



PMP® Certification Training

Lesson 12: Project Communications Management

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This course is based on the Project Management Institute, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge PMBOK® Guide—Sixth Edition*.

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Objectives

- ▷ Define communication and Project Communications Management
- ▷ Identify the key concepts, tailoring, trends, and Agile or adaptive considerations
- ▷ Explain the elements of a basic communication model
- ▷ Describe the Project Communications Management processes

Communication

The definition of communication is as follows:

Communication is a two-way process of transferring information from one entity to another. It is the exchange of information, intended or involuntary.



A project manager spends around 90 percent of time ensuring proper project communication.

Key Concepts for Project Communications Management

The types of communication:

- Written: Physical or electronic
- Spoken: Face-to-face or remote
- Formal or informal: Formal papers or social media
- Gestures: Tone and facial expressions
- Media: Pictures or actions
- Choice of words: Words chosen to express an idea

Written

- Project management plan
- Project charter
- Long-distance communication

- Emails
- Notes

Oral

- Presentations

- Conversations

Formal

Informal

Trends and Emerging Practices

- **Inclusion of stakeholders in project review:** The stakeholder community of each project includes individuals, groups, and organizations that the project team has identified as essential to the successful delivery of project objectives and organizational outcomes.
- **Inclusion of stakeholders in project meetings:** Project meetings should include stakeholders from outside the project and even the organization as appropriate.
- **Increased use of social computing:** Social computing in the form of infrastructure, social media services, and personal devices has changed how organizations and stakeholders communicate.
- **Multifaceted approaches to communication:** The standard communication strategy for project stakeholder communications embraces and selects from all technologies and respects cultural, practical, and personal preferences for language, media, content, and delivery.

Tailoring Considerations

- **Stakeholders:** The project team must consider whether the stakeholders are internal or external or both.
- **Physical location:** The physical location of stakeholders must be considered. The project must consider whether the team is co-located or based in the same geographical area or spread across multiple time zones.
- **Communications technology:** The project team needs to consider the technologies available to develop, record, transmit, retrieve, track, and store communication artifacts. The technologies that are most appropriate and cost effective for communicating need to be considered.
- **Language:** The project team must consider if one or many languages are used. Allowances need to be made to adjust to the complexity of team members from diverse language groups.
- **Knowledge management:** The project team need to consider whether the organization has a formal knowledge management repository and if it is used by the stakeholders.

Considerations for Agile/Adaptive Environments

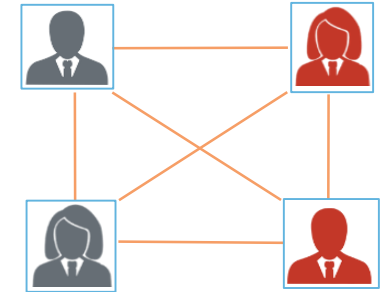
- Communicating evolving and emerging details more frequently and quickly
- Streamlining team member access to information, frequent team checkpoints, and colocating team members as much as possible
- Posting project artifacts in transparent fashion
- Holding regular stakeholder reviews to promote communication with management and stakeholders

Communication Channels



Given that communication takes place between four members of a team, there are six unique channels of communication.

If a team comprises ten stakeholders, how many channels of communication would exist?



Use the formula: $\text{Number of Communication Channels} = n * (n - 1) / 2$

In the formula, 'n' is equal to the number of stakeholders.

In this case, $n = 10$.

