

CE29x Team-Project Challenge

Communication in Projects

Professor Anthony Vickers

Room: INW.3.17

e-mail: vicka

with acknowledgements to Keith Primrose, Iain Langdon, and Michael Fairbank

Team attendance

CE291					
Team	Number of members	Attendance events	Maximum possible	Percentage	
1	6	14	18	78	
2	7	14	21	67	
3	7	17	21	81	
4	7	8	21	38	
5	8	10	24	42	
6	8	17	24	71	
7	7	12	21	57	
8	7	14	21	67	
9	7	7	21	33	
10	7	15	21	71	
11	7	12	21	57	
12	8	8	24	33	
14	7	18	21	86	
15	7	8	21	38	
16	7	9	21	43	
18	7	19	21	90	
19	8	4	24	17	
20	8	4	24	17	
22	7	18	21	86	
23	8	12	24	50	
24	7	12	21	57	
25	6	6	18	33	
26	7	16	21	76	
27	7	10	21	48	
28	6	10	18	56	
29	7	9	21	43	
30	7	1	21	5	
31	6	17	18	94	
32	7	14	21	67	
33	7	6	21	29	
34	7	13	21	62	
				55	Average

CE292					
Team	Number of members	Attendance events	Maximum possible	Percentage	
1	6	10	18	56	
2	6	4	18	22	
3	6	7	18	39	
4	5	7	15	47	
5	5	1	15	7	
				34	Average

CE293					
Team	Number of members	Attendance events	Maximum possible	Percentage	
1	7	10	21	48	
2	6	6	18	33	
3	7	2	21	10	
4	7	3	21	14	
				26	Average

CE299					
Team	Number of members	Attendance events	Maximum possible	Percentage	
1	6	8	18	44	
2	6	8	18	44	
3	7	14	21	67	
4	7	11	21	52	
5	7	8	21	38	
6	7	14	21	67	
7	7	8	21	38	
8	5	8	15	53	
				51	Average

Review of previous lecture

1. Keep on top of Risk in project
 - * What are you actively doing to lower the risk exposure?
 - * Who is responsible for tracking and mitigating this risk?
 - * (Who are your risk issues in Jira assigned to?)
2. Keep good communication with stakeholders (“stakeholder management”)
 - * Are all stakeholders supportive of project?
 - * Are all stakeholders up-to date with project progress?
3. Flexible Leadership style
 - * Different team-members are motivated by different things.
 - * How to get the best out of each person?

Project Stakeholders

- * Project Stakeholders

- * ...Anyone with any kind of “stake” in the project
- * Individuals and organisations who are actively involved
- * Or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of project execution or successful completion

- * **Project management team** must identify the stakeholders

- * Determine what their needs and expectations are,
- * Keep them engaged in project success
- * Manage and influence those expectations to ensure a successful project

Key Stakeholders

- * Performing organisation
 - * The enterprise whose employees are most directly involved in doing the work of the project
- * Project manager
 - * The individual responsible for managing the project
- * Customer
 - * The individual or the organisation who will use the project product
- * Project team members
 - * The people doing the work on the project who are working to realise the product
- * Sponsor
 - * The individual or group who provides the financial resources, in cash or in kind, for the project.

Question

- * So if you were building a major piece of software suite for the NHS, who might the stakeholders be?

Stakeholder Management

- * Beware of the situation where a stakeholder might give verbal assurances of enthusiasm for project,
 - * but in more honest discussions admits low motivation,
 - * and a low belief in project success
- * Keeping stakeholders updated and on-side, with good communication skills, is essential for project's success

COMMUNICATION IN PROJECTS

Lecture Outline

- * Communication

- * Purposes for Communication

- * Digital Communication

- * Professional Email Etiquette

- * Communication within Projects

- * When communication goes wrong

- * Change Management

Purposes for Communication

Purposes for communication

- * Think about the PURPOSE of your communication
 - * This can help you communicate more effectively
- * Also think about WHO you are communicating to
 - * And what is the context

Purposes for communication

* Three W's of communication ...

What *am I going to say ?*

Why *am I trying to say it ?*

How *can I best say it ?*

The answers interact with each other!

