

# Project Management

## **Project Communication Management**

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of good communications in projects.
- Explain the elements of project communications planning, including how to create a communications management plan and perform a stakeholder communications analysis.
- Describe various methods for distributing project information and the advantages and disadvantages of each, discuss the importance of addressing individual communication needs, and calculate the number of communication channels in a project.



# What is Project Communication

*communication*

# A Classic Case of Miscommunication

In Center Harbor, when Walter Cronkite steered his boat into port. The avid sailor was amused to see in the distance a small crowd on shore waving their arms to greet him. He could barely make out their excited shouts: “Hello Walter, Hello Walter!”





# A Classic Case of Miscommunication

As his boat came closer, the crowd grew larger, still yelling. Pleased at the reception, Cronkite tipped his white captain's hat, waved back, even took a bow. But before reaching dockside, Cronkite's boat abruptly jammed aground. The crowd stood silent. The veteran suddenly realized what they'd been shouting: “**Low water, low water!**”



# Analysis of Flawed Communication Process



# Analysis of Flawed Communication Process



Sender  
has  
idea

*Warn  
boater*

# Analysis of Flawed Communication Process

Sender  
has  
idea

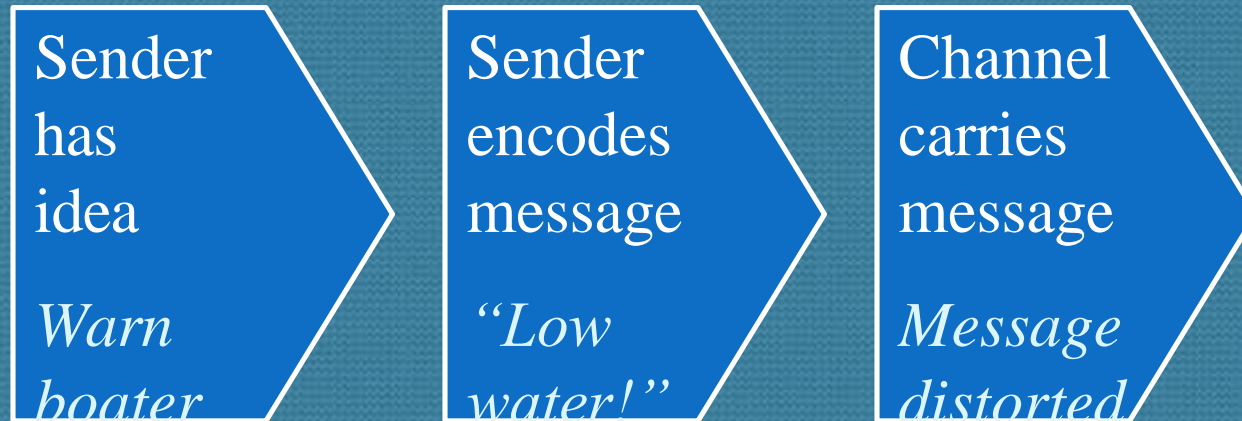
*Warn  
boater*

Sender  
encodes  
message

*“Low  
water!”*



# Analysis of Flawed Communication Process



# Analysis of Flawed Communication Process





# Barriers That Caused Cronkite Miscommunication

- Frame of reference

- Receiver accustomed to acclaim and appreciative crowds.

- Language skills

- Accent makes "water" and "Walter" sound similar.

- Listening skills

- Receiver more accustomed to speaking than to listening.

# Barriers That Caused Cronkite Miscommunication

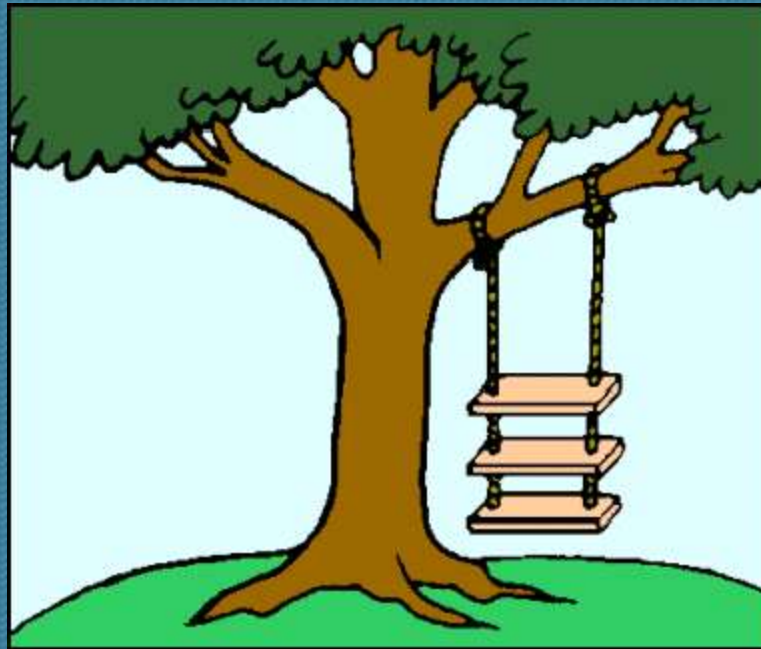
- Emotional interference
  - Ego prompted receiver to believe crowd was responding to his celebrity status.
- Physical barriers
  - Noise from boat, distance between senders and receivers.

