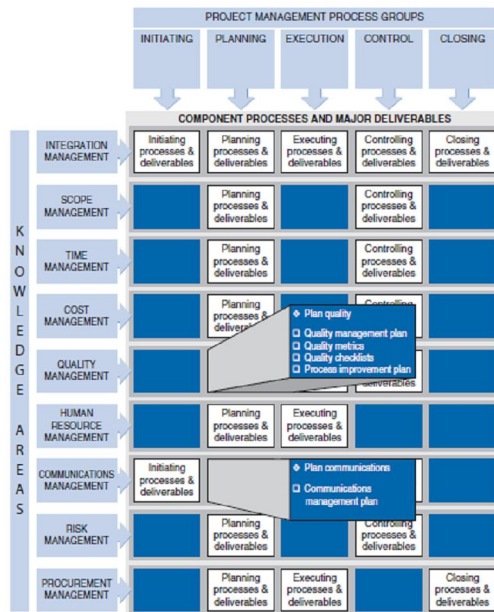


## Chapter 7

# Project Communications Planning



♦ Indicates Component Process  
□ Indicates Deliverable

## Objectives

### Part 2: Communications Management

- Understand the importance of possessing excellent communication skills

Know how to build a communication management plan

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## Project Manager's Skills (in theory)

- Analytical Skills ability to see things as systems, identify, analyze, and solve problems in an optimal way for a specific organization.
- Technical Skills ability to understand how computers, data networks, software, operating systems, etc. work together, as well as their potentials and limitations.
- Management Skills include organization's resource management, project management (people and money), risk management, and change management.
- Communication Skills include effective interpersonal communication (written, verbal, visual, electronic, face-to-face conversations, presentations in front of groups), listening, group facilitation skills.

## Top 7 Competencies of Project Manager (a survey of 400+ project managers)

1. **Communications Skills - verbal and written**
2. Leadership Skills
3. Organizational Skills - planning, time management
4. Interpersonal Skills
5. Negotiation Skills - diplomacy and mediating
6. Team Building Skills
7. Technical Skills

Source: "Positive Leadership In Project Management" by Rachael Miletkov

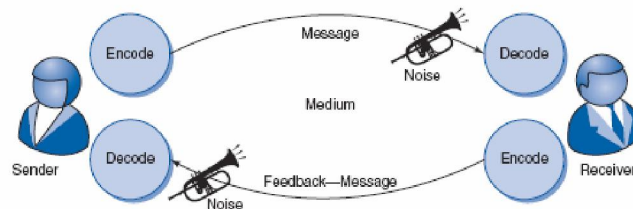
## Communications Planning

- Importance of Good Communications:
  - The greatest threat to many projects is a "failure to communicate"
  - Effective project communications is paramount to success on all projects and especially on IT projects due largely to the language gap that occurs on many projects
  - Strong verbal skills are a key factor in career advancement for SW/IT project managers and professionals
  - It has been estimated that as much as 90% of a project manager's time is spent in some form of communication

***The problem is: "If the organization's management team knows nothing of what you are doing, they will assume you are doing nothing"***

## Importance of Good Communications

- Medium communication transport (email, phone,...)
- Encode translate thoughts into language
- Message output of encoding
- Noise anything that interferes with the transmission and understanding of the message
- Decode translate message into meaningful thoughts or ideas



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## Project Communications Management Process. Communications Planning

- **Communications planning:** determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders
- **Communications Planning.** Every project should include some type of communications management plan, a document that guides project - written and oral communications (timing, detail)

Stakeholder Register

Stakeholder	Document	Detail Level	Delivery Format	Frequency	Team Contact
John Smith	Status report	Summary—2	Email—PDF	Monthly	Laura Smith
Mike Dunbar	Status report	Detail	Email—PDF	Weekly	Laura Smith
Becky Ploss	Earned Value Management report	Summary—1	Intranet	Weekly	Larry Cosgray
Dir. Finance	Budget/Actuals	Detail	Hard copy	Monthly	Carlos Rodriguez
Dir. Human Resources	Staffing plan	Detail	Email—PDF	Weekly	Larry Cosgray

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## Project Communication Management Plan: Expected Outcome



Communications Management Plan Template  
[www.ProjectManagementDocs.com](http://www.ProjectManagementDocs.com)

### COMMUNICATIONS MATRIX

The following table identifies the communications requirements for this project.

Communication Type	Objective of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable
Kickoff Meeting	Introduce the project team and the project. Review project objectives and management approach.	• Face to Face	Once	• Project Sponsor • Project Team • Stakeholders	Project Manager	• Agenda • Meeting Minutes
Project Team Meetings	Review status of the project with the team.	• Face to Face • Conference Call	Weekly	• Project Team	Project Manager	• Agenda • Meeting Minutes
Technical Design Meetings	Discuss and develop technical design solutions for the project.	• Face to Face	As Needed	• Project Technical Staff	Technical Lead	• Agenda • Meeting Minutes
Monthly Project Status Meetings	Report on the status of the project to management.	• Face to Face • Conference Call	Monthly	• PMO •	Project Manager	•
Project Status Reports	Report the status of the project including activities, progress, costs and issues.	• Email	Monthly	• Project Sponsor • Project Team • Stakeholders • PMO	Project Manager	• Project Status Report

Template is available at

<http://www.projectmanagementdocs.com/templates/Communications%20Management%20Plan.pdf>

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## Team Communication

- **Formal, impersonal approaches** include software engineering documents and work products (including source code), technical memos, project milestones, schedules, and project control tools, change requests and related documentation, error tracking reports, and repository data.
- **Formal, interpersonal procedures** focus on quality assurance activities applied to software engineering work products. These include status review meetings and design and code inspections.
- **Informal, interpersonal procedures** include group meetings for information dissemination and problem solving and "collocation of requirements and development staff."
- **Electronic communication** encompasses electronic mail, electronic bulletin boards, and by extension, video-based conferencing systems.
- **Interpersonal networking** includes informal discussions with team members and those outside the project who may have experience or insight that can assist team members.

## Project Team Communication Methods

<u>Communication Methods</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Project Workbook	Official system documentation, such as data flow diagrams or entity-relationship diagrams, interview notes
Face-to-face meetings	Review project schedule
Audio-, Video, and Data-Conferencing Via the Internet	Review project documents, schedule, demonstration of current findings and results
Seminars and Workshops	Techniques and methods to be used in subsequent project phases
Project Newsletters	Introduce new team members, explain upcoming project activities
Status Reports	Project activity completions and issues
Specification Documents	Form designs, program structure charts
Minutes of Meetings	Decisions made on alternative system designs
Bulletin Boards	Project status, awards for team members
Memos	Guidance to team members, personnel appraisals
Brown-Bag Lunches	Information from trade shows attended by team members, ideas about articles read on SA&D
Hallway Discussions	Answers to questions, advice on how to deal with problems

## The Communication Plan Must Answer the Following Questions:

- Who are the stakeholders?
- What information do the stakeholders need, when do they want it, at what level of detail do they need, and in what form?
- Who on the project team is responsible for collecting data, creating the reports, and disseminating the reports?
- Who on the project team is the first contact for stakeholders with questions and issues?
- Who on the project team is the first contact for external vendors with questions and issues?

The image shows a detailed project communication plan template. It includes a 'Stakeholder Register' table with columns for Stakeholder, Interest, Influence, and Communication Method. Below this is a 'Communication Plan' section with a table for 'Stakeholder Roles and Other Project Participants' listing roles like Project Sponsor, Project Manager, Communications Manager, Project Team Member, Quality Team Member, Procurement Team Member, and Other Stakeholder. The plan also includes sections for 'TABLE OF CONTENTS', 'DEFINITION', 'DOCUMENT CHANGE', 'ABOUT THE DOCUMENT', 'PARTICIPANT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES', and 'APPROVAL SHEET'.

## Communication Management Plan: An Outcome

Following members:					
Members	Inform	Involve	