Purposes for communication

- * Some kind of persuasion is the purpose
 - * Informing – giving information that is believed
 - * Influencing – affecting a decision
 - * Responding – establishing reputation, as in exams
 - * Entertaining – keeping people absorbed
 - * Warning – about danger
- * Sometimes categories are combined - an *entertaining* article that is designed to *influence* your view on topic X.

Purposes for communication

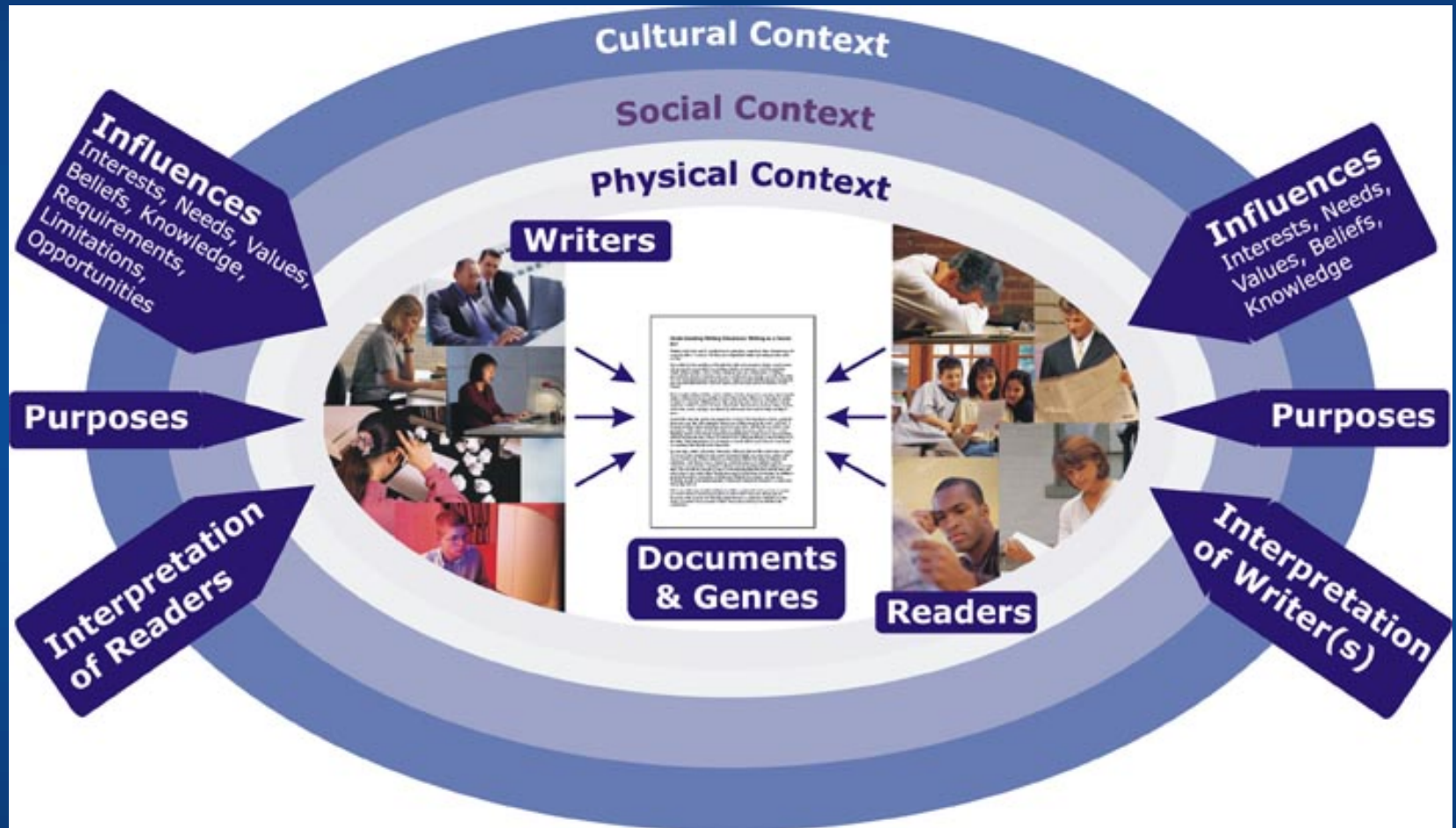
- * How do we measure success in communicating ?
- * Ask yourself:
 - * “Have I got my message across?”
 - * or persuaded you of its value or rightness?
 - * or influenced your subsequent decisions?
 - * or convinced you of my worth, reputation or skill ?
 - * “Have I stayed relevant without unnecessary digression ?”