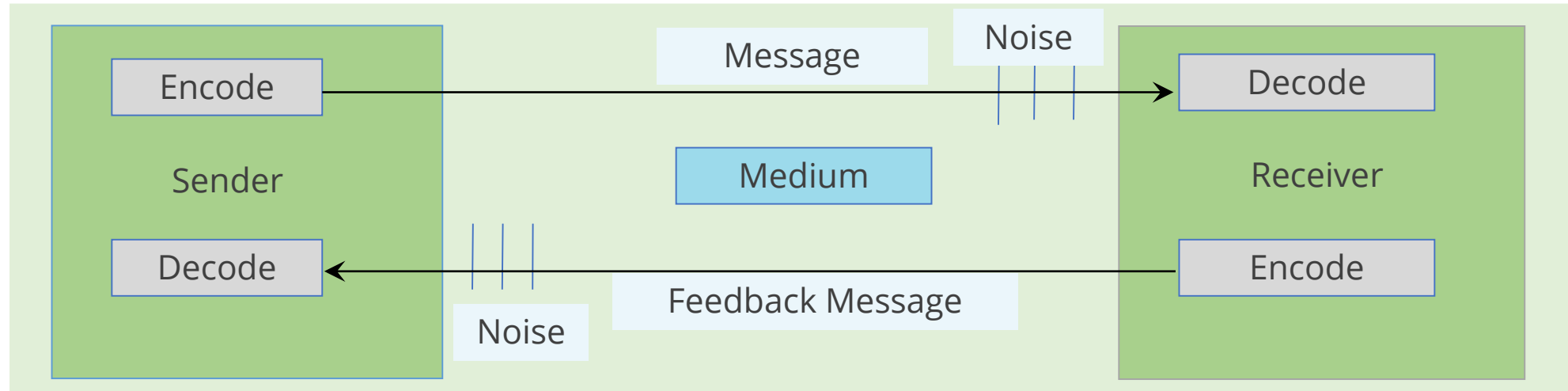
By substituting 'n' in the formula, the total number of communication channels that exist in a team of 10 stakeholders is 45.



When a large number of communication channels exist, it may get chaotic if communication is not structured.

Basic Communication Model

The process of communication involves several steps. Given below is a simple communication model:



A Japanese tourist calls a hotel in Dubai to book a room. The tourist speaking Japanese is the encoding of the message. Telephone serves as the medium. However, decoding is problematic as the receptionist does not understand Japanese. The same would be true if the receptionist speaks Arabic. However, communication can be streamlined if they communicate in a language comprehensible to both of them.

Basic Communication Model (Contd.)

Analyzing the communication model helps in identifying the communication problems.

- Encoding is the process of translating thoughts or ideas into a language that is understood by others.
- Decoding is the process of translating the message back into meaningful thoughts or ideas.
- Message is the output of encoding.
- Feedback message is the output of encoding.
- Medium is a communication method to convey the message.
- Noise is anything that interferes with the transmission and understanding of the message. Examples include distance and unfamiliar technology.

Project Communications Management

The definition of ***Project Communications Management** is as follows:

“Project Communications Management includes the processes necessary to ensure that the information needs of the project and its stakeholders are met through development of artifacts and implementation of activities designed to achieve effective information exchange.”

Project manager needs to ensure that the stakeholders get timely access to the required information.

*Definition taken from the Glossary of the Project Management Institute, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, (PMBOK® Guide)* – Sixth Edition, Project Management Institute, Inc., 2017, Page 359

Project Communications Management Processes

Knowledge Areas		Project Integration Management	Project Scope Management	Project Schedule Management	Project Cost Management	Project Quality Management	Project Resource Management	Project Communications Management	Project Risk Management	Project Procurement Management	Project Stakeholder Management
Project Management Process Groups	Initiating	4.1 Develop Project Charter									13.1 Identify Stakeholders
	Planning	4.2 Develop Project Management Plan	5.1 Plan Scope 5.2 Collect Requirements 5.3 Define Scope 5.4 Create WBS	6.1 Plan Schedule Management 6.2 Define Activities 6.3 Sequence Activities 6.4 Estimate Activity Durations 6.5 Develop Schedule	7.1 Plan Cost Management 7.2 Estimate Costs 7.3 Determine Budget	8.1 Plan Quality Management	9.1 Plan Resource Management 9.2 Estimate Activity Resources	10.1 Plan Communications Management	11.1 Plan Risk Management 11.2 Identify Risks 11.3 Perform Qualitative Risk Analysis 11.4 Perform Quantitative Risk Analysis 11.5 Plan Risk Response	12.1 Plan Procurement Management	13.2 Plan Stakeholder Engagement
	Executing	4.3 Direct and Manage Project Work 4.4 Manage Project Knowledge				8.2 Manage Quality	9.3 Acquire Resources 9.4 Develop Team 9.5 Manage Team	10.2 Manage Communications	11.6 Implement Risk Response	12.2 Conduct Procurements	13.3 Manage Stakeholder Engagement
	Monitoring and Controlling	4.5 Monitor and Control Project Work 4.6 Perform Integrated Change Control	5.5 Validate Scope 5.6 Control Scope	6.6 Control Schedule	7.4 Control Costs	8.3 Control Quality	9.6 Control Resource	10.3 Monitor Communications	11.7 Monitor Risks	12.3 Control Procurements	13.4 Monitor Stakeholder Engagements
	Closing	4.7 Close Project or Phase									