Which of these barriers could be overcome through improved communication skills?



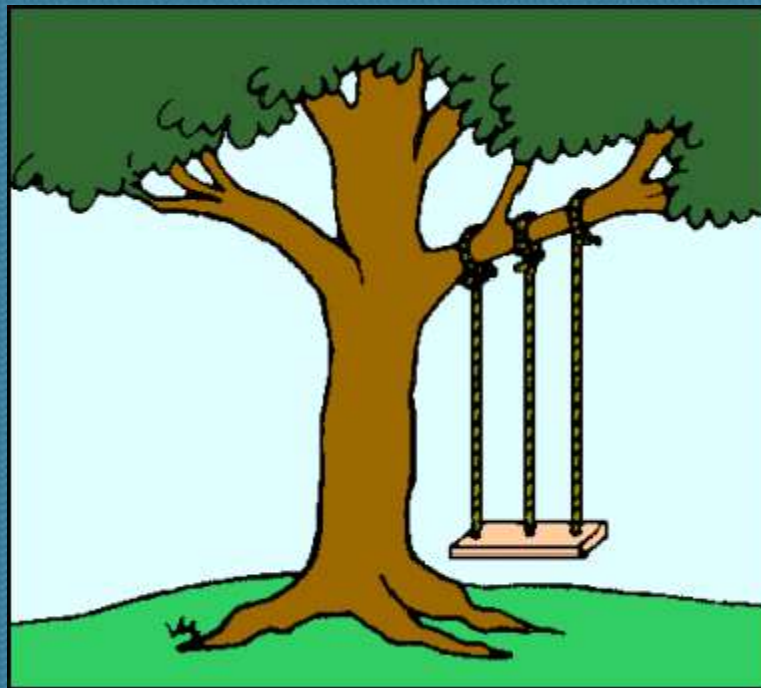
# Another Example of Miscommunication

# As Marketing Requested It

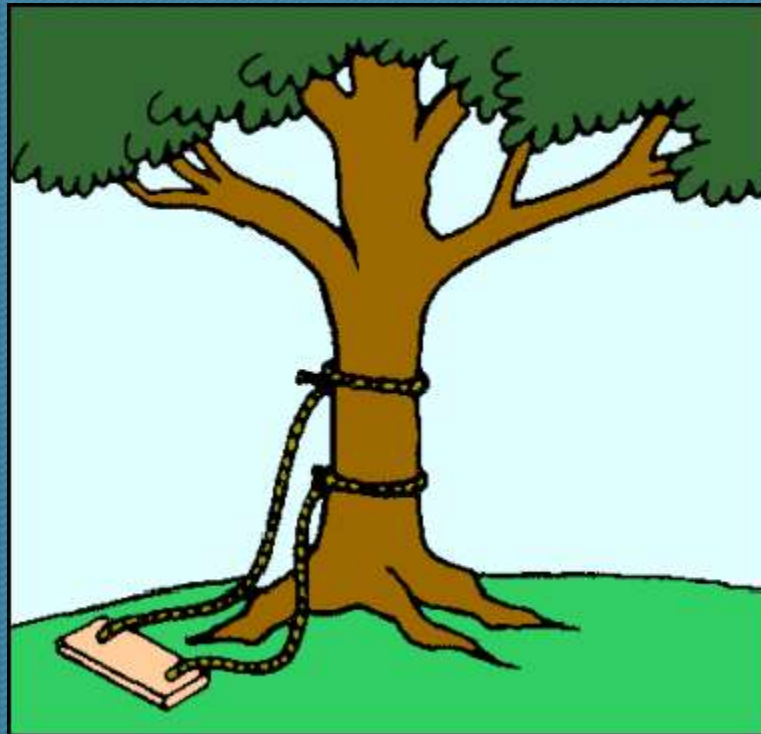




# As Sales Ordered It

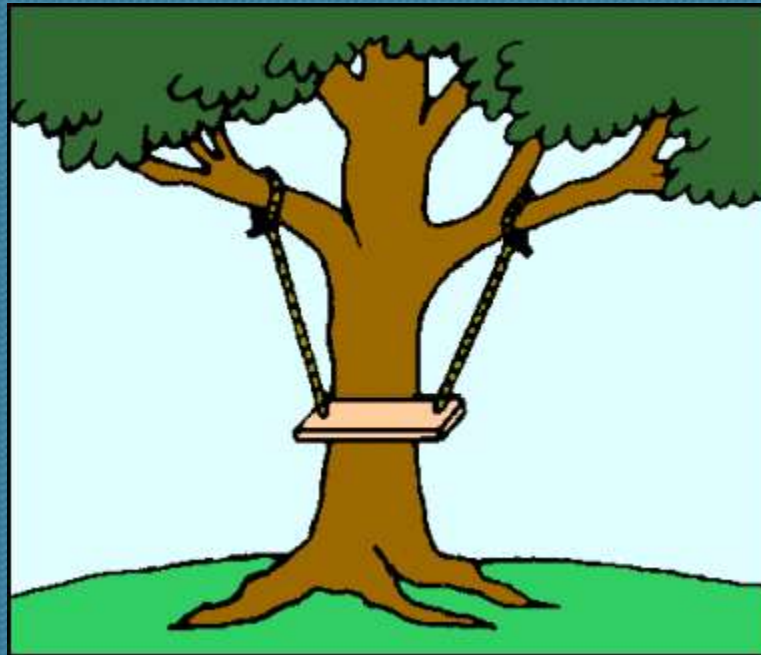


# As Engineering Designed It

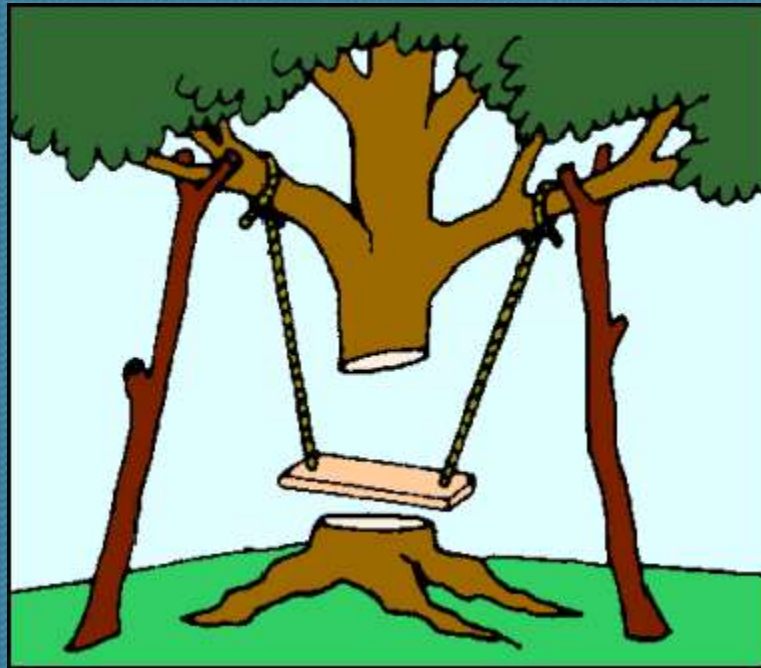




# As Production Manufactured It

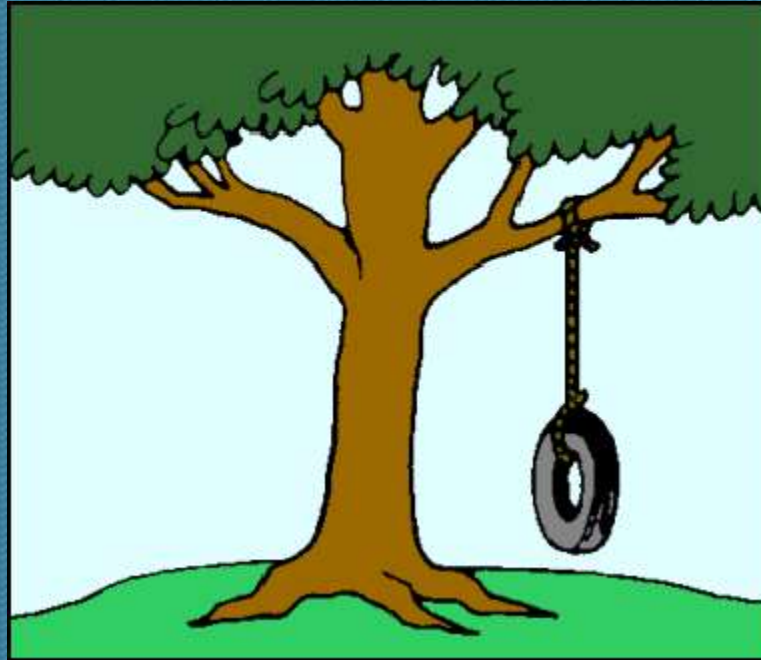


# As Maintenance Installed It





# What the Customer Wanted



# What is Project communication?

- Writing that addresses a particular need
  - User-oriented documents
  - Efficient documents
- Communication with an electronic and a human component
- Communication that reaches a global audience



## How is Project Communication defined?

- Producing project communication involves creating, designing, and transmitting technical information so that people can understand it easily and use it safely, effectively, and efficiently. Markel, 2001, p. 4

# How is Technical Communication defined?

- Technical communication is the process by which researchers and technical experts develop information products for users. Killingsworth & Palmer, 1999, p. 4