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATION

- * Communication requires ...
 - * originator - to create the communication
 - * recipient - to understand the communication
 - * suitable language - mutually understood
 - * choice of mode (mechanistic & social) - to suit originator and recipient
 - * willingness to modify, explain or interpret - to suit the recipient
- * The focus of originators is ...
 - * commonly inward, on themselves and their own context
 - * better when it includes the likely context, and needs, of the recipients

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATION

- it takes two (at least)



- * think about your intended audience and their likely interpretation
- * You should change your communication style, depending on your target audience.

Language

- * Communication requires some form of language
- * Language is a set of signs and rules, mutually understood
 - * spoken signs use sounds, written signs use ink, gesture signs use body
 - * computer protocols are also languages - e.g. http or Ethernet
 - * key issue is the requirement for mutual understanding

Language (2)

- * Language has many different modes
 - * Mechanistic modes - spoken, written, gesture, etc.
 - * Social modes - formal, slang, colloquial, technical, etc.
- * Choice of mode tends to restrict subject matter and bias the expression,
 - * which might (deliberately ?) include or exclude a particular audience
- * Translating between modes can be difficult
 - * Potential for confusion

Language (3)

- * Try searching LinkedIn Learning for Technical Writing courses. I have put some in Moodle.

Digital Electronic Communications

Digital Electronic Communications

- * Digital Electronic Communications

- * Email and SMS (I-I communication)



- * Social media (Many-to-many communication)



- * Dramatic increases in speed

- * has benefits

- * and disadvantages

Digital Electronic Communications

Points for caution:

I. Speed:

- * You need to get it right because fewer people check your work
 - * Hastily written email can't be revoked once you've clicked "send"
- * Need to develop skills that were previously taken for granted
- * Consider the number of people who publish Tweets and then want to hastily remove them
 - * PR disasters to themselves or their companies
 - * Great British Bake Off: Prue Leith accidentally reveals winner

Digital Electronic Communications

Points for caution:

2. Disintermediation, i.e.:

- * New technology removes layers of people between author and audience
- * Intermediate stages, where correctness was evaluated, are vanishing
 - * Quite likely you can email the CEO of your company directly
 - * Lowly ranked staff can email “all-staff”
 - * Or become anonymous whistle-blower

Professional Email Etiquette

Using Email effectively

- * When you send an email, you want it to contain all the information the recipient needs
 - * Otherwise it is likely to generate questions in return (i.e. create more emails and more work for both of you)...
- * Proof read, and think twice before you click Send
- * Try to get basic grammar + spelling right...
 - * and look professional

Using Email effectively

- * You can use the McGhee Productivity Solutions (MPS) e-mail P.A.S.S. model to help compose your messages:
 - * P — What is the purpose of this communication, and does the purpose relate to an objective?
 - * A — What action is required; is there a due date; and who owns the action?
 - * S — What supporting documentation does the recipient need?
 - * S — Does the subject line effectively summarize the message?
- * Think carefully about whether to use the To / CC / BCC fields
- * More details are given in ["CE29x hints for good e-mail communication"](#)

Communication within Projects

Communications Leadership

- * To make a project run smoothly, need good communication.
 - * Keep all parties informed
 - * Try to avoid misunderstandings
- * Some teams struggle in CE29x projects because of communication break-down

Communications Leadership

“Stakeholder Management”

- * Keep the stakeholders informed, of:
 - * Project progress
 - * Project Solution
 - * Show them the complete “roadmap”, and ways of accommodating change along the way
- * Include people from the Business / Organisational entities into the solution process; help them to own the solution
- * How often are you to meet and update the various stakeholders?

Project Communication methods

- * Different approaches:
 - * Meetings (i.e. ≥ 2 people)
 - * Inter-personal relationships (i.e. 1 to 1)
 - * Notes, memos, messages etc.
- * The difficulty is to define and maintain the right level of communication for everyone
 - * don't overwhelm people.
 - * Let them get on with their jobs
 - * And don't undersupply the required detail either!

