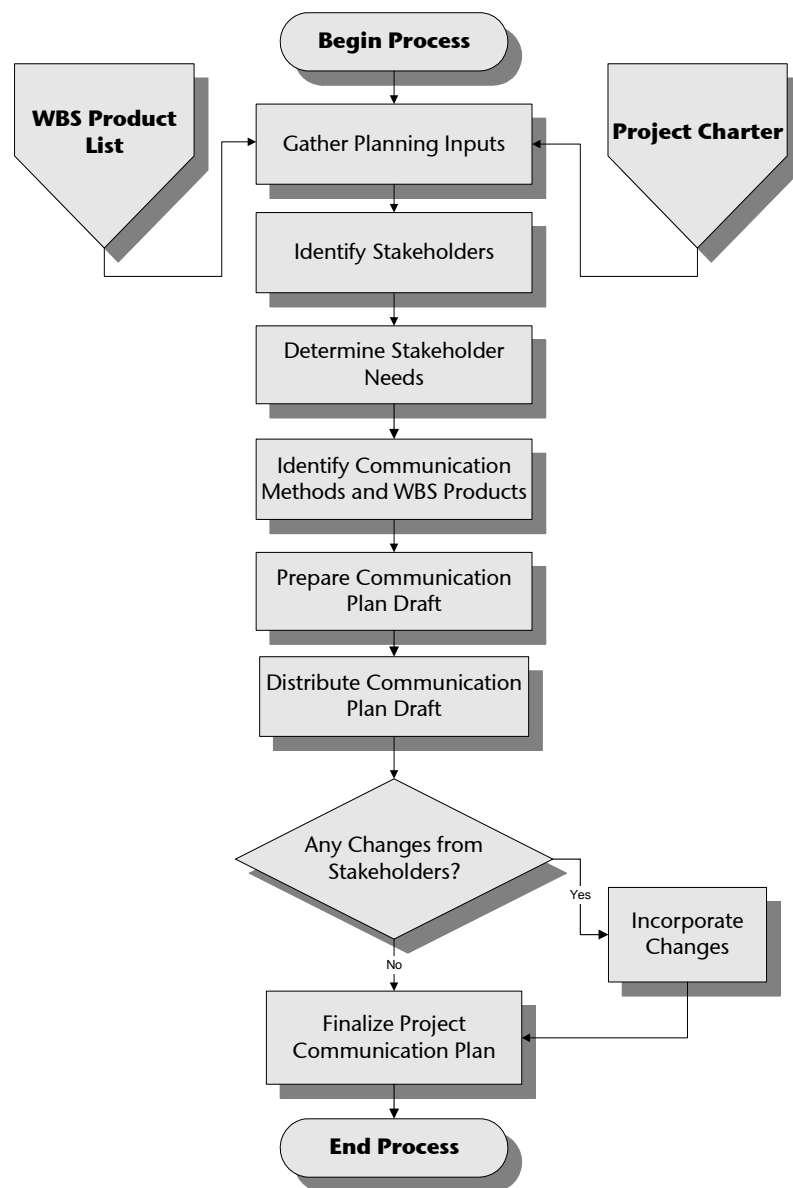


Figure 2. Communication plan flowchart

The project development team (PDT) develops a communication plan by asking the following questions:

- ▶ Who needs what information?
- ▶ When do they need the information?
- ▶ Who delivers the information?
- ▶ How should the information be delivered?

While all projects share the need to communicate project information, the specific information needs and the methods of distribution may vary widely.

Gather Planning Inputs

The PDT develops two inputs for the project communication planning process:

- ▶ WBS product list — a list of potential project products, based on the workplan that includes all the elements of the WBS, and the sub-products of the WBS.
- ▶ Project charter — the record of the agreement between the sponsor and the project manager on the key elements of a project. The project charter lists the project manager, the project sponsor, and the PDT (for further details about the project charter, see the Project Management Handbook).

Identify Stakeholders

Project stakeholders have information and communication needs. Identifying the information needs of the stakeholders and determining a suitable means of meeting those needs are important factors for project success.

The PDT must identify the stakeholders on a project, determine what their needs and expectations are, and then manage and influence those expectations to ensure a successful project.

The PDT brainstorms a list of stakeholders using the roles identified in the *Project Management Handbook*, the RBS/OBS list of functional areas, and the Innovation Checklists for project manager (*see Project Management Directive (PMD) 007R*).

Determine Stakeholder Needs

As early as possible, the PDT assigns team members to contact local, regional, state, and federal agencies that have even a minor stake in a project. By working with these agencies from the earliest stages, the project team reduces the chance of conflict at critical times.

For more information about external project stakeholders, see “Involve the Community” on page 19.



The key to successful community involvement is communicating with external project stakeholders early and often.



For more information about the PDT, see the Project Management Handbook and the third edition of the PMBOK Guide section 10.4, pages 221 and 235.

Identify Communication Methods and WBS Products

Project team members and stakeholders use different communication methods at particular times during the project lifecycle. For examples of communication methods, see “Communication Methods” on page 26.