# How is Technical Writing defined?

- Technical writing informs, explains, instructs, or persuades a specific audience through mastery of specific strategies and sometimes a special language, so that readers gain new knowledge or the ability to perform their own complex and specialized jobs more effectively. VanAlstyne & Tritt, 2002, p. 6



# Who are Technical Communicators?

- Technical writer
- Technical editor
- Web designer
- Online documentation specialist
- Information developer
- Instructional developer



# What Skills does a Technical Communicator need?

- Address particular readers
- Help readers solve problems
- Reflect an organization's goals culture
- Work collaboratively
- Use design to increase readability
- Use words or graphics or both
- Use high-tech tools
- Meet deadlines



# What are Measures of Excellence in Technical Communication?

- Honesty
- Clarity
- Accuracy
- Comprehensiveness
- Accessibility
- Conciseness
- Professional appearance
- Correctness
- Relevance



# What are Seven Principles of Technical Writing?

- Know your purpose
- Know your audience
- Choose and organize your content around your audience
- Write clearly and precisely
- Use good page design
- Think visually
- Write ethically



# What are Types of Technical Communication?

- Manuals
- Procedures
- Instructions
- Online help
- Reports
- Proposals
- Memos
- Email
- Web pages
- Quick reference cards



# *Techniques to Improve Org Communication*

- Emphasis on teamwork
- Improve reporting system
- Focus on employees participation & involvement
- Improve management system
- Change the organizational culture.
- Flatter hierarchy.
- Cross functional teams.
- Fewer control.

# Guidelines for Choosing Communication Technologies.

- Audience expectations.
- Time and cost.
- Nature of the message.
- Presentation needs.
- Work environment.



# What is Project Communication

- Exchange of Project-specific information



# Project Communication Management

Project Communications Management includes the processes required to ensure timely appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval and ultimate disposition of project information. The Project Communications Management processes provide the critical links among people and information that are necessary for successful communications.