Table 1-4. Project Management Process Group and Knowledge Area Mapping

Plan Communications Management

"Plan Communications Management is the process of developing an appropriate approach and plan for project communications activities based on the information needs of each stakeholder or group, available organizational assets, and the needs of the project." This belongs to the Planning Process Group.

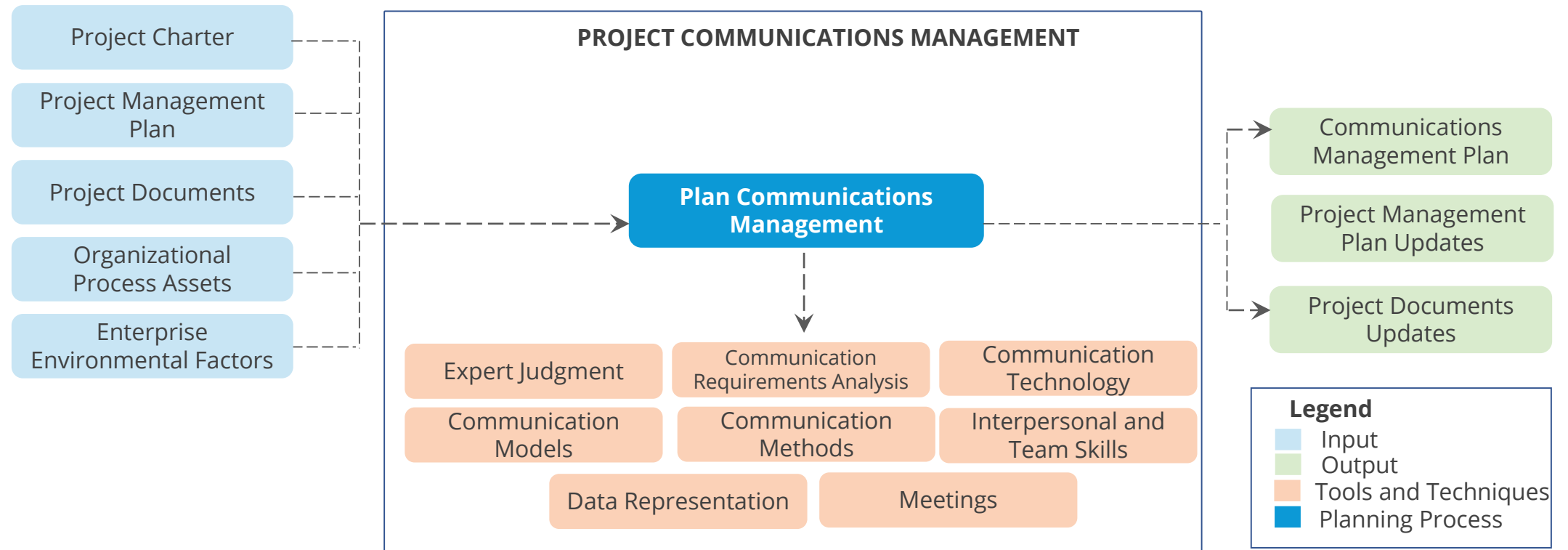


Figure 10-2. Plan Communications Management: Inputs, Tools and Techniques, and Outputs



Understand the communication management process to answer concept-based questions in exam.

