



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# SWEN90016

## Software Processes & Project Management

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Lecture 4

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## Intended Learning Objectives

~~Module 8 – Project Management Plan.~~

~~Module 9 – Stakeholder Management.~~

**Module 10 – Communication Management.**

# Intended Learning Objectives

## Communication Management.

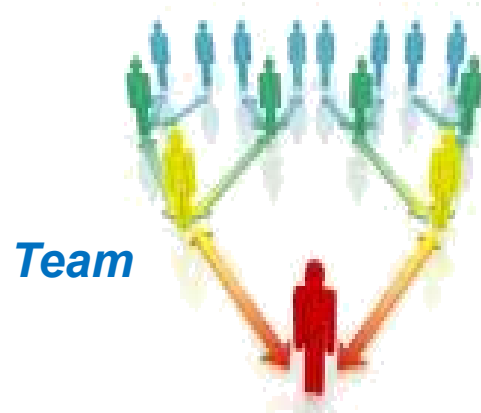
1. The communication challenge.
2. The importance of listening.
3. Communication key skills & importance.
4. Communication plans.
5. Virtual teams & communication.
6. Key communication considerations.

## Communication Challenges



*Individual*

- Semantics [meaning]
- Perception [interpretation]
- Communication Channel
- Feedback
- Anxiety
- Culture



*Team*

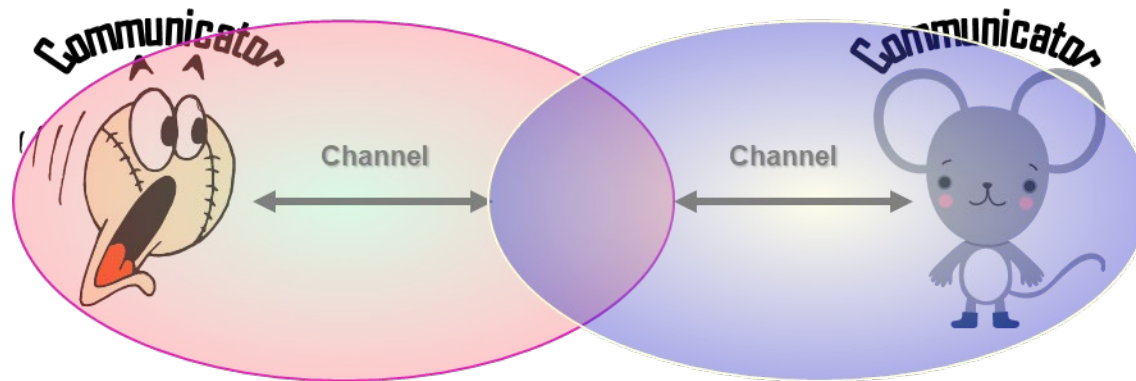
- Status
- Silos
- Information Overload
- Lack of Communication
- Protocol [rules]

## Module 6. 1 – Communication Challenges



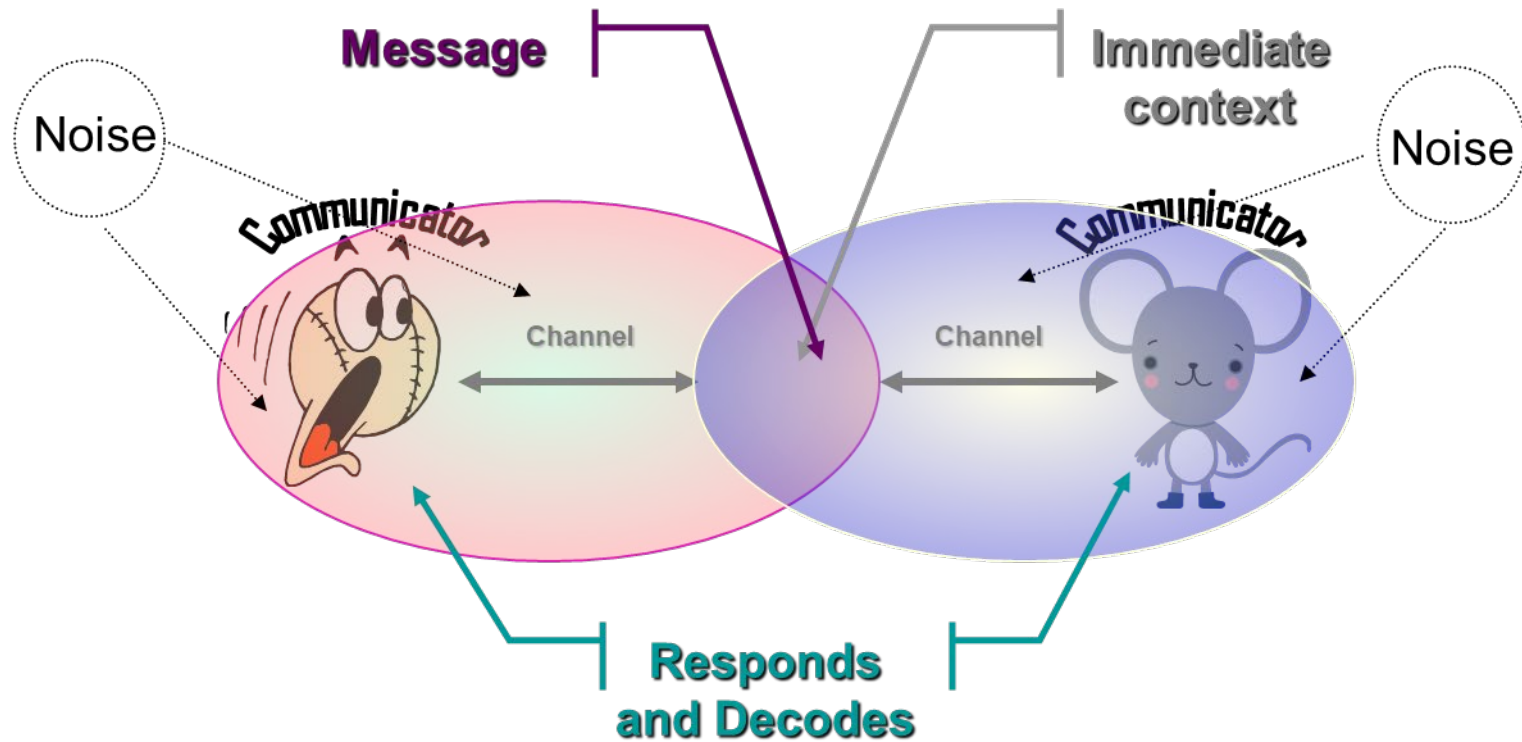
*The Communication Model*

## Module 6.1 – Communication Challenges



*The Communication Model*

## Communication Challenges



*The Communication Model*

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# The importance of Listening

*Hearing is the act of perceiving sound by the ear.*

*Listening requires concentration and is the process of taking in what you hear and mentally organising it so it makes sense.*

**The Act of Listening  
Demands Real Effort**

**Listening is An  
Essential Life Skill**



**Truly Effective  
Listeners are Rare**

**Few People Practice  
Listening and Even Fewer  
Have Been Trained to Listen**

# The importance of Listening

## Why Do We Listen?

- Promotes problem-solving abilities
- Demonstrates acceptance of others
- Builds and retains trust in relationships
- Increase speaker's receptiveness to thoughts and ideas of others
- Increases self-esteem of the speaker helps you evaluate messages
- Helps you understand and retain information
- Allows you to help others

# The importance of Listening

## The Process of Listening

- Predicting [some expected outcome]
- Receiving
- Assigning meaning
- Assess / Validate
- Remembering

# The importance of Listening

- Types of Listening
  - Passive Listening – *Lectures*
    - Taking in the information without processing or reacting
  - Active or Empathetic Listening – *Tutorials*
    - Show interest
    - Asks questions
    - Avoid distractions
    - Use direct eye contact
    - Do not interrupt
    - Read both verbal and nonverbal messages

# The importance of Listening

## Challenges to Listening

- Physiological limitations
- Inadequate background information
- Selective memory or expectations
- Fear of being influenced / persuaded
- Bias and being judgemental
- Boredom or interference from emotions
- Partial listening and distractions e.g. mobile phones / background noise
- Physical barrier e.g. environment, lighting, uncomfortable seating
- Cultural differences [understanding the spoken words]
- Past experiences
- Jargon & Acronyms

# The importance of Listening

## The Importance of Active Listening

- Shows the speaker you are concerned or interested
- Leads to getting better information
- Encourages further communication
- Has the potential to enhance relationships
- Can calm down someone who is upset
- Invites others to listen to you
- Leads to better co-operation and problem solving

# The importance of Listening

TED Talk: 5 ways to listen better

Julian Treasure

7 min video

# Intended Learning Objectives

## Communication Management.

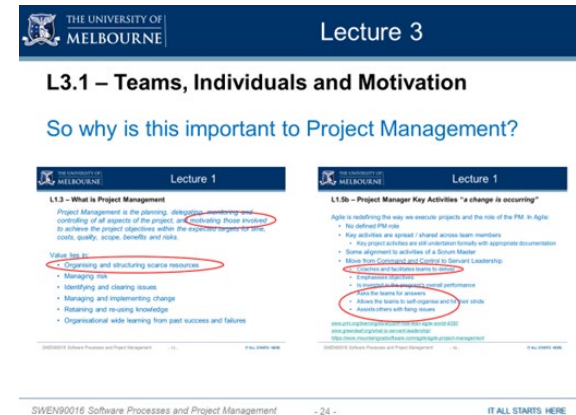
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# Communication key skills & importance

## Communication Skills are critical in Project Management

- Conveying your point of view
- Motivating and influencing others
- Delegating
- Recognising, defining and solving problems
- Delivering presentations / updates
- Setting goals & articulating a vision
- Managing conflict
- Networking
- Negotiating



**Lecture 3**

### L3.1 – Teams, Individuals and Motivation

So why is this important to Project Management?

**L1.3 – What is Project Management**

Project Management is the planning, delegating, controlling and managing all aspects of the project, ensuring those involved to achieve the project objectives within the budget for time, costs, quality, scope, benefits and risks.

**What skills do you need?**

- Organizing and structuring scarce resources
- Managing risk
- Identifying and clearing issues
- Managing and implementing change
- Repeating and re-using knowledge
- Organizational wide learning from past successes and failures

**L1.5b – Project Manager Key Activities “a change is occurring”**

Agile is redefining the way we execute projects and the role of the PM. In Agile:

- No defined PM role
- Key activities are spread / shared across team members
- Key project activities are still undertaken formally with appropriate documentation
- Some alignment to activities of a Scrum Master
- Move from Command and Control to Servant Leadership
- Empowering agencies
- Collaborative working
- Clear the space for success
- Draw the team in and engage in a virtuous circle
- Avoidance with long issues

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# Communication key skills & importance

## Why Is This Important?

Because successful Project Managers MUST have the ability to:

- Read / understand the client
- Run a meeting
- Communicate (written & orally) thoughts accurately
- Manage the team
- Influence your environment
- Ensure alignment and buy-in to the purpose / outcome

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# Communication Plan

- A large proportion of a Project Managers time is spent on communication
- Project Managers often use a Communications Plan to assist in managing and coordinating key communication messages
- A good project Communication Plan:
  - Ensures communications is effective and efficient
  - Allows the Project Manager to be pro-active
  - Sets a common understand of what will be done and when
  - Clarifies who is responsible for key items, what will be delivered and by who

<http://www.projectmanagementdocs.com/project-planning-templates/communications-management-plan.html#ixzz5A9VcGljd>

# Communication Plan

A Communications Plan defines:

- What information will be communicated - detail and format
- Communication Channel - meetings, email, telephone, web portal, etc.
- When information will be distributed – frequency of formal and informal comms
- Who is responsible
- Communication needs of stakeholders
- Resources the project will allocate for communication
- How sensitive or confidential information will be communicated & who will authorise this
- The flow of project communications
- Any constraints (internal or external) which affect project communications
- Any standard templates, formats, or documents the project must use
- Escalation process for resolving any communication-based conflicts or issues

# Communication Plan

**Example**

Is underpinned by a Communications Matrix

Stakeholder	Communication Objective	Format	Frequency	Owner	Importance
Sponsor	Provide updates on project progress, key issues, success and support required	Regular Meeting - face to face Formal Report	Weekly Monthly	Project Manager	High
Business Expert	Gather requirements, sign-off all scope, approve prototype and final acceptance	Formal Report / documentation	Fortnightly	Project Manager	High
Finance	Future funding approval	Project Finances	Bi-monthly	Finance rep	High
Human Resources	Identify staff required for project and deal with all staff related items	Resource plans	Monthly	Project Support	Medium
Risk Department	Identify risks and mitigation strategies and ensure they are being followed	Risk Management Plan	Monthly	Project Support	Medium
Internal IT Staff	Identify resources for all phases including Design, Requirements Gathering, Development and Production Implementation	Regular Meeting - face to face Formal Report	Weekly Monthly	Project Manager	High
External IT Staff / Supplier	To ensure they can execute on their Testing Services contract	Formal Report	Monthly	Project Manager	Low

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# Virtual Teams & Communication

## What is a virtual team?

- A virtual team (also known as a geographically dispersed team, distributed team, or remote team) usually refers to a group of individuals who work together from different geographic locations and rely on communication technology. (Wikipedia)



# Virtual Teams & Communication

In 2014 survey 1,700 knowledge workers, 79% reported working always or frequently in dispersed teams. Armed with laptops, Wi-Fi, and mobile phones, i.e. technology most professionals can do their jobs from anywhere.

## Why does it appeal to employees?

- Employees can be more flexible with work and home commitments

## Why does it appeal to organisations?

- Organisations can access the best GLOBAL talent
- Save on real estate costs

# Virtual Teams & Communication

What does this mean for communication

- Communication is less rich and less frequent than face-to-face interaction

Why?

- Less visual and behavioural cues
- Less or no informal interactions

BUT not all bad

- Those less inclined to speak in groups, may feel more comfortable
- Less importance on interpersonal skills and physical appearance may benefit certain members of the team
- Still need to be mindful of unconscious bias (virtual unconscious bias)

# Virtual Teams & Communication

## Create a Communication charter.

- Discipline about how the team should communicate
- Norms of behaviour when participating in virtual meetings (background noise, side conversations, talking clearly and at a reasonable pace, listening attentively, not dominating the conversation)
- Guidelines on communication modes - in which circumstances, which mode should be used e.g. email should be used for formal correspondence, a WhatsApp group for chatting informally, documents

# Virtual Teams & Communication

## Leverage communication technologies

- How can you use technology to function effectively as a team?
- Who has access to which technologies - bandwidth, free vs cost.

## Team building

- Virtual water cooler
- Formal and informal team building activities
- For instance we have a random channel in our slack group where we post funny jokes, memes, celebrations e.g. birthdays, milestones. An intentional place to strengthen the group
- Think of how you can use social networking tools and features to create a connected team.

# Virtual Teams & Communication

## Factors that contribute to a good virtual team

- Good communication skills
- High emotional intelligence
- Ability to work independently
- Resilience
- Awareness and sensitivity to other cultures is important especially in global groups

*Guess what – They are very similar to factors that contribute to any successful team!*

### References:

<https://hbr.org/2013/06/making-virtual-teams-work-ten>

<https://hbr.org/2014/12/getting-virtual-teams-right>

<https://hbr.org/2018/02/how-to-collaborate-effectively-if-your-team-is-remote>

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# Key Communication Consideration

## Importance of Face to Face meetings

- 58% of communication is through body language
- 35% of communication is through how the words are said
- 7% of communication is through content or words that are spoken
- Pay attention to more than just the actual words
- A person's tone or voice and body language can say a lot about how they really feel
- Non verbal comms govern how other people feel about us and also how we feel about ourselves

*Body Language - Spend some time looking at Ted Talk [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-\\_Mh1QhMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc)*

# Key Communication Consideration

## Items to remember

- Rarely does the receiver interpret a message exactly as the sender intended
- Geographical location and cultural background affect the complexity of communications
  - Different working hours
  - Language barriers
  - Different cultural norms
- Communication helps manage conflicts effectively
- Spend time developing communication skills – *practice & feedback*
- Choose the channel appropriately



# Key Communication Consideration

## Communication Channels – some examples

Choose carefully as it will make a difference

How well medium is Suited to:	Hard Copy	Telephone Call	Voice Mail	eMail	Meeting / f2f	Web Site
Confirming commitments	1	3	3	1	2	1
Building consensus	3	2	3	3	1	3
Mediating conflict	3	2	3	3	1	3
Resolving misunderstanding	3	1	3	3	1	3
Addressing negative behaviour	3	2	3	2	1	3
Expressing support / appreciation	1	1	2	1	1	1
Encouraging creative thinking	2	3	3	2	1	3

**1 = Most suited, 2 = Less suited and 3 = Least Suited**

# Key Communication Consideration

## Conflict

Conflict is the single most undermanaged activity in projects and if left unresolved will destroy a project. Key causes include:

- Schedule
- Intellectual disagreements
- Personalities
- Project Priorities
- Manpower
- Technical
- Administration
- Personality
- Cost

# Key Communication Consideration Conflict

Deal with it quickly and succinctly and  
**BEFORE** it becomes a major issue