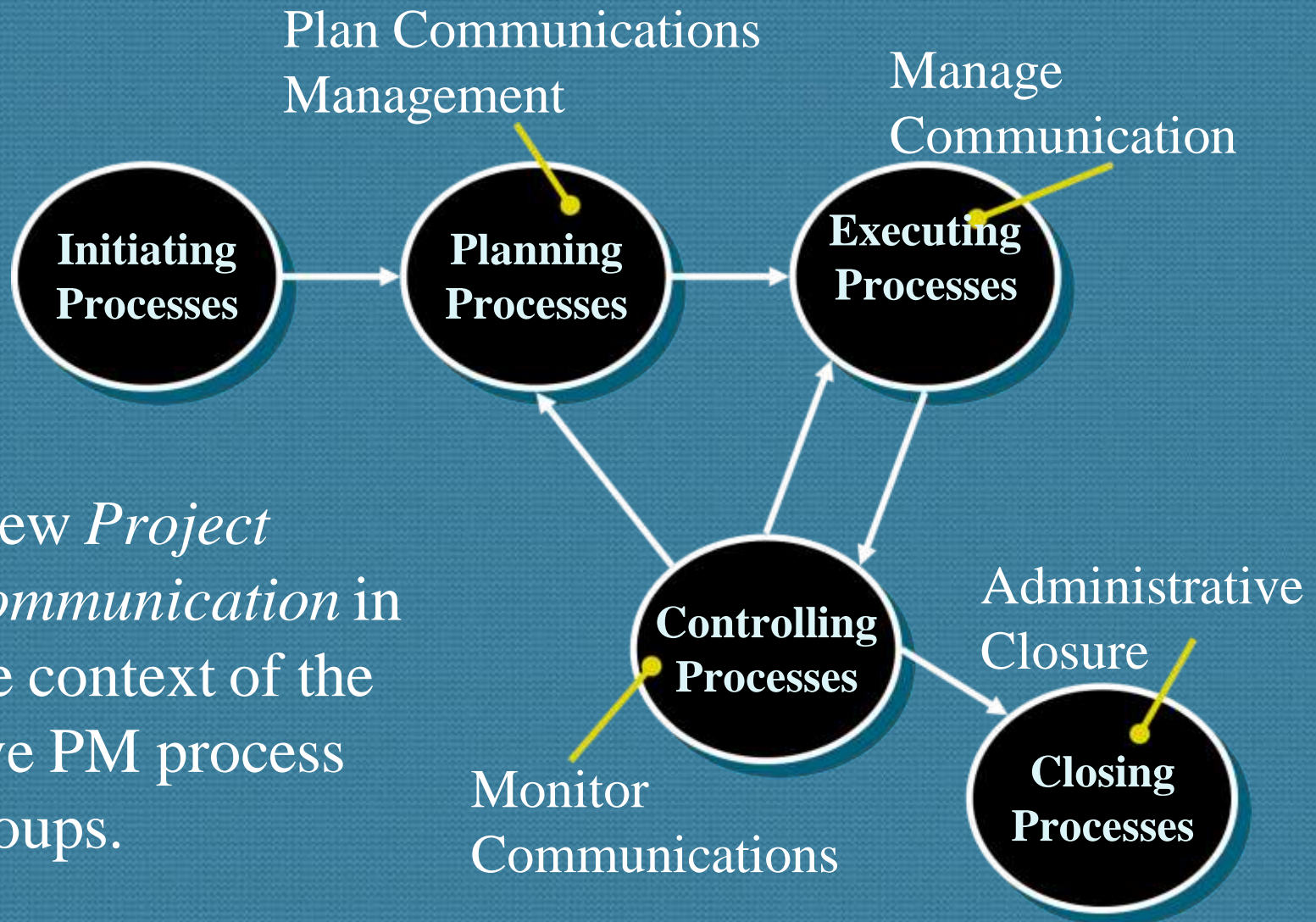
# What's in it for a Project Manager?

*Three reasons you need to manage project Communication*

- Meet the information needs of your project stakeholders (Communications Planning and Managing)
- Track and report on project performance (Monitoring Communications)
- Formally document project results (Administrative Closure)



# Project Communication *Management*



View *Project Communication* in the context of the five PM process groups.



## PROCESS GROUPS

INITIATING

PLANNING

EXECUTING

MONITORING AND  
CONTROLLING

CLOSING

PROJECT  
COMMUNICATIONS  
MANAGEMENT

plan  
communications  
management

manage  
communications

monitor  
communications

# Importance of Good Communications

- 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 skills are a key factor in career advancement for IT professionals.



# Project Communications Management Processes

- **Plan Communications Management:** the process of developing an approach and plan for all project-based communication activities based on the information needs of each stakeholder, available resources in the organization, and the needs of a project.
- **Manage Communications :** the process of creating, collecting, distributing, storing, accessing, managing, monitoring, and disposing of project information.
- **Monitor Communications:** the process of ensuring that the information needs of project stakeholders, as well as the project, are met.



Generally, a project management communication plan should answer the following key questions:

- **Who?** Who needs to know?
- **What?** What do they need to know?
- **When?** How frequently?
- **Where?** Where are communications required?
- **Why?** Why is this important?
- **How?** How are they kept informed?



# Who? Stakeholder Identification

Did you think of everyone?

If you are designing an application in this project, have you included the end-users in the early project communications?

If your end-user works for another organization such as a local or city government or a voluntary agency, have you also kept the IT people in those entities informed?

# What? Stakeholder Analysis

- Tendency to send too much to too many – very easy to do with electronic communications! Too much is as bad as too little – can't read everything.
- Target your audiences – and realize you may have more than one.



# When ?

- How often?
- Morning & afternoon?
- Day of week?
- Day of month?
- Different intervals for various stakeholders
  - Weekly for team members
  - Bi-weekly for sponsor
  - Monthly for Executives
  - Etc.