Business Scenario: Problem Statement



- Communication is 90% of a Project Manager's job; communicating status is a critical part of ensuring project success.
- Your company is a key supplier for a major airline company; most projects are one to three years long.
- A large, 18-month design and manufacturing project is about halfway complete when the original project manager leaves for another position, and you are asked to step in as the new project manager.
- The project includes work performed by sub-contractors, and they have some key deliverables coming up. You need to understand the status of these deliverables.
- How should you prepare yourself for the project manager role, especially as it relates to communication requirements?

Business Scenario: Solution



- The project manager should start with the full project management plan. This document serves as a guide for the team and all stakeholders by setting expectations of what the team plans to do to execute the defined tasks to support the scope of work.
- PMP also includes the three baselines; the project manager can use them as a guide to measure the current status of the project.
- As it specifically relates to communication, the communication plan would provide details on what needs to be distributed, and why, how, when, and to whom it would be disseminated. It would also specify the roles and responsibilities for communication.

Manage Communications

“Manage Communications is the process of ensuring timely and appropriate collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, monitoring, and the ultimate disposition of project information.” It belongs to the Executing Process Group.

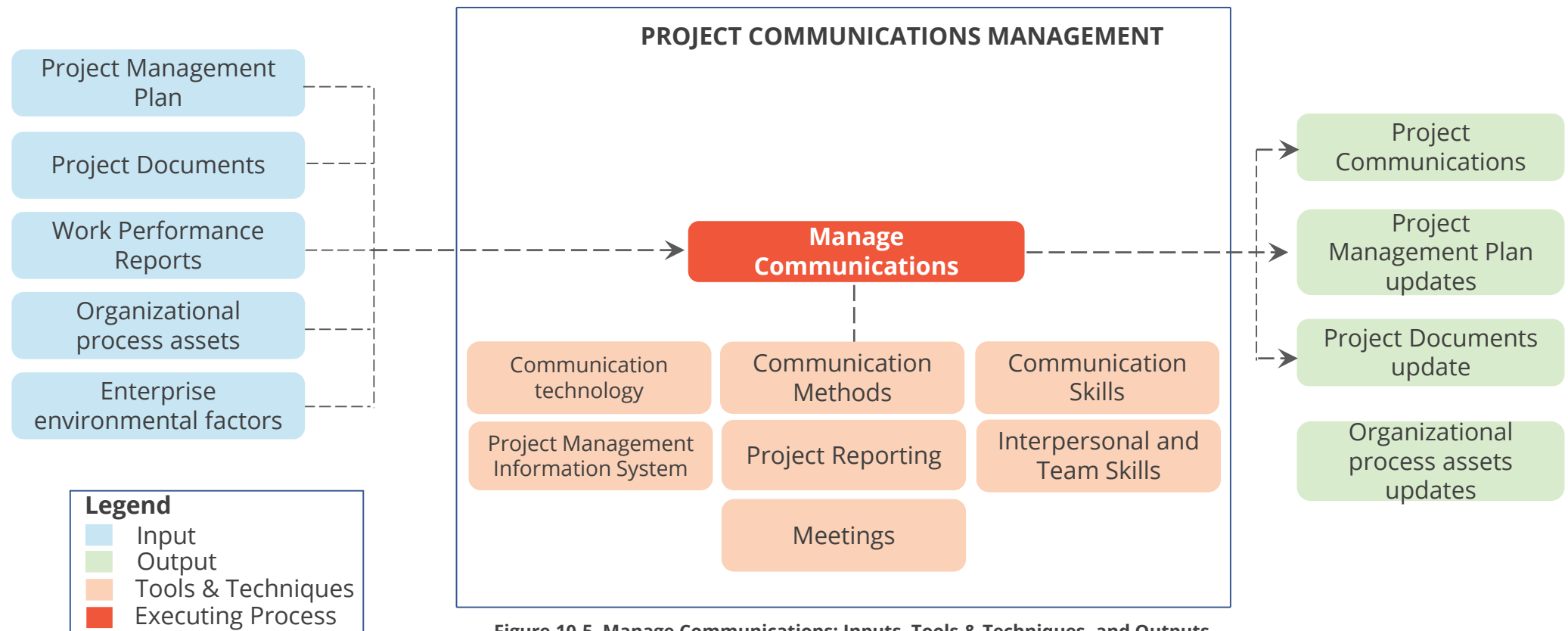


Figure 10-5. Manage Communications: Inputs, Tools & Techniques, and Outputs

Monitor Communications

“Monitor Communications is the process of ensuring the information needs of the project and its stakeholders are met.” It is part of the Monitoring and Controlling Process Group.

