

# Project Communications Management

**Project Skills**

Team FME

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## Preface

The project manager will spend at least half of their working day communicating with project team members and other stakeholders. Communication skills are every bit as important as planning skills and the other technical skills of project management.

You will learn:

- Why effective communication is vital to project success
- The principles of good project communication
- How to develop a communications plan
- Where communications problems usually occur and how to pre-empt them

The Free Management eBooks 'Project Skills' series are structured around the ten key knowledge areas of project management detailed in the 'Project Management Institute, A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, (PMBOK® Guide)—Fifth Edition, Project Management Institute Inc., 2013'. ISBN-13: 978-1935589679.

The eBooks in this series follow the structure of the PMBOK® Guide because it represents a tried and tested framework. We have tried to ensure full alignment of our eBooks with the Guide by using the numbering convention as well as the naming convention.

If you need more detailed explanation of a particular subject then you can simply refer to the related chapter and paragraph number in the PMBOK® Guide. Remember, many of the generic project management methodologies available refer to the PMBOK® Guide as a basic framework.

A knowledge of the PMBOK® processes will go a long way towards giving you an understanding of almost any project management methodology that your organization may use.

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## About this Knowledge Area

Communications form an essential part of any project and unlike technical areas, for example estimating and risk assessment; communication is something that the project manager has to take direct personal responsibility for. The lack of a communication plan is often the biggest single mistake the project manager can make because completing a complex project successfully requires teamwork, and teamwork requires good communication.

The importance of communications between the project manager and the stakeholders cannot be overstated. The level, content and frequency of such communications form the bedrock of a projects success.

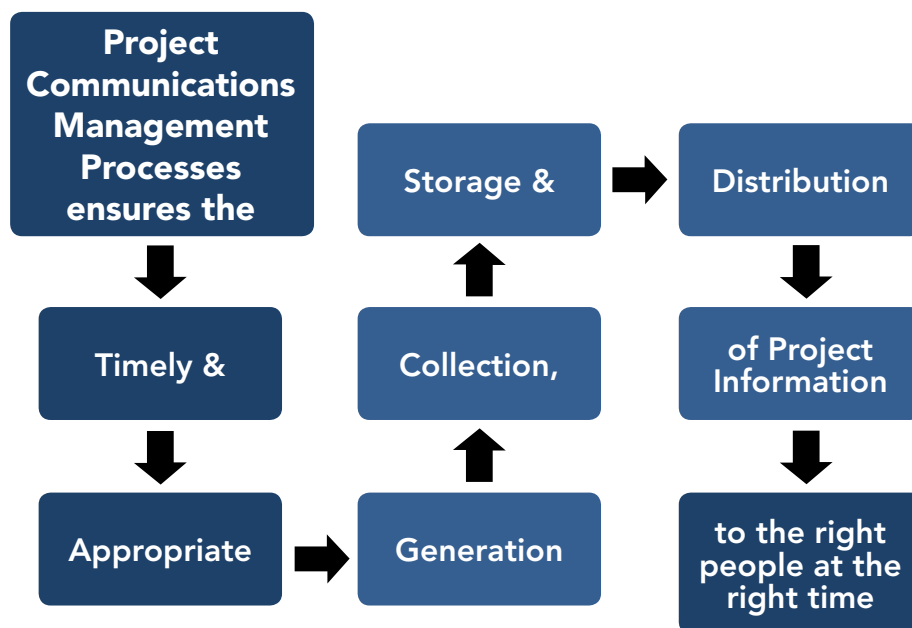
The Project Communications Management processes ensure information is exchanged in an appropriate and timely fashion. They include the following:

Process	Process Group	Key Deliverables
10.1 Plan Communications Management	<b>Planning</b>	Communication Management Plan
10.2 Manage Communications	<b>Executing</b>	Project Communications, Plan Updates, Documentation Updates
10.3 Control Communications	<b>Monitoring &amp; Controlling</b>	Work Performance Information, Change Requests

These processes interact with each other and with other processes and although the PMBOK® treats them as being discrete, there will always be a significant amount of interaction between them.

## Introduction

A project manager's job consists of making decisions and then communicating these to the appropriate stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner. In order to make these decisions the project manager is dependent on the effective flow of information from and between the stakeholders.



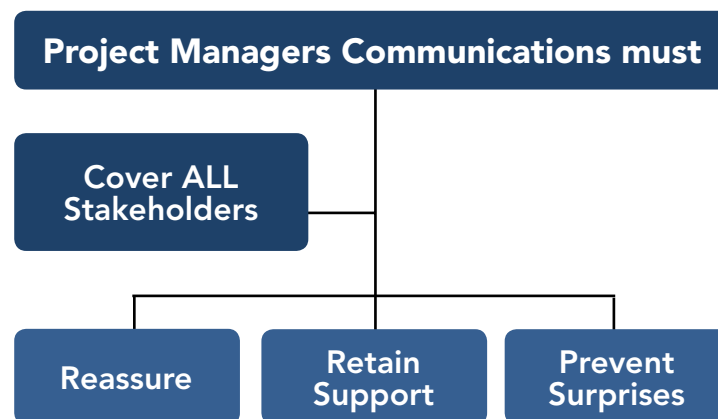
Project Communications Management includes the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, storage and distribution of project information. The aim is to create a communication infrastructure so that everyone involved has access to the right information at the right time.

Communication is usually thought of as a general management skill rather than one that is specific to project management. Whilst this is true, there are some features of projects that can cause communication problems and make a communication management plan both desirable and necessary.

Projects can create a huge volume of data that needs to be collected, collated and analyzed. Communications management can help the project manager get these tasks under control.

All stakeholders, even those only involved only at the periphery of the project, need to be kept informed of the project aims, its progress and any changes that may affect them. In addition to merely informing them, the project manager should actively manage the way that this information is disseminated in a way that reassures people and keeps them onside.

### The PMBOK® Project Communications Management Processes



If this is not done in a systematic way, stakeholders may see or hear something regarding the project and draw their own erroneous conclusions about how it will negatively affect them. This can result in political problems that could have been averted if the project manager had kept everyone informed and reassured.

Good communications keep the project team motivated and add to the project managers credibility and reputation for professionalism.