# Where ?

- Location for status meetings
- Location for team meetings
- Locations for information: Network drive, website, internal or external, Email attachments, Email text



# Why ?

- Curiosity? Good/bad
- Need to know?
- Provide information
- Prepare end-users for transition
- MANY REASONS TO SHARE INFORMATION!

# How ?

- Emails
- Status reports
- Phone calls
- Meetings
- Face to face, one on one
- Press release
- Other?



# Plan Communications Management

- During the plan communications management process, project managers, together with the project team, develop a **project communication plan** that details your communication management system or approach.
- The group should specify how it intends to address stakeholders' communication needs throughout the project using assets available within the organization. Different stakeholders have different communication expectations.



# Communications Management Plan Contents

- The message or information to be communicated
- Communication distribution frequency and schedule
- Communication modes, such as email, text messages, **face-to-face communication**, meetings, reports on the status of **deliverables** and project milestones, etc.
- The stakeholders who are receiving the information
- The team member(s) responsible for delivering content and responding to questions or requests
- Communication constraints (e.g., budget allotted for communication, schedule, communication technology, internal and external policies, legislation requiring communications to be handled a certain way, etc.)



# Communications Management Plan Contents (cont'd)

- Input documents you will need in order to create your communication plan may include:
  - A **project charter**
  - A stakeholder register
  - A **resource allocation** and management plan
- Although the project communication plan is created during the **project planning** phase, you may have to repeat the process as the project's communication requirements change. If stakeholders are added to or removed from the project, the plan will have to be revisited.

# Sample Stakeholder Analysis for Project Communications

STAKEHOLDERS	DOCUMENT NAME	DOCUMENT FORMAT	CONTACT PERSON	DUE
Customer management	Monthly status report	Hard copy	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	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	11/1/2006
Software subcontractor	Software implementation plan	E-mail	Najwa Gates	6/1/2006

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



# Manage Communications

- In this process, project managers and their teams execute the tasks and activities defined in the communication plan, i.e., the collection, creation, storage, retrieval, management, distribution, monitoring, and disposal of project information.
- The goal is to provide timely, accurate information to the right people using the appropriate project communication tools.



# Manage Communications (Cont)

- Besides information distribution, this is also where you encourage stakeholders to ask questions or discuss any lingering doubts or confusion they may have regarding the project, so you can provide clarification.
- Communication is a two-way street. Not only should you provide the information to the right recipients at the right time, but you also have to make certain they receive and understand the information you send out.



# Manage Communications (Cont)

- Documents created during this process include:
  - Performance reports
  - Presentations
  - Schedule updates
  - Updates on the status of the project's deliverables
- Certain project documents may have to be updated, too, such as the communication management plan, project plan, stakeholder register, stakeholder engagement plan, and the lessons learned register.
- Communications management occurs throughout the **project's life cycle**.



# Manage Communications (Cont)

- Getting the right 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:
  - Using technology to enhance information distribution.
  - Formal and informal methods for distributing information.



# 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.

# Importance of Face-to-Face Communication

- Research says that in a face-to-face interaction:
  - 58 percent of communication is through body language.
  - 35 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.



# Encouraging More Face-to-Face Interactions

- **Short, frequent meetings** are often very effective in 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.

# Media Choice Table

KEY: 1 = EXCELLENT HOW WELL MEDIUM IS SUITED TO:	2 = ADEQUATE		3 = INAPPROPRIATE			
	HARD COPY	TELEPHONE CALL	VOICE MAIL	E-MAIL	MEETING	WEB SITE
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



# Understanding Group and Individual Communication Needs

- People are not interchangeable parts.
- 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.