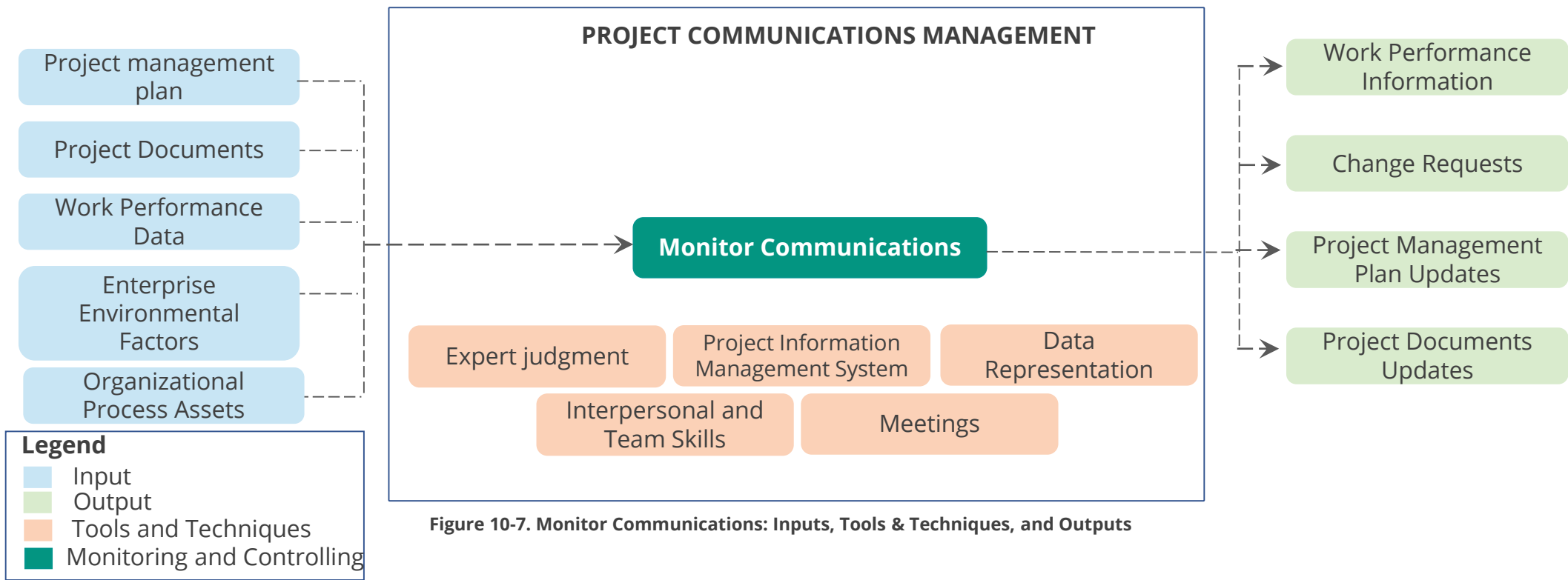


Figure 10-7. Monitor Communications: Inputs, Tools & Techniques, and Outputs

Business Scenario: Problem Statement



- Regina is managing a four-year international project and she is a year and a half into the project.
- Her project team includes team members from three different countries. Because of the distance between team members, many of them have never worked together on a project before. Therefore, Regina has to work hard to map out suitable communication methods in her plan to reach everyone.
- As the team nears the halfway mark on the project, Regina notices an influx in her issue log and a decrease in her team's productivity and engagement during project team meetings.
- What are some things Regina can do to motivate her team?

Business Scenario: Solution



- The issue log can be used to communicate issues on the project, like areas of confusion, disagreement, concern, etc. Therefore, Regina will be able to take the information and analyze the causes of the problems. She will be able to determine the root causes and the corrective actions needed to resolve the issue.
- In her investigation, she should link the areas of confusion to her lack of consideration of noise factors that prevented clear communication during web meetings and her lack of attention to cultural differences.
- Regina should also incorporate cultural awareness activities in her meetings going forward to increase respect for one another, minimize future communication barriers, and increase the team's cohesiveness.



Key Takeaways

- ▷ Communication is a two-way process of transferring information from one entity to another.
- ▷ The four commonly used communication methods are formal written, formal oral, informal written, and informal oral.
- ▷ The total number of unique channels of communication can be calculated using the formula $n * (n - 1)/2$.
- ▷ By analyzing the basic communication model, problems in project communication can be identified.
- ▷ Project manager is responsible for timely availability of information to all the stakeholders.
- ▷ The three Project Communications Management processes are Plan Communications Management, Manage Communications, and Monitor Communications.

Additional Reading

(Refer to the exercises provided in the PMP Classroom Exercises)



- Exercise 18



Quiz

Quiz



1. **As a project manager, you have a problem with a team member's performance. Which is the best way of communicating this problem to the team member?**

- A ► Informal oral
- B ► Formal oral
- C ► Formal written
- D ► Informal written

Quiz



1. **As a project manager, you have a problem with a team member's performance. Which is the best way of communicating this problem to the team member?**

- A** ▶ Informal oral
- B** ▶ Formal oral
- C** ▶ Formal written
- D** ▶ Informal written



The correct answer is: **A**

Informal oral communication is a good option. If this does not solve the problem, it should be followed up with formal written communication.

Quiz



2.

You are managing a project with project teams in different geographical locations. There are approximately 25 team members plus a team lead at 3 different locations. Additionally, there are 3 members from a supporting group that are working part-time on the project. How many communication channels are possible in your project?

- A 496
- B 992
- C 424
- D 32

Quiz



2.

You are managing a project with project teams in different geographical locations. There are approximately 25 team members plus a team lead at 3 different locations. Additionally, there are 3 members from a supporting group that are working part-time on the project. How many communication channels are possible in your project?

- A 496
- B 992
- C 424
- D 32



The correct answer is: **A**

This is directly based on the formula $n*(n-1)/2$. If n is the number of stakeholders in the project, the total possible communication channels = $n*(n-1)/2$. The project has 25 team members, 3 team leads, 3 support team members, and the project manager. That makes 32 people and 496 possible communication channels. Refer to *PMBOK® Guide – Sixth Edition Project Communications Management, Communication Channels, Glossary*.

Quiz



3. You have a project team spread across 5 different countries. As a project manager, what is the best communication method that you should follow for communicating important project announcements?

- A Informal written
- B Informal oral
- C Formal written
- D Formal oral

Quiz



3. You have a project team spread across 5 different countries. As a project manager, what is the best communication method that you should follow for communicating important project announcements?

- A Informal written
- B Informal oral
- C Formal written
- D Formal oral



The correct answer is: **C**

Communication is a big issue if team members are geographically distributed, and it is always a good practice to use formal written communication in such cases.

Quiz



4.

Project information may be distributed using a variety of methods, including hard copy document distribution, shared access to networked electronic databases, fax, electronic mail, voice mail, video conferencing, and electronic tools. These are known as _____.

- A** ▶ Project controls
- B** ▶ Project reporting system
- C** ▶ Project distribution system
- D** ▶ Project Management Information System

Quiz



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- A** ▶ Project controls
- B** ▶ Project reporting system
- C** ▶ Project distribution system
- D** ▶ Project Management Information System



The correct answer is: **D**

All the methods mentioned are commonly known as Project Management Information System.

Quiz



5.

As part of a joint venture, a project manager working with another company needs to share some confidential information related to intellectual property rights. He wants to know the person responsible for authorizing the release of confidential information. Which project document should he refer?

- A** ▶ Organizational Breakdown Structure
- B** ▶ Project Charter
- C** ▶ Communication Management Plan
- D** ▶ Stakeholder Management Plan

Quiz



5.