There are three Project Communications Management processes:

- 10.1 Plan Communications Management
- 10.2 Manage Communications
- 10.3 Control Communications

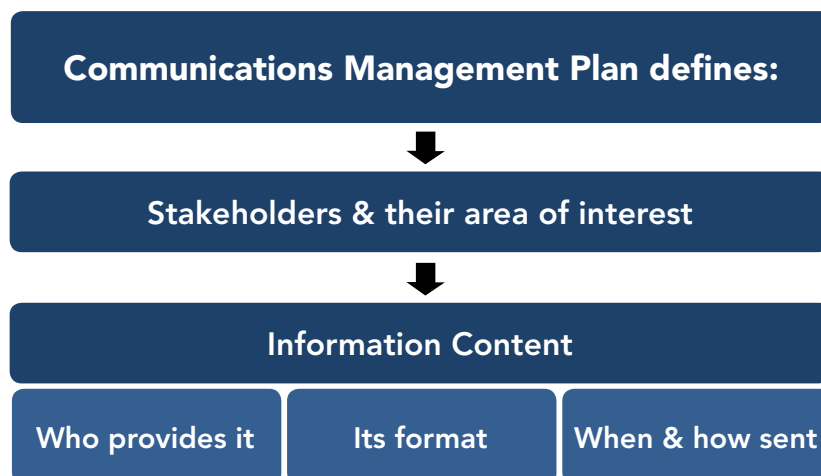
These are dealt with in detail in the following chapters of this eBook.



## 10.1 Plan Communications Management

This is the process of determining the project stakeholder information needs and defining a communication approach. The main output is the communications management plan, which answers the questions:

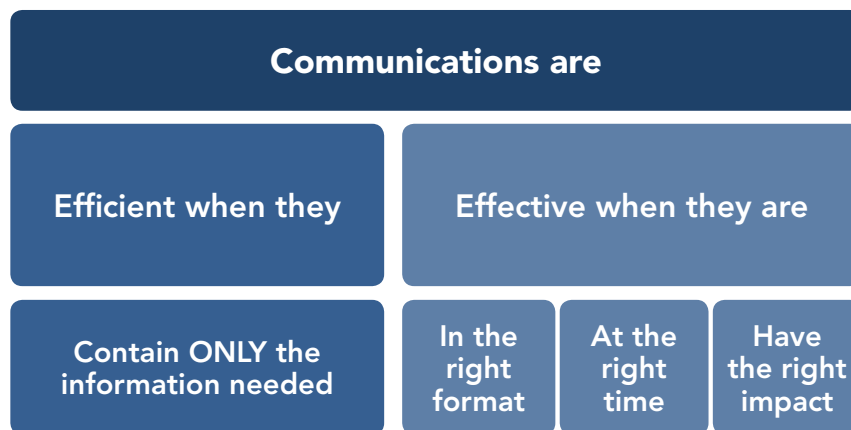
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are their interest areas?
- What information is of value to them?
- Who will provide it?
- How often will it be distributed and updated?
- What format will it take?



While all projects share the need to communicate project information, the informational needs and methods of distribution vary widely. Identifying the information needs of the stakeholders and determining a suitable means of meeting those needs are important factors for project success.

A poor communications plan will lead to serious problems because required information will be delivered late, people will be sent information that is not relevant to their needs and sensitive information may be sent to people who should not receive it.

Remember, effective communication means that the information is provided in the right format, at the right time, and with the right impact. Efficient communication means providing only the information that is needed.



Depending upon the complexity and importance of the project, communication management may be done formally or informally. This process is performed early in the project and it is revised and refined as the project progresses.

Inputs	Tools & Techniques	Outputs
Project Management Plan	Communication Requirements Analysis	Communications Management Plan
Stakeholder Register	Communication Technology	Project Documents Updates
Enterprise Environmental Factors	Communication Models	
Organizational Process Assets	Communication Methods	
	Meetings	

The inputs, tools and techniques, and outputs of this process are summarized in the table above.

### 10.1.1 Plan Communications Management: Inputs

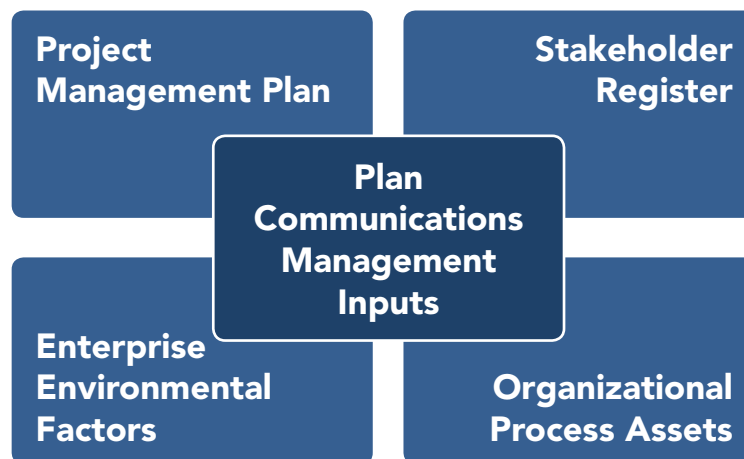
This process requires the following inputs:

#### 10.1.1.1 Project Management Plan

This plan provides information on how the project will be executed, monitored, controlled, and closed.

#### 10.1.1.2 Stakeholder Register

This was created in process '13.1 Identify Stakeholders' and is a list of all relevant stakeholders and their interest areas.



#### 10.1.1.3 Enterprise Environmental Factors

All enterprise environmental factors are used as inputs for this process since communication must be adapted to the project environment.

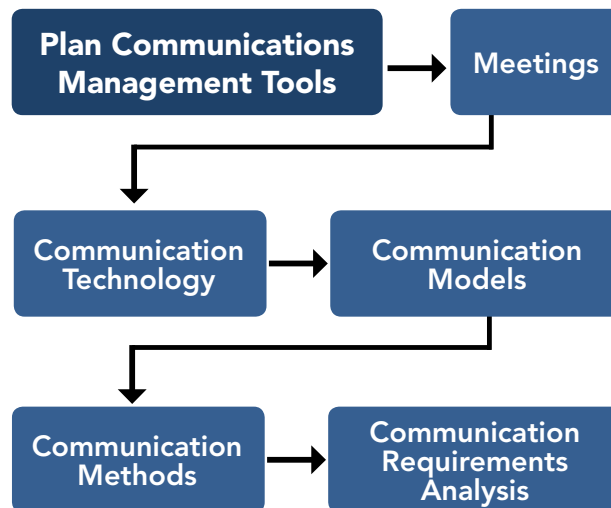
#### 10.1.1.4 Organizational Process Assets

These include communication lessons learned from previous projects and any policy procedures or guidelines that must be adhered to. Both of these provide insights on both the decisions taken regarding communications issues and the results of those decisions in previous similar projects.