# 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.



# 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 cultural norms

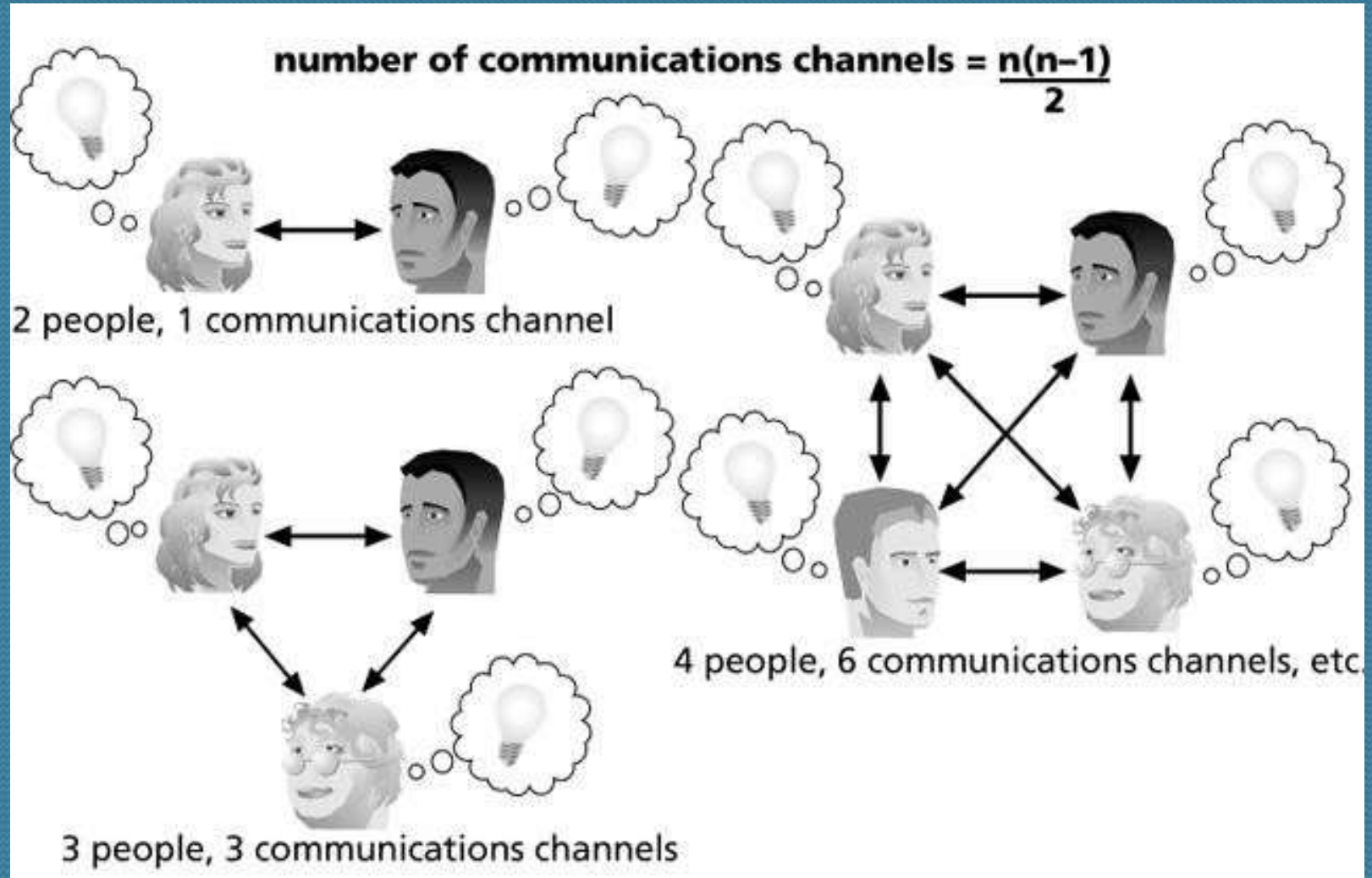
# Determining the Number of Communications Channels

- As the number of people involved increases, the complexity of communications increases because there are more communications channels or pathways through which people can communicate.
- Number of communications channels =  $\frac{n(n-1)}{2}$

where  $n$  is the number of people involved.



# The Impact of the Number of People on Communications Channels



# Monitor Communications

- Also performed throughout the project, this process ensures that all of the communication techniques and methods you're using -- including the monitoring and control measures you have in place -- follow the project communication plan.
- It's also at this stage that you gauge whether or not your approaches are producing the desired results. Otherwise, you may have to make some adjustments in order to prevent any communication issues from affecting the project.



# Monitor Communications (Cont)

## **Actions to carry out in this process include:**

- Verify that communications go out as scheduled.
- Verify that the right stakeholders receive the right communications.
- Verify that stakeholders understand the communications they receive.
- Verify that relevant feedback or questions reach the right people.

# Monitor Communications (Cont)

**Some of the project management documents you'll be creating or updating include:**

- Change requests
- Work performance reports
- Communication management and stakeholder engagement plans
- Other relevant project documents, such as the issue log and the stakeholder register



# Issue Log

Issue #	Issue Description	Impact on Project	Date Reported	Reported By	Assigned To	Priority (M/H/L)	Due Date	Status	Comments
1	Servers cost 10% more than planned	Slight increase in project cost	5/15	Jean	Oded	M	6/15	Closed	The sponsor agreed to provide additional funds to meet the deadline.
2	Two people left the project	Need to reassign personnel	9/26	Gaurav	Karen	H	10/2	Open	If Karen cannot reassign people within a week, she should talk to Peter directly.
etc.									

# How to be Successful at Project Communication Management

- From project initiation to closing, effective communication drives project management. Creating a **project proposal** that will compel investors to act favorably requires excellent communication skills. The same is true for:
  - Negotiating contracts with vendors and suppliers
  - **Gathering the project's requirements**
  - Interviewing stakeholders to understand their needs and expectations
  - Planning the project
  - Dividing the project into work packages
  - Assigning tasks and responsibilities to team members
  - Building a winning team
  - Facilitating meetings
  - Keeping track of the project's progress
  - Writing reports



# How to be Successful at Project Communication Management

- And then there's diversity in the workplace. Many of today's project teams are composed of diverse groups of people.
- Even among small, local teams, communication challenges abound. You want everyone on the same page. You want people with an interest in the project to know what's going on -- not just once, but on a regular basis.
- You want everyone involved to understand the project's priorities, as well as the risks and opportunities it presents.
- You want team members to feel accountable for their assigned roles and responsibilities -- and to rally toward the same objectives. You want stakeholders to support, instead of oppose, the project's goals.
- If opposition from stakeholders cannot be helped, though, you'll want to be able to manage their influence on the project. At the same time, you have to be respectful, receptive, and encouraging.



# Key Skills for Project Communication Management

- Showing active listening skills
- Having strong speaking and writing skills
- Being skilled at conflict resolution
- Ability to motivate, engage, and guide a team
- Setting expectations, and managing them
- Having a propensity for questioning ideas and exploring alternatives
- Recognizing that people think and communicate differently
- The ability to create an environment of trust, so people can comfortably speak their minds
- Acknowledging opposing ideas (even when you don't agree with them)
- Being willing to ask for and accept help if you need it
- Having a positive disposition



# Overcoming Communication Barriers

- Realize that communication is imperfect.
- Adapt the message to the receiver.
- Improve your language and listening skills.
- Question your preconceptions.
- Plan for feedback.

# Surmounting Organizational Barriers

- Encourage open environment for interaction and feedback.
- Flatten the organizational structure.
- Promote horizontal communication.
- Provide hotline for anonymous feedback.
- Provide sufficient information through formal channels.



# Barriers to Interpersonal Communication

- Bypassing
- Limited frame of reference
- Lack of language skills
- Lack of listening skills
- Emotional interference
- Physical distractions

# Understanding is shaped by

- Communication climate
- Context and setting
- Background, experiences
- Knowledge, mood
- Values, beliefs, culture



# Barriers That Block the Flow of Information in Organizations

- Closed communication climate
- Top-heavy organizational structure
- Long lines of communication
- Lack of trust between management and employees
- Competition for power, status, rewards

# Additional Communication Barriers

- Fear of reprisal for honest communication
- Differing frames of reference among communicators
- Lack of communication skills
- Ego involvement
- Turf wars



# Benefits of Effective Communication

- Improves quality of services & products.
- Provides competitive advantage.
- Motivate & involve employees.
- Reduce Cost.
- Saves Time.
- Increases productivity
- Streamline work practices.
- Build Goodwill.



## Types of Nonverbal Communication:

- **Kinesic behavior**, -body motion such as gestures, facial expressions, eye behavior, touching, - Body movement.
- **Physical characteristics**- body shape, physique, posture, height, weight, hair, & skin color.
- **Paralanguage**- Voice quality, volume, speech rate, pitch, & laughing.
- **Proxemics**, -Way people use & perceive space, seating arrangements, & conversational distance.
- **Environment**- Building & room design, furniture & interior decorating, light noise, & cleanliness.
- **Time-Being** late or early, keeping others waiting, & other relationships between time & status.



# Reading Body Language

Unspoken message	Behavior
“I want to be helpful.”	Uncrossing legs
	Unbuttoning coat or jacket
	Unclassing hands
	Moving closer to other person
	Smiling face
	Removing hands from pockets
	Unfolding arms from across chest
“I’m confident”	Avoiding hand-to-face gestures & head scratching
	Maintaining an erect stance
	Keeping steady eye contact
	Steeling fingertips below chin

# Reading Body Language

## Unspoken message

“I’m nervous

“I’m superior to you.”

## Behavior

Clearing throat

Expelling air (such as “Whew!”)

Placing hand over mouth while speaking

Hurried cigarette smoking

Peering over tops of eyeglasses

Pointing a finger

Standing behind a desk & leaning palms down on it

Holding jacket lapels while speaking





Thank you