

Project Management IT124P

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Module 2.4 Project Communication Management



What is project communication management

- The processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and ultimate disposition of project information



Importance of Good Communications



shows the trouble often caused by a lack of communication



Seem to take control of working conditions

- The greatest threat to many projects is a failure to communicate.
- 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.



Why Do We Manage Communications?

- Project Managers spend most of their time communicating
- Communication is complex; requiring choices between:
 - Sender-Receiver models
 - Choice of media
 - Writing style
 - Presentation techniques
 - Meeting management



Importance of Project Communication Management

- ❑ Failure to communication is often the greatest threat to the success of any projects.
- ❑ Communication is the oil that keeps a project running smoothly.
- ❑ Project communications management involves planning communications management, managing communications, and controlling communications.
- ❑ The goal of project communications management is to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage, and disposition of project information.

Importance of Project Communication Management

According to an article in the International Journal of Business and Social Science:

- ❑ Organizations are looking for workers with the correct mix of technical, soft, and business skills.
- ❑ The most important non-technical skills are problem solving, team work, listening, the ability to adapt to new technologies and languages, time management, the ability to transfer knowledge to application, multitasking, verbal communication, the ability to visualize and conceptualize, “be the customer” mentality, interpersonal skills, understanding business culture, inter-team communication, and give and receive constructive criticism.
- ❑ “The need for these non-technical skills is so great that some IT companies indicate that they will hire individuals with minimum technical skills so long as they demonstrate solid soft and business skills.”*

Project Communications Management Processes



1. Communications planning
2. Information distribution
3. Performance reporting
4. Managing stakeholders



1. Communication Planning

Determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders.

- This process should include
 - Communications Management Plan
 - a document that guides project communications.
 - Stakeholder Analyze 
 - This also aid in communication planning.
 - analyze communication needs of the stake holders, who needs what information, when they will need it, how it will be given to them, and by whom.
 - Suggested methods or technologies for conveying the information.

Output - Communications Management Plan



2. Information distribution

Making needed information available to project stakeholders in a timely manner.



- Include all important information.
- Don't be afraid to report bad information.
- Use technology to enhance information distribution.
- Use formal and informal methods for distribute information.



2.1 Encouraging More Face-to-Face Interactions

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

2.2 Information Distribution Media

- Meeting
- Hard Copy
- Telephone Call
- Voicemail
- E-Mail
- Website



2.3 Suggestions for Improving Project Communications

- Manage conflicts effectively.
- Develop better communication skills.
- Run effective meetings.
- Use e-mail effectively.
- Use templates for project communications.



3. Performance Reporting

Collecting and disseminating performance information, including status reports, progress measurement, and forecasting.