The project team uses the WBS product list to identify the products that may be needed on the project. The PDT identifies:

- ▶ Who produces the product
- ▶ Who receives the product
- ▶ The method of product transmittal

This information is tied directly to WBS elements and sub-products required for the project.

Prepare the Communication Plan Draft

The project communication plan includes the information needed to successfully manage project product deliverables.

The project communication plan includes the following (see Figure 4. Sample communication plan on page 31):

- ▶ Brief introduction and background — answers the question, “Why do we need a project communication plan?”
- ▶ A list of the project sponsor, project manager, PDT members, and other key stakeholders.
- ▶ Methods of communications to be used, including formal meetings to be held (who, what, when, how).
- ▶ Project reporting information — answers the question, “How will project performance be collected and distributed to the internal and external project stakeholders?”
- ▶ Stakeholders analysis — includes internal stakeholders (name and contact information) identified by Cost Center number and function, and external stakeholders (name and contact information) identified by agency or organization. The stakeholders analysis is designed to help the PDT analyze internal and external stakeholder needs by gathering the following information from each stakeholder:
 - Goals for the project. What is each stakeholder’s desired outcome for the project? The project manager should ensure at the start that there is a consistent vision for the project.
 - Preferred methods of communication. Project team members will use this information as a means to meet individual communication needs. If the team cannot reasonably communicate through each stakeholder’s preferred medium, the team needs to negotiate a method to ensure that each stakeholder receives and understands the project communication.
 - Preferred method for recognizing performance of the team, within the constraints of what is achievable. The PDT uses this information to plan appropriate celebrations at the completion of each project component. For a list of possible rewards, see “Decide How to Acknowledge the Performance of the Team” on page 14.



For a stakeholders analysis sample, see “Figure 5. Sample stakeholder analysis” on page 32.



Templates for the stakeholder analysis and the communication matrix are available on the Internet at:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/projmgmt/guidance.htm>



For communication matrix sample, see Figure 6. Sample communication matrix on page 33.

- ▶ Communication matrix — this tool is used to track project performance by project component and WBS element. The WBS product list is the input. It includes the WBS codes, WBS titles, sub-products, and Uniform Filing System location numbers. The list also indicates which sub-products should be filed in the Project History File (PHF). To complete the communication matrix, the PDT indicates if the sub-product is required, who produces it, who receives it, the method of transmittal, and the date submitted.

The project manager assigns a team member to complete the draft project communication plan for each appropriate project component:

- ▶ Project Initiation Document (PID)
- ▶ Permits and Environmental Studies
- ▶ Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E)
- ▶ Right of Way
- ▶ Construction

Decide How to Acknowledge the Performance of the Team

Some forms of recognition that are achievable in California State service are:

- ▶ Gold and Silver Superior Accomplishment awards & Employee Recognition Program Accomplishment awards
- ▶ End-of-project phase team celebrations organized by the project manager and sponsored by appropriate managers and project stakeholders
- ▶ Certificates, posters, and letters of appreciation from the District Director, Deputy District Director, or other appropriate manager
- ▶ Certificates and letters of appreciation from local agencies and other external stakeholders
- ▶ Excellence in Transportation awards presented by the Department
- ▶ Tranny awards presented by the California Transportation Foundation
- ▶ Purcell, Roberts, and Moskowitz awards presented by the Department
- ▶ Excellence in Highway Design awards presented by the Federal Highway Administration
- ▶ Environmental Excellence awards presented by the Federal Highway Administration
- ▶ Public Affairs Skills awards presented by the Federal Highway Administration
- ▶ Other External Professional Awards such as Project of the Year awards by the ASCE

Develop a Conflict Management Strategy

A good communication plan includes a conflict management strategy which is designed to make issues between stakeholders more manageable. Project managers minimize conflicts and resolve issues through constant communication with the project sponsor(s), project team members, and other project stakeholders. Project managers can use the sample strategy that appears later in this section, or can develop a more specific strategy.

The project manager negotiates and/or mediates conflict resolution. Project managers encourage project stakeholders to seek win-win solutions to their problems when possible. Because the project manager discusses and develops a conflict management strategy before the project begins, issues are more manageable. The project manager documents in the project record any decisions that utilize the conflict management strategy.

Figure 3 shows an overview of conflict management (also see Appendix B for conflict management plan).

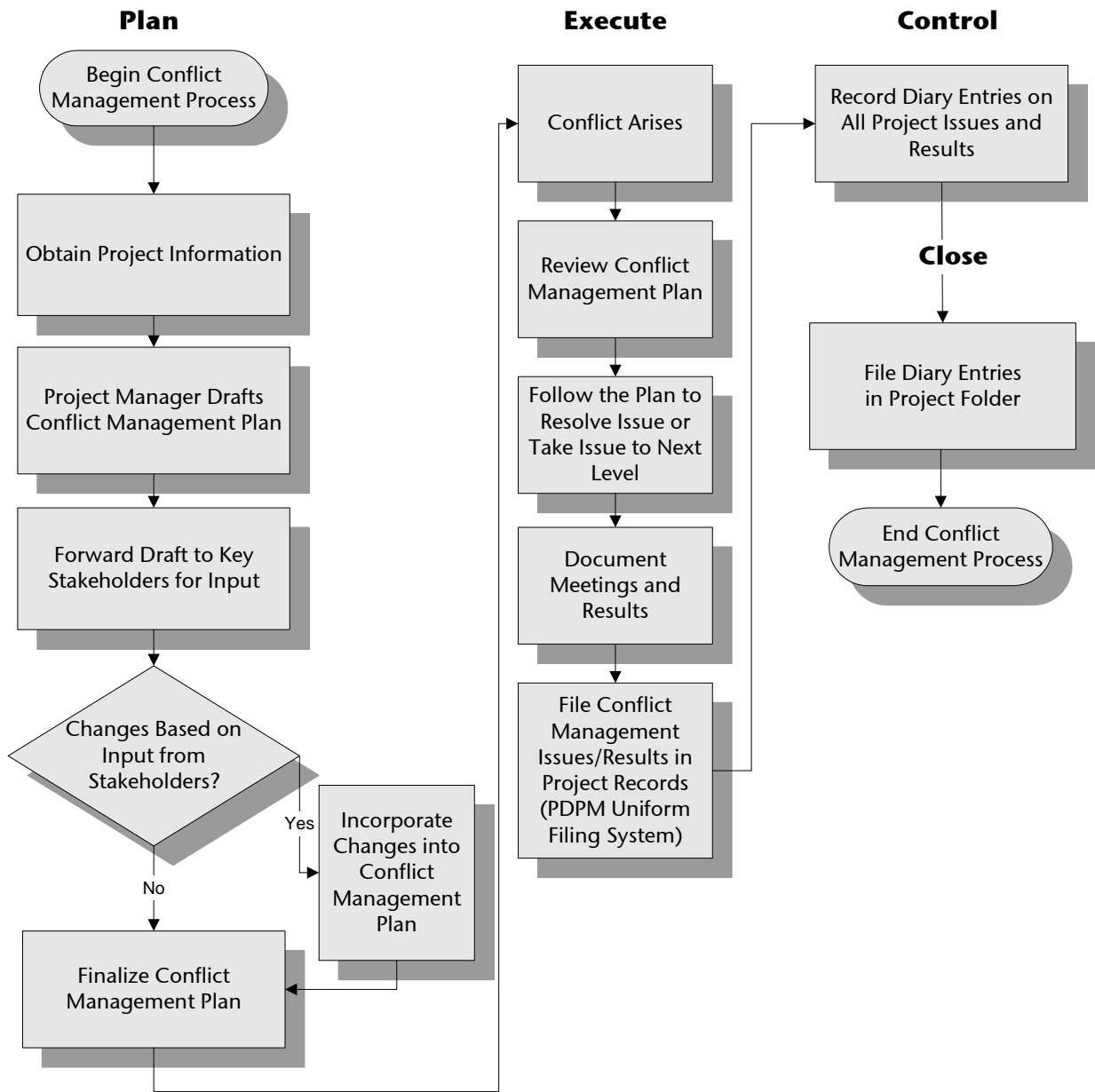


Figure 3. Conflict management flowchart



The project manager prepares the conflict management strategy with input from stakeholders. Stakeholders use this strategy to resolve issues at any time during the project.

Sample Conflict Management Strategy

The project manager and the project stakeholders meet and agree to attempt to resolve all conflicts at an individual level as much as possible. Two (or more) parties with a dispute will meet and use the following guidelines:

► To resolve conflicts within the scope of the project:

Step	Action
1	Acknowledge the conflict
2	Establish ground rules
3	Establish common ground and shared goals
4	Separate the problem from the people
5	Have the parties share collected data related to the conflict
6	Explore solutions, listing as many alternatives as possible
7	Evaluate solutions, looking for a win-win solution
8	Select the best solution
9	Share the solution with the project stakeholders

If a conflict cannot be resolved at an individual level, the conflict may need to be escalated by the project manager with the functional manager or the Chief of Program/Project Management. (See Appendix B for timetable for escalation process.)

Each time stakeholders meet to resolve a conflict, they record the following information:

- Issues
- Meeting date and location
- Attendees
- Results of meeting

Distribute the Communication Plan Draft



For complete definitions of task managers and functional managers, see the Project Management Handbook.

The project manager sends the draft project communication plan to the project stakeholders for review and input. When reviewing the communication matrix, functional managers ensure that a task manager is assigned to each WBS elements listed in the functional managers' area of responsibility. The functional managers list all the assigned task managers on the communication matrix and the stakeholder analysis.

**Incorporate
Changes and
Finalize the
Communication
Plan**

The project manager or PDT members incorporate changes from the project stakeholders into the project communication plan. The project manager then distributes the final project communication plan to the project team members. The project management support unit (PMSU) uses the finalized project communication matrix to track the progress of project deliverables. (For a sample of a completed project communication plan, see “Appendix A: Sample Project Communication Plan” on page 30.)