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- A** ▶ Organizational Breakdown Structure
- B** ▶ Project Charter
- C** ▶ Communication Management Plan
- D** ▶ Stakeholder Management Plan



The correct answer is: **C**

A communication management plan will capture the details of the person responsible for authorizing the release of the confidential information on the project.

Quiz



6.

A project manager of an information technology project is discussing a complex algorithm with a new team member. After a long and thorough oral discussion, the project manager asks the person if he has understood the algorithm and can put it in the document. The team member implies that he has understood. However, when the project manager goes through the document, he realizes that the member hasn't understood what was actually said, thus resulting in an inefficient use of time and effort. Who is responsible for this loss of time, and how could this be avoided?





- A ▶ Project manager; he should not have given the complex assignment to a new team member.
- B ▶ Team Member; he should have not implied that he had understood but should have cleared his doubts immediately.
- C ▶ Project Manager; he should have helped the team member in preparing and reviewing the document.
- D ▶ Project manager; it is his responsibility to ensure that his message is clear and concise and confirm that the team member truly understands the message.

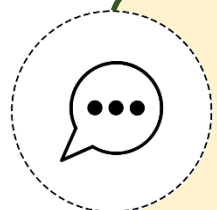
Quiz



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-  B Team Member; he should have not implied that he had understood but should have cleared his doubts immediately.
-  C Project Manager; he should have helped the team member in preparing and reviewing the document.
-  D Project manager; it is his responsibility to ensure that his message is clear and concise and confirm that the team member truly understands the message.



The correct answer is: **D**

In the communication model, it is the sender's responsibility to make the message clear, complete, and concise so that the recipient can receive it. The sender must also confirm that the recipient truly understands the message. Therefore, the responsibility lies with the project manager.

Quiz



7.

Xavier is a project manager of a large learning management system implementation. He recently held a meeting with the project's key stakeholders. One of the Senior Directors from Sales complained that there were never any status updates for the project. Xavier has spent considerable time on weekly project status reports to ensure they were accurate and well formatted. He has printed hard copies of the reports and placed them on stakeholders' desks. What should Xavier do?



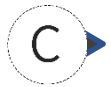

- ☐ A Immediately send an email to all stakeholders explaining the status report process and include copies of all status reports.
- ☐ B Follow-up with the Senior Director and confirm whether a printed status reports best meets his communication needs. Update the Communication Plan if there are any changes.
- ☐ C Transition to an email distribution of the status reports.
- ☐ D At this point, Xavier does not need to do anything,. Not all stakeholders will be fully engaged in the project, and it is not his job to ensure that they read the status reports.

Quiz



7.

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-  **A** Immediately send an email to all stakeholders explaining the status report process and include copies of all status reports.
-  **B** Follow-up with the Senior Director and confirm whether a printed status reports best meets his communication needs. Update the Communication Plan if there are any changes.
-  **C** Transition to an email distribution of the status reports.
-  **D** At this point, Xavier does not need to do anything,. Not all stakeholders will be fully engaged in the project, and it is not his job to ensure that they read the status reports



The correct answer is: **B**

Checking with the Director on his preferred communication channel is an important component of the Communication Management Plan. As a Sales Director, it is possible that the stakeholder might not be in the office consistently to benefit from hard copies of the reports. Any changes should be updated in the Communication Management Plan.

Quiz



8. Sally spends part of each Friday afternoon informally connecting with all project team members to ensure that they are aware of the priorities and status of the project. What process is Sally performing?

- A Monitor Communications
- B Plan Communications Management
- C Team management
- D Quality Control

Quiz



8. Sally spends part of each Friday afternoon informally connecting with all project team members to ensure that they are aware of the priorities and status of the project. What process is Sally performing?

- A ▶ Monitor Communications
- B ▶ Plan Communications Management
- C ▶ Team management
- D ▶ Quality Control



The correct answer is: **A**

Sally is monitoring the effect of her communications using interpersonal and team skills.

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This concludes
"Project
Communications
Management."



The next lesson is
"Project Risk Management."

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