Examples for performance reporting tools

- Oracle Fusion Project Performance Reporting
- Microsoft Project



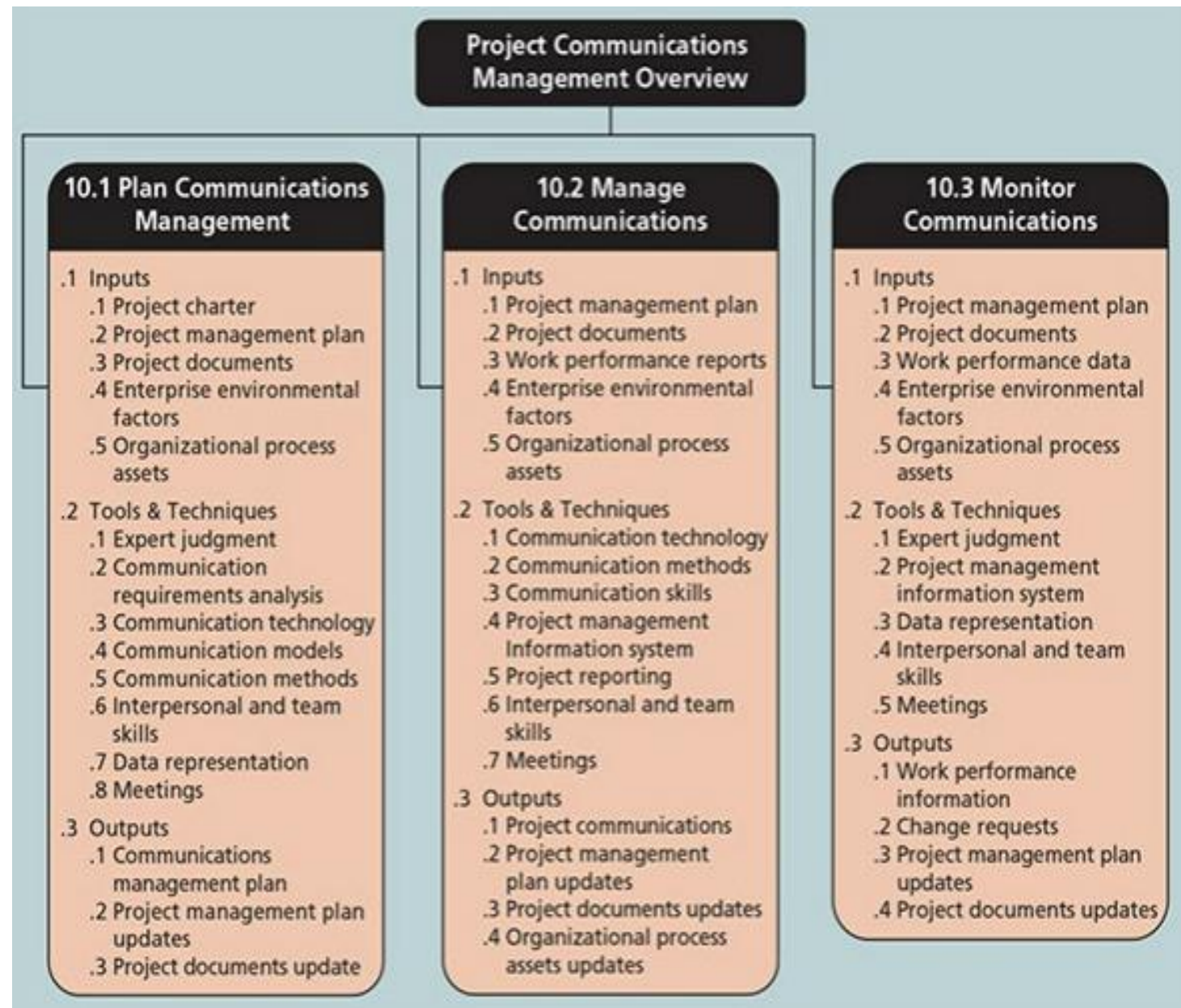
4. Managing Stakeholders

Managing communications to satisfy the needs and expectations of project stakeholders and to resolve issues.

- Project manager and project team members should work with different kinds of stakeholders.
- Good stakeholder management helps to improve efficiency of project management and organizational growth.
- Project successes impact on stakeholders.



Project Communication Management Overview



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Project Communication Management Processes

1. **Planning communications management** involves determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders. Who needs what information? When will they need it? How will the information be given to them?
2. **Managing communications** involves creating, distributing, storing, retrieving, and disposing of project communications based on the communications management plan.
3. **Monitoring communications** involves ensuring that stakeholder communication needs are met

Information Distribution

❑ *Use of technology*

- Using an internal project management information system, you can organize project documents, meeting minutes, customer requests, requests to change status, and make them available in an electronic format.

❑ *Formal and informal communications*

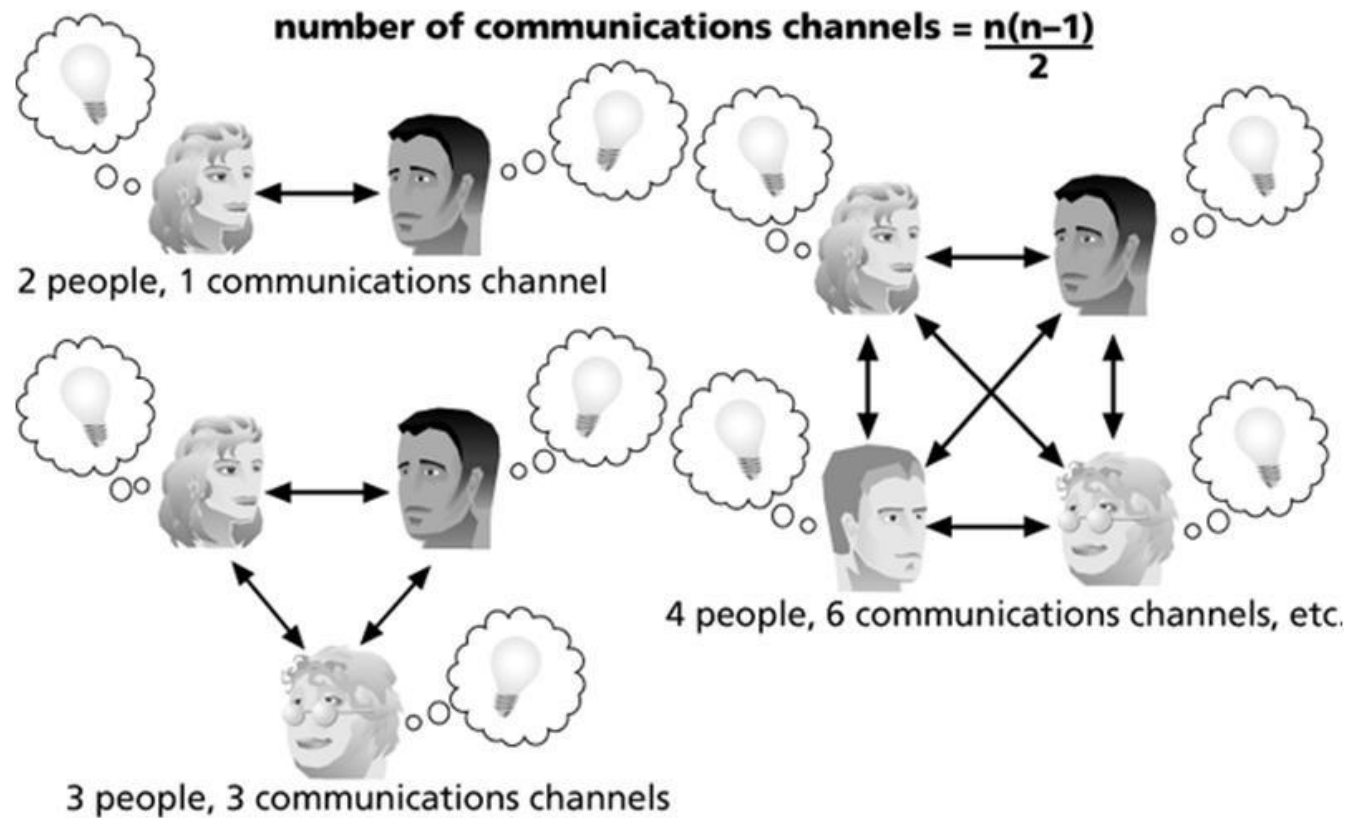
- Informal verbal communications are equally effective ways to distribute information, but technical professionals tend to neglect more informal techniques.

❑ *Complexity of communications*

- There are more communications channels as more people are involved in projects.

Information Distribution

- Impact of the number of people on communications channels



Planning Communications Management

Communications management plan

- ☐ A document that guides project communications.
- ☐ This plan varies with the needs of the project, but some type of written plan should always be prepared.
- ☐ The communications management plan should address the following items:
 1. Stakeholder communications requirements
 2. Information to be communicated, including format, content, and level of detail
 3. Who will receive the information and who will produce it
 4. Suggested methods or technologies for conveying the information
 5. Frequency of communication
 6. Escalation procedures for resolving issues
 7. Revision procedures for updating the communications management plan
 8. A glossary of common terminology

Performance Reporting

❑ *Status Reports*

- describe where the project stands at a specific point in time
- address where the project stands in terms of meeting scope, time, and cost goals
- can take various formats depending on the stakeholders' needs

❑ *Progress Reports*

- describe what the project team has accomplished during a certain period of time

❑ *Project Forecasting*

- predicts future project status and progress based on past information and trends



Sample Stakeholder Communication Analysis

Stakeholders	Document Name	Document Format	Contact Person	Due
Customer management	Monthly status report	Hard copy and meeting	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 and meeting	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	November 1
Software subcontractor	Software implementation plan	E-mail	Najwa Gates	June 1

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

Performance Reporting

❑ *Status Review Meeting*

- good way to highlight information provided in important project documents, empower people to be accountable for their work, and have face-to-face discussions about important project issues
- used by many program and project managers to exchange important project information and motivate people to make progress on their parts of the project
- sometimes become battlegrounds where conflicts between different parties come to a head

| Managing Stakeholders

- ❑ Project managers must understand and work with various stakeholders.
 - Need to devise a way to identify and resolve issues.

- ❑ Two important tools include:
 - Expectations management matrix
 - Issue log

Managing Stakeholders

Expectations Management Matrix

MEASURE OF SUCCESS	PRIORITY	EXPECTATIONS	GUIDELINES
Scope	2	The scope statement clearly defines mandatory requirements and optional requirements.	Focus on meeting mandatory requirements before considering optional ones.
Time	1	There is no give in the project completion date. Every major deadline must be met, and the schedule is very realistic.	The project sponsor and program manager must be alerted if there are any issues that might affect meeting schedule goals.
Cost	3	This project is crucial to the organization. If you can clearly justify the need for more funds, they can be made available.	There are strict rules for project expenditures and escalation procedures. Cost is very important, but it takes a back seat to meeting schedule and then scope goals.
Etc.			

Using Communication Skills to Manage Conflict

Blake and Mouton (1964) delineated five basic modes for handling conflicts:

1. **Confrontation** - project managers directly face a conflict using a problem-solving approach that allows affected parties to work through their disagreement
2. **Compromise** - project managers use a give-and-take approach to resolving conflicts
3. **Smoothing** - project manager de-emphasizes or avoids areas of differences and emphasizes areas of agreement
4. **Forcing** - project managers exert their viewpoint at the potential expense of another viewpoint
5. **Withdrawal** - project managers retreat or withdraw from an actual or potential disagreement

Running Effective Meeting

Guidelines to help improve time spent in meeting:

- ☐ Determine if a meeting can be avoided
- ☐ Define the purpose and intended outcome of the meeting
- ☐ Determine who should attend the meeting
- ☐ Provide an agenda to participants before the meeting
- ☐ Prepare handouts, visual aids, and make logistical arrangements ahead of time
- ☐ Run the meeting professionally
- ☐ Build relationships

Effective Communication Strategies for Project Managers

- **Active Listening:** Pay close attention to what stakeholders are saying and ask clarifying questions.
- **Transparency and Open Communication:** Be upfront and honest about project challenges and roadblocks.
- **Tailored Communication:** Adapt your communication style to each stakeholder's preferences and information needs.
- **Empathy and Respect:** Be mindful of different communication styles and maintain a professional and respectful tone.
- **Embrace Technology:** Leverage project management software, collaboration tools, and communication platforms to streamline communication.

Communication Infrastructure

- ❑ set of tools, techniques, and principles that provides a foundation for the effective transfer of information among people
- ❑ tools include e-mail, project management software, groupware, fax machines, telephones, teleconferencing systems, document management systems, and word processors
- ❑ techniques include reporting guidelines and templates, meeting ground rules and procedures, decision-making processes, problem-solving approaches, conflict resolution and negotiation techniques
- ❑ principles include providing an environment for open dialogue using “straight talk” and following an agreed upon work ethic