Project Communication methods

Intangible aspects of communication styles are important:

- * The environment of the project, management styles and ownership are all just as crucial to success:
 - * Trust / respect
 - * Purpose – why we're doing what we do
 - * Hands on / hands off management
 - * Teams & roles

Successful communication

A good communications strategy will hopefully have led to:

- * The project's problem domain being well understood
- * The project's goals (and their value) being clearly defined, communicated, and agreed upon
- * All stakeholders understand all constraints of the proposed solution
- * Partnerships and cooperation exists between all parties
- * All parties maintain their commitment to the project & its success

Communication plan

- * A communication plan describes how the project team will communicate:
 - * between themselves
 - * with Project Sponsor
 - * with Stakeholders

Communication plan

- * Communication plan defines:
 - * Location of information repository (GitLab, intranet, SharePoint, Moodle, Jira, ...)
 - * Timings of meetings
 - * Contact information
- * You want communication to be appropriately directed
 - * All relevant people notified

Communication plan

- * In our group project, we have:
 - * Scrum Master
 - * Important role in getting team to learn from mistakes (sprint retrospective)
 - * Buy in to delivering next sprint on time
 - * Jira issues to comment on
 - * Issues are “assigned to” people
 - * Code commenting

Communication plan

- * Provide 'templates' for regular types of communication
- * Use appropriate technology to communicate
 - * Jira helps us with this:
 - * Bug reports
 - * Risk Reports
 - * User Stories

Communication plan

- * Create a Glossary of Terms to establish common vocabulary throughout the business
- * Define “Success” for the project before engaging
- * Identify all potential stakeholders and solicit their involvement, including organisational stakeholders, not just the end users

Communication plan

* Communication Plan might specify how information flows:

E.g. tester X, you pass bug requests to developer Y. No need to involve the users.

E.g. All communications with the client should go via the sales person / project manager

E.g. Client should be involved in fortnightly scrum meetings

When communication goes wrong

Consider these situations:

1. WHAT IF? The real problem that the project is designed to address *remains hidden* from the stakeholders, or is more complex than they realise, and / or is changing?
2. WHAT IF? There is no consensus on vision and constraints? There are different perceptions and definitions of problem / solution domains

Consider these situations:

3. WHAT IF? There is no understanding of the needs or interests of other parties?

- * Resulting in power struggles for control and / or abandonment of project ownership / responsibility

4. WHAT IF? Problem analysis replaces one problem with another

Crucial that people know where they are going and why – good communication is core to achieving this.

Some Causes of a failed Communication Strategy

- * Focusing on technology and not focusing on the causes of a business problem
- * Lack of clarity of the business problem, attempting to solve a moving target
- * Different vocabulary and communication styles
- * Limited project methodology / process
- * Skills predominantly 'hard' – e.g. technology, not 'soft' – e.g. listening and questioning
- * Friction within organisation and between departments

Q: What is meant by vocabulary in this context?

Change Management

Helping users and stakeholders embrace change

Soft issues

- * When the new IT system goes live, users might have their workflows changed.
 - * This needs communicating effectively.
- * Changes to processes are not always welcomed by users.
 - * Organisational structures may need changing
 - * Job descriptions often change
 - * Old ways will be defended
 - * Training will be required
- * Taking a caring and considerate approach to telling the affected people how their lives will be affected by this project

Soft issues

- * Helping Stakeholders and Organisational staff embrace change is called “Change Management”
- * “Change management” is a career in itself
 - * See “Change Management Foundations”, A LinkedIn Learning course on Moodle.

Users may show Different attitudes towards individual role

- * The key is to take appropriate action:
 - * Involve the willing / able
 - * Avoid overreacting to the unwilling / unable
 - * Find ways to coach the unable and sell to the unwilling.

		Low	Willingness	High
Low Ability	High	They say: “Could be” Your goal: SELL	They say: “Can I?” Your goal: DELEGATE	
	Low	They say: “Not Interested” Your goal: TELL	They say: “Want to be” Your goal: COACH	

Further Study

- * Quiz on Communication
- * Quiz on Critical Path Analysis 3
- * Suggested LinkedIn Learning courses
- * Next Presentations (Week 7) will cover Organisations and Ethics.