There may also be information on the structure of internal or external groups, departments or organizations that can be helpful in creating the communications management plan.

### 10.1.2 Plan Communications Management: Tools and Techniques

There are five tools and techniques that can be used.



#### 10.1.2.1 Communication Requirements Analysis

This analysis involves deciding who should be informed of what and how important it is that they receive that information. Projects generate a great deal of data and a key component of planning the project's actual communications requirements is to limit both the quantity of information being circulated and the communication paths that are used.

There are broadly speaking, two parts to this.

1. Is what could be described as the high-level or strategic considerations' (This would include communications between the project manager, sponsor, senior management, the media and other influential stakeholders).
2. Concerns the more low-level and practical communications between project teams and team members.

Without explicit instructions to the contrary, most people will tend to over-communicate. This tendency is quite understandable no one wants to hear the words from other members of the project team:

*'But you didn't tell us'*

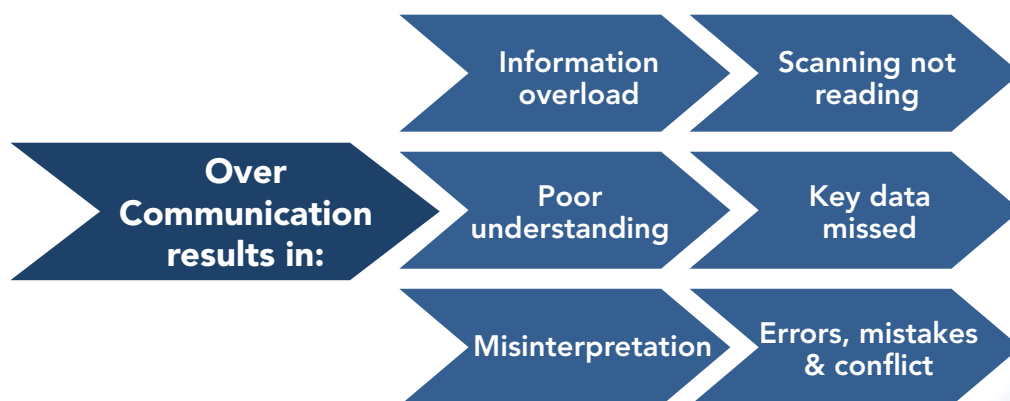
*'We didn't know about that'*

Consequently, people usually act to protect themselves from these accusations by sending what they believe is important information to everyone they feel might possibly have an interest in it.



This has become more of a problem than ever with the universal adoption of email where it is actually less effort to send a message to everyone rather than to take the time to decide who really needs to know about the matter.

This over-communication issue becomes more of a problem the bigger the project. On large projects, people having to read emails and then decide whether or not the information contained is pertinent to them can waste a great deal of time. To make matters worse, any significant information is often not read or understood properly because team members are snowed under with largely irrelevant emails.



In practical terms, the time spent by the project manager to address this problem will usually more than pay for itself in time saved by project team members in their day-to-day work.

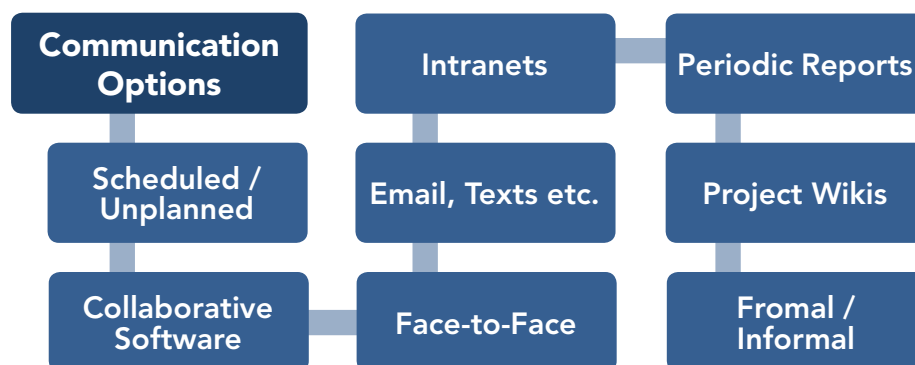
The information typically used to determine project communication requirements includes:

- Organization charts
- Stakeholder Register:
  - Responsibility relationships
  - Logistical considerations &
  - Stakeholder information
- Stakeholder management strategy.

### 10.1.2.2 Communication Technology

There are many ways to communicate, including unscheduled and informal face-to-face meetings, periodic reports, project wikis, collaborative software and email. When deciding on the appropriate technology for each type of communication the project manager should ask himself or herself...

- How time-sensitive is the information?
- Does communication need to be interactive?
- Should the information be 'pushed' or 'pulled'?
- What technology is actually available?
- What technologies are the stakeholders familiar with?
- How much expenditure can be justified?
- Does the environment 'force' certain decisions?



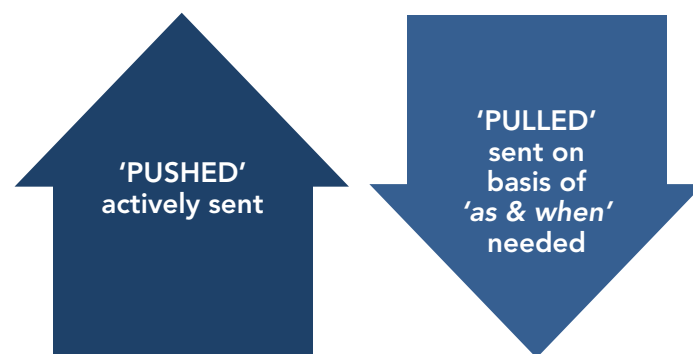
If information is time-sensitive or frequently updated then you will need to make a decision about whether it needs to be available immediately, or would regularly issued reports suffice?

If the information invites discussion for example then this is best done interactively in a meeting, phone call, or a videoconference. The alternative is usually a seemingly endless round of emails that can be both time consuming and frustrating particularly when there are more than two parties involved.

When communicating you need to consider if the information should be:

- 'Pushed'—actively sent (via email for example) or
- 'Pulled'—sent in a way that lets the interested access it as and when needed (for example, post it on a blog or project wiki)

You also need to take into account what technology is available and to know if the relevant stakeholder(s) have access to it. There may be differences in the types of technology that are used internally by the project team and that used by other stakeholders. This extends to the compatibility of the experience and expertise of the stakeholders compared to the project team.

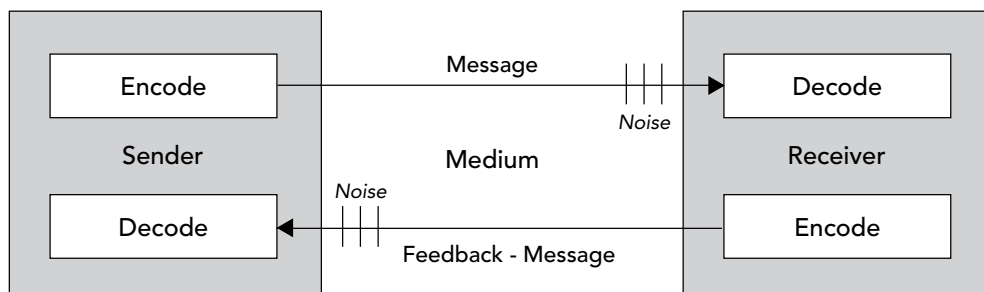


In some instances the project manager would need to decide if training is needed and then assess if there is sufficient time and money to conduct it. This will depend on the project complexity and duration. Spending money on improving the communications infrastructure may well be justified in the case of a long and complex project, particularly if it can be used on subsequent projects.

Finally, the nature of the project environment may 'force' certain decisions. It may operate on a face-to-face basis or in a virtual environment. This will have a significant influence on the communications technology that should be chosen. The project manager may find that they have to adopt more comprehensive technology in a virtual project, for example a teleconferencing system.

### 10.1.2.3 Communication Models

The PMBOK® briefly describes a basic communication model as follows:



*Communication—Basic Model (PMBOK® Fifth Edition)*

This model demonstrates how information is sent and received between two parties, defined as the sender and the receiver. It has implications for project communications in that the sender is responsible for making the information clear and complete so that the receiver can receive it correctly, and for confirming that it is properly understood.

People often communicate with little or no thought for the existing knowledge of their audience. For example, they use jargon that the audience/receiver is not familiar with or make assumptions about the level of expertise they have. Encoding the message for the audience/receiver could be as simple as defining the letters of an acronym and providing a few words of explanation. This is illustrated below.



**Message without encoding**

*SR cannot supply DBAs with DB2 experience, recommend using SK for this. Please email your response ASAP. Thank you.*

**Message after encoding**

*Our freelance staff agency Systems Resources (SR) cannot supply Database Administrators (DBA's) with the database experience (IBM DB2) that we need for this project. I recommend we use Software Knowledge (SK). Please email your response ASAP. Thank you.*

This example clearly shows that the original message is incomprehensible to anyone without knowledge of the language, roles and practices of a particular IT department. In its original form, it may only be understood by a handful of people. However, once it has been encoded any person involved in this project would be able to understand it.

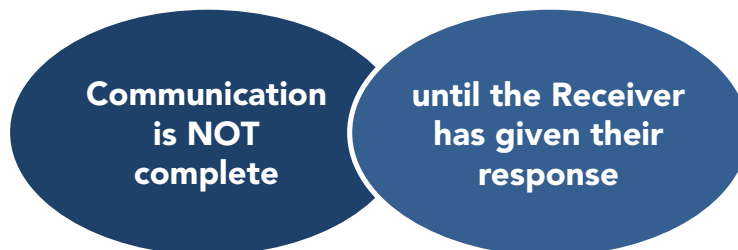
The next stage of this basic communication model is to send the encoded message to the recipient. This person then has the job of decoding the message in a way they can relate to. It is at this stage that messages may be changed, filtered, misinterpreted or edited so that it meets the receiver's own reconceived framework.

From this example it is easy to see that the non-encoded message is open to great number of interpretations depending on the knowledge and experience of the receiver. But once the message is encoded its content and meaning are straightforward giving a clear explanation of the situation the project needs resolving.

This basic communication model also contains the concepts of:

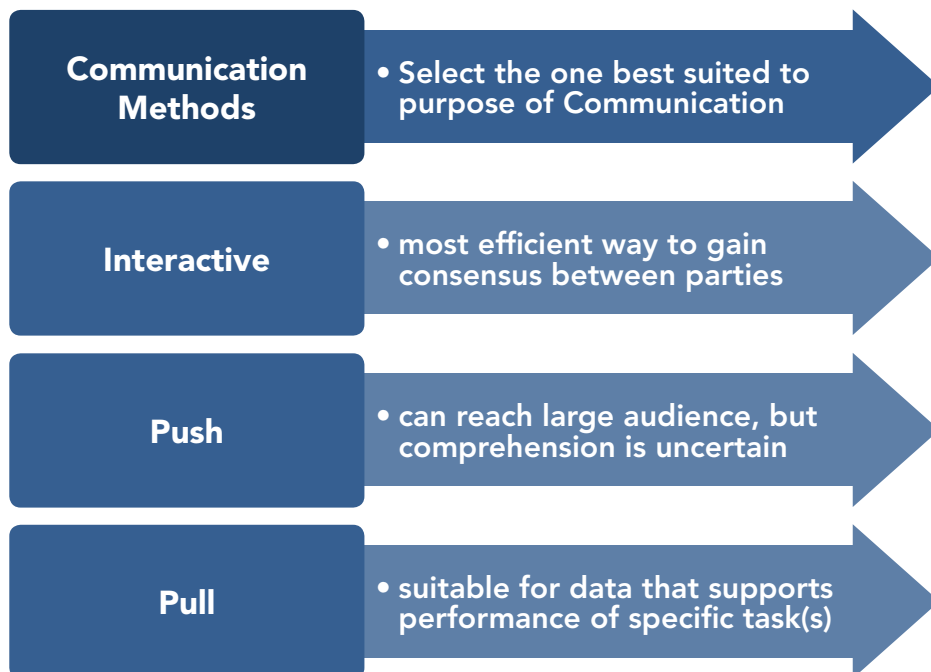
- Noise is anything that interferes with the transmission and understanding of the message (for example, unfamiliar technology or lack of background information).
- Decoding, that is the work required to translate the message back into meaningful thoughts or ideas.

The reason for encoding is simply to eliminate noise from the message and to make the process of decoding it as straightforward as possible for the receiver.



It also illustrates that communication cannot be considered complete until the receiver has fed their response back to the sender. Note that the encoded message makes this clear by specifically asking for a response. The original sender can then decide whether the message has been understood in the way that they expected. If it has not, they can do something about it before it becomes a problem.

### 10.1.2.4 Communication Methods



These methods can be broadly classified into 'interactive', 'push and 'pull', all of which were alluded to in the discussion of communication technology above.

- *Interactive communication* includes meetings, phone calls and videoconferencing. This is the most efficient way reach a consensus between different parties.
- *Push communication* includes emails, memos, reports, voice mails and press releases sent to stakeholders who need to know the information. This ensures that the information is distributed but does not certify that it actually reached or was understood by the intended audience.
- *Pull communication* includes blogs, wikis and other software that supports collaborative working. It can be used for things like technical standards or support where people need to be able to access sub-sets of the information at their own discretion.

The project manager decides, based on communication requirements, what, how, and when communication methods are to be used in the project.

### 10.1.2.5 Meetings

This process requires discussion and dialogue with the project team to determine the most appropriate way to update and communicate project information, and to respond to requests from various stakeholders for that information.

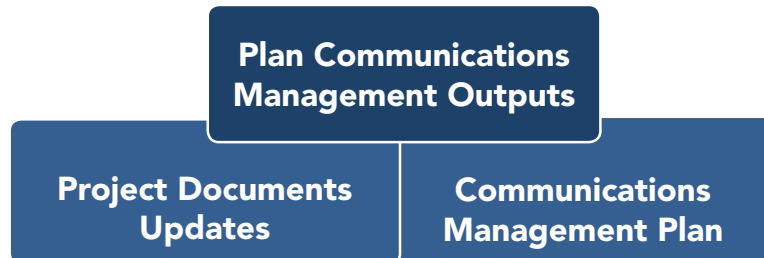
Collective decision-making is very important area of project management that the PM-BOK® does not go into any detail about but which can make or break this part of the project.

Almost all of the processes that form part of project time management will involve meetings between the project manager, the team and other stakeholders in order to make decisions about the activity definitions and associated estimates. How well these meetings are conducted will have a major impact on how smoothly the project runs.

If you want to know more about how to improve your project meetings, then visit our on-line library of resources and download free any of the eBooks, checklists and templates in the 'Meeting Skills' area from <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/skills-meeting.htm>. These free eBooks cover all aspects of meetings including how to set an agenda that will ensure that the meeting achieves it's aims and how to chair a meeting so that it is as productive as possible.

### 10.1.3 Plan Communications Management: Outputs

This process will create the following outputs:



#### 10.1.3.1 Communications Management Plan

This forms part of the project management plan, and will contain the following information:

- Information to be communicated, including language, format, content, and level of detail
- Reason for the distribution
- Time frame and frequency for the distribution
- Person responsible for it
- Person responsible for authorizing release of confidential information;
- Person or groups who will receive the information;
- Methods or technologies used to convey it
- Resources allocated for communication activities
- Glossary of common terminology

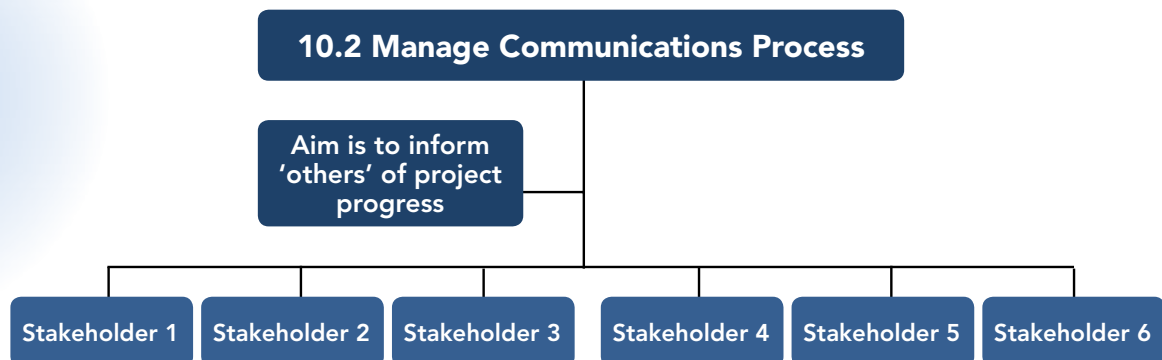
In addition, a process for identifying issues that cannot be resolved at a lower staff level will need to be worked out so that issues can be escalated.

#### 10.1.3.2 Project Documents Updates

These include updates to the Project schedule, Stakeholder register, and Stakeholder management strategy.

## 10.2 Manage Communications

The purpose of this process is to keep the various stakeholders informed on the progress of the project.



This is done according to the communications management plan was created within the plan communications process.

The inputs, tools and techniques, and outputs of this process are summarized in the table below.

Inputs	Tools & Techniques	Outputs
Communications Management Plan	Communication Technology	Project Communications
Work Performance Reports	Communication Models	Project Management Plan Updates
Enterprise Environmental Factors	Communication Methods	Project Documents Updates
Organizational Process Assets	Information Management Systems	Organizational Process Assets Updates
	Performance Reporting	

### 10.2.1 Manage Communications: Inputs

This process requires the following inputs:



#### 10.2.1.1 Communications Management Plan

This plan, which was created in the previous process, is the main input to this process.

#### 10.2.1.2 Work Performance Reports

These reports organize and summarize the information gathered, and present the results of any analysis compared to the performance measurement baseline. A simple report might show only performance information such as the percentage complete of particular activities whilst more detailed reports could include:

- Analysis of past performance
- Current status of risks and issues
- Work completed during the reporting period
- Work to be completed during the next reporting period
- Summary of changes approved in the period
- Results of variance analysis
- Forecasted project completion (including time and cost)
- Other relevant information to be reviewed and discussed

This information should be provided at the level of detail required by various stakeholders, as documented in the communications management plan.

### 10.2.1.3 Enterprise Environmental Factors

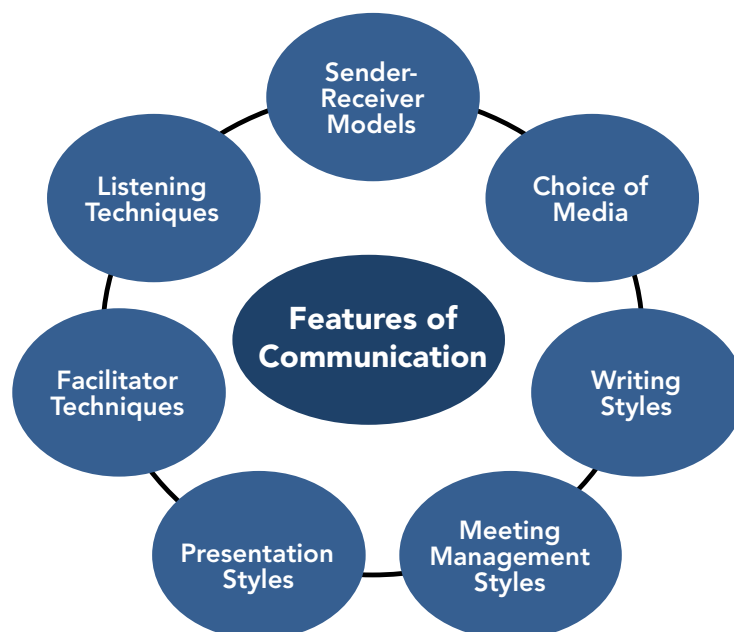
These include the organizational culture and structure, government or industry standards and regulations, and the project management information system being used.

### 10.2.1.4 Organizational Process Assets

These include reporting policies, procedures or guidelines, lessons learned from previous projects, databases containing individual stakeholders and their contact information, plus any templates that have been developed for communication purposes.

## 10.2.2 Manage Communications; Tools and Techniques

The 5th Edition of the PMBOK® Guide explains some of the general features associated with effective distribution of project communications before describing the five tools and techniques that can be used in this process.



These general features are:

- *Sender—Receiver Models*—this reminds the project manager to make sure that a response is asked for to ensure that the message has been decoded correctly and its meaning has been understood. (For greater detail on this model refer to section 10.1.2.3).

- *Choice of Media*—the media that is selected to transmit the message is heavily dependent on the nature of the information you want to exchange and how it is likely to be used. For example when:
  - Information is for instructional or structural purposes an entry on an intranet, wiki or blog may be the best media.
  - Wanting to inform others involved in the project on a particular aspect of the project the best media would be email, memo, text, report etc.
  - There is a need to discuss or debate a specific issue or problem then the most effective media would be interactive—meeting, video or web conferencing.

(For greater detail on this model refer to section 10.1.2.4).

Another key aspect you need to consider when selecting the media for your communication is how permanent does it need to be and do you need an acknowledgement it has been read and understood by the intended recipient?

The media you use attaches a level of formality to your information. You need to ensure that the method selected is given the same level of importance as you intended by its recipient. For example, emails are considered a formal way to communicate by those entering management. Whereas experienced managers see them as informal!

- *Writing Style*—this has two aspects and has a strong correlation to the nature of the information to be shared.
  - Degree of formality—Reports will be written in a formal style and format, yet emails between the project team will be informal. The nature of the communication will play a significant role in deciding the level of formality.
  - Style of writing—the project manager need to adopt the one which will best communicate the desired information in a way that gets the correct meaning across to the recipient.

Communication can be written in the passive voice (“mistakes were made”) removing direct blame or accountability. Or in the active voice (“You made a mistake”) which is more direct and includes the reader in the communication by addressing them personally.



- *Meeting Management Styles*—are influenced by the culture of the organization along with the urgency and importance of the topic for the meeting. Another significant factor in deciding the how you manage your meeting is the status of your audience and the image you want or need to portray.

The success of your meetings is largely dependent on how well you have prepared yourself, the participants and the agenda. (For more detail on these areas look at our Meeting Skills resources <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/skills-meeting.htm>.)

- Workshop—this may be your selected style when defining the work packages with the project team. The more informal management of this type of meeting and layout of the room will make it easier for new ideas and initiatives to be discussed. (To understand more about the influence of the layout of your meetings click here <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/faqcm/delivering-10.htm>.)
- Planning—by its very nature the purpose of this type of meeting means it is important and therefore a more formal management approach reflects this. The need to have an experienced chair and timed agenda proved the structure and direction needed to develop the plan.
- Decision-making—this type of meeting will be formal due to the key personnel involved whose expertise or role (project sponsor, stakeholder etc.) will play a significant part in the project's success. Planning and preparing for how to manage such meetings is critical and will ensure that you portray a professional image.

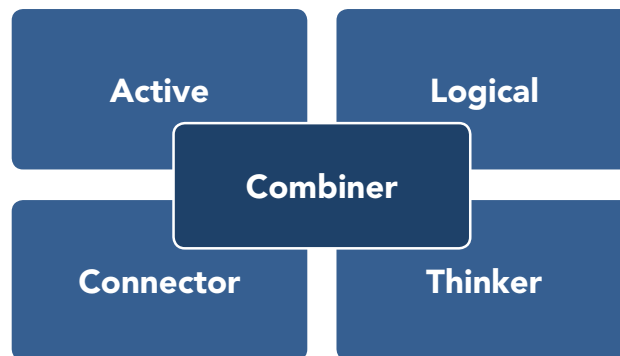


- *Presentation Styles*—is largely influenced by your audience of your message. Are you presenting an update to stakeholders? Are you letting the project team know how well things are progressing? Do you need how well a new person is settling in?
  - Formal—is the style you would adopt for providing your project stakeholders with an update. This portrays the correct image and level of importance you want for this type of presentation. It also gives you the most control of the messages you want to give and helps you manage their expectations effectively.
  - Informal—is the style you would use when updating the project team. This is because you will be presenting this type of information regularly and you want the environment to encourage discussion.
  - Adhoc communications are a significant part of a managers role. This style of presentation would be used in both proactive and reactive situations where you needed to gauge another's understanding and motivation such as a recent secondment to the team. Your ability to actively listen in such instances is critical. (To learn more on this topic <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/dldebk/dlcm-active.htm>.)

The level of preparation you need for a presentation is reflected in the importance of your message and the level of formality attached to it. (Our free eBook on planning a presentation will give you more detail in this area <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/dldebk/dlcm-planning.htm>.)

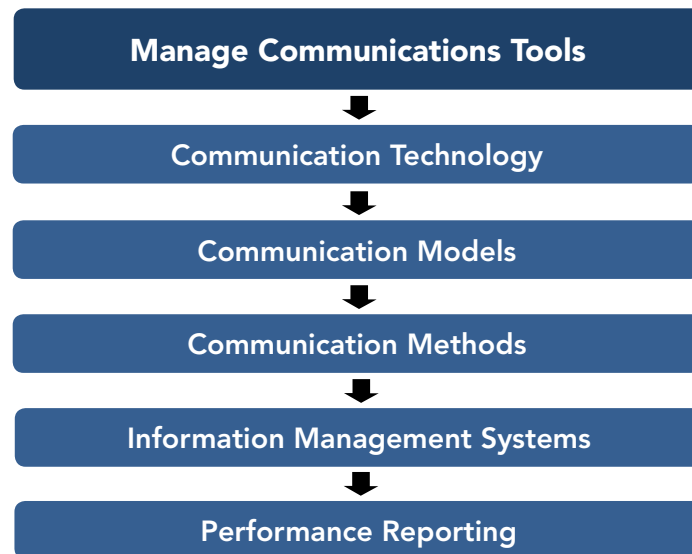
- *Facilitation Techniques*—are a significant part of a successful project manager's skill set. These techniques will be used in the project meetings and presentations to help achieve their objectives.
  - Splitting larger teams into groups of 3-4 people enables several aspects of a project to be discussed at the same time. Each group then presents its findings to the team for their agreement.
  - Mind maps enable initiatives to be explored in an open and unrestricted way. It provides the opportunity for people in the project team to contribute their knowledge in an impartial way and without prejudice.
  - Brainstorming is an excellent technique for generating and exploring ideas. To use this technique effectively clear instructions of how people should act and when comments on contributions will be discussed must be given. You need to give thought to how you will record this output i.e. who records the data, who manages contributions, how it is noted etc?

- *Listening Techniques*—are an essential to ensure effective communication. Each individual has their own style of communication (see diagram below) that means they have a preferred way of listening.



- Active communicator finds it hard to listen because they are quick to draw conclusions and jump in to pauses. This can be counter-productive in a project environment as key issues may be missed.
- Connectors listen in an empathetic way and focus on the need to understand the feelings and emotions of the situation. This aspect of listening is important but it has to play a minor role in managing a project.
- Logical communicators will listen for the facts and figures in the message and assess how well it fits their own opinion. This may prove problematic if the individual finds it hard to be objective about what they hear.
- Thinkers are critical listeners who need to evaluate, appraise what they have heard.
- Combiner will use active listening (this is discussed in detail in its own eBook <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/dldebk/dlcm-active.htm>) so that 100% focus is on the conversation and they questioning and paraphrasing to confirm their understanding is correct.

To learn more about your preferred style of communication and how it impacts on your exchanges with others download our free eBook on 'Effective Communications' <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/dldebk/dlcm-effective.htm>.



#### **10.2.2.1 Communication Technology**

This is described in the previous process '10.1 Plan Communications Management' and should be appropriate for the information being communicated.

#### **10.2.2.2 Communication Models**

This is described in the previous process '10.1 Plan Communications Management' and should ensure that communication is efficient and effective.

#### **10.2.2.3 Communication Methods**

This is described in the previous process '10.1 Plan Communications Management' and should be appropriate for the information being communicated.

#### **10.2.2.4 Information Management Systems**

Project information is managed and distributed using a variety of tools, including:

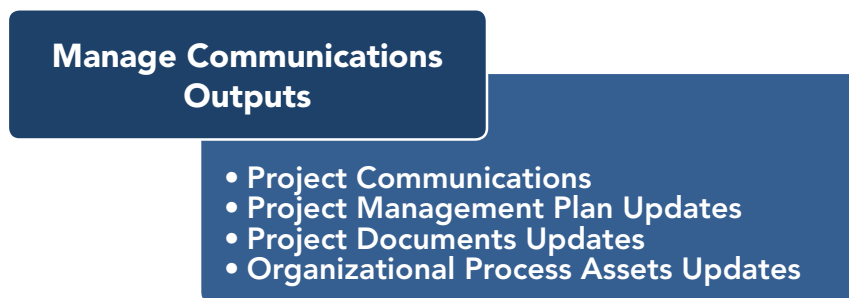
- Project Management Tools
- E-mail
- Fax
- Voice mail
- Telephone
- Video/web conferencing
- Hard-copy.

#### 10.2.2.5 Performance Reporting

This takes the work performance on the project, including the past (progress reports), present (status), and future (forecasts).

### 10.2.3 Manage Communications: Outputs

This process will create the following outputs:



#### 10.2.3.1 Project Communications

These include performance reports, the status of deliverables, schedule progress, and costs incurred.

#### 10.2.3.2 Project Management Plan Updates

These provide information on project baselines, communications management and stakeholder management.

#### 10.2.3.3 Project Documents Updates

These include issue logs, the project schedule and project funding requirements.

#### 10.2.3.4 Organizational Process Assets Updates

These include:

- *Stakeholder notifications*—inform this group about resolved issues, approved changes, and general project status.
- *Project reports*—describe project status and include lessons learned, issues logs, project closure reports, and outputs from other Knowledge Areas.

- *Project presentations*—are used to provide information formally or informally to any or all of the project stakeholders. The information and presentation method should be relevant to the needs of the audience.
- *Project records*—include correspondence, memos, meeting minutes, and other documents describing the project.
- *Feedback from stakeholders*—is the information received from stakeholders concerning project operations that can be distributed and used to modify or improve future performance of the project.
- *Lessons learned documentation*—includes the causes of issues, reasoning behind the corrective action chosen, and other types of lessons learned about information distribution.

## 10.3 Control Communications

This is the process of monitoring and controlling communications throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met. It involves the periodic collection and analysis of baseline versus actual data to understand and communicate the project progress as well as to forecast future performance based on performance to date.

The reports themselves can take any format from a simple status report, specifying the percentage of each activity complete to more elaborate reports that include an analysis of past performance, the current status of risks and issues, and other relevant information that could be of interest.

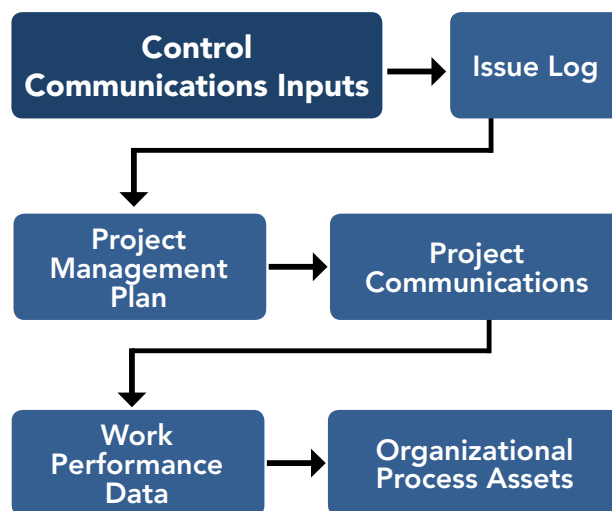
The important thing is that there is sufficient information to allow the project manager to use it in other monitoring and management processes and that it is provided in a timely manner.

The inputs, tools and techniques, and outputs of this process are summarized in the table below.

Inputs	Tools & Techniques	Outputs
Project Management Plan	Information Management systems	Work Performance Information
Project Communications	Expert Judgment	Change Requests
Issue Log	Meetings	Project Management Plan Updates
Work Performance Data		Project Documents Updates
Organizational Process Assets		Organizational Process Assets Updates

### 10.3.1 Control Communications: Inputs

This process requires the following inputs:



#### 10.3.1.1 Project Management Plan

The project management plan provides information on scope, schedule, and cost baselines against which actual progress can be measured. Information used in this process includes stakeholder communication requirements, the reason for the distribution of the information, the timeframe and frequency for the distribution, and the identity of the originator and recipient.

#### 10.3.1.2 Project Communications

These include performance reports, the status of deliverables, schedule progress, and costs incurred.

#### 10.3.1.3 Issue Log

An issue log is used to document and monitor the resolution of issues. It may be used to facilitate communication and ensure a common understanding of issues. A written log documents and helps to monitor who is responsible for resolving specific issues by a target date. Issue resolution addresses obstacles that can block the team from achieving its goals.

#### 10.3.1.4 Work Performance Data

These include planned versus actual performance for schedule, cost and technical performance.

#### 10.3.1.5 Organizational Process Assets

These include organizational policies, procedures and report templates, as well as specific communication technologies available, allowed communication media, record retention policies, and security requirements.

### 10.3.2 Control Communications: Tools and Techniques

There are three tools and techniques that can be used.



#### 10.3.2.1 Information Management Systems

An information management system provides a standard tool for the project manager to capture, store, and distribute information to stakeholders about the project cost, schedule progress, and performance. Software packages allow the project manager to consolidate reports from several systems and facilitate report distribution to the project stakeholders.

Examples of distribution formats may include table reporting, spreadsheet analysis, and presentations. Graphic capabilities can be used to create visual representations of project performance information.



### 10.3.2.2 Expert Judgment

This is often relied upon by the project team to assess the:

- Impact of the project communications
- Need for action or intervention
- Actions that should be taken
- Responsibility for taking such actions &
- Timeframe for taking action.

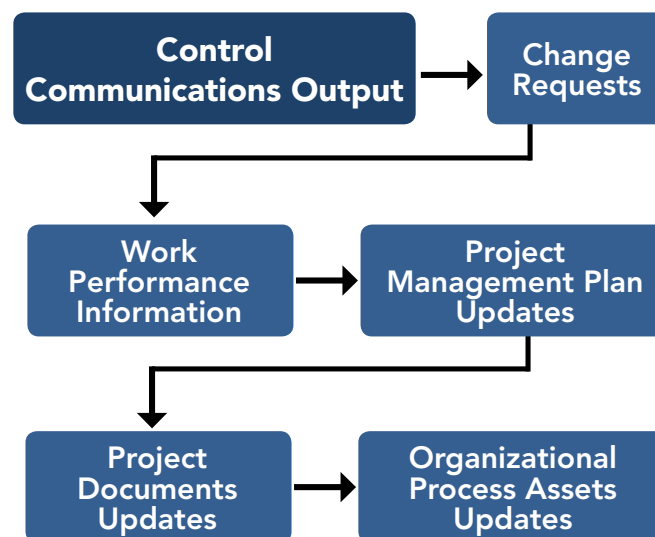
Almost any stakeholder may provide it and it is up to the project management team to act on it so that project communications are as effective and efficient as possible.

### 10.3.2.3 Meetings

These are face-to-face communications with the relevant stakeholders.

## 10.3.3 Control Communications: Outputs

This process will create the following outputs:



### 10.3.3.1 Work Performance Information

These reports organize and summarize the information gathered, and present the results of any analysis compared to the performance measurement baseline.

*A simple report might show:*

- Only performance information such as the percentage complete of particular activities.

*A more detailed report could include:*

- Analysis of past performance
- Current status of risks and issues
- Work completed during the reporting period
- Work to be completed during the next reporting period
- Summary of changes approved in the period
- Results of variance analysis
- Forecasted project completion (including time and cost)
- Other relevant information to be reviewed and discussed

This information should be provided at the level of detail required by various stakeholders, as documented in the communications management plan.

### **10.3.3.2 Change Requests**

These include recommended corrective actions to bring future performance back in line with the project management plan, as well as any preventative actions that could prevent the situation from recurring.

### **10.3.3.3 Project Management Plan Updates**

Changes may need to be made to the:

- Communications Management Plan,  
and possibly even the
- Stakeholders Management Plan
- Human Resources Management Plan.

#### **10.3.3.4 Project Documents Updates**

These include forecasts, performance reports, and issue logs.

#### **10.3.3.5 Organizational Process Assets Updates**

These include lessons learned documentation, including the causes of issues, reasoning behind the corrective action chosen, and other types of lessons learned about performance reporting.

## **Summary**

The contents of the Project Communications plan and its impact throughout the whole project life cycle is how others will judge the project manager. This individual's credibility and professional standing will be formed on this plan's successful implementation.

This plan also forms the bedrock of a project manager's ability to make decisions that ensure the efficient running of the project. It is only by creating an environment where there is a free and open exchange of information between all parties that such decisions can be made.

The existence of a formal plan in the project management environment is essential because more than any other management function enormous amounts of data and information must be collected, collated and analyzed in a controlled manner.

The infrastructure of the Project Communications Management plan ensures that each person gets the right information at the right time in the right format so they can complete the task. This is especially pertinent when the project manager is dealing with any of the stakeholders, reassuring them and retaining their support.

The objectives of the Communications Management process are:

- To define the communications needs of a project;
- To define required messages, appropriate media and channels, task assignments and timings for communications delivery that will enable the project to meet these needs
- To ensure that the right people receive the right information at the right time to meet their needs and to achieve project objectives

If you want to know more about project management or communication in general the eBooks in these skill sets available from <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/skills-project.htm> are:

- Project Management Skills
  - Principles of Project Management
  - Process Groups
  - Integration Management
  - Scope Management
  - Time Management
  - Cost Management
  - Quality Management
  - Human Resources (HR) Management
  - Communications Management
  - Risk Management
  - Procurement Management
  - Stakeholder Management
- Communications Skills
  - Effective Communications
  - Active Listening
  - Planning a Presentation
  - Preparing a Presentation
  - Delivering a Presentation

## Other Free Resources

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**eBooks**—Our free management eBooks cover everything from accounting principles to business strategy. Each one has been written to provide you with the practical skills you need to succeed as a management professional.

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**Checklists**—When you are working under pressure or doing a task for the first time, it is easy to overlook something or forget to ask a key question. These management checklists will help you to break down complex management tasks into small controllable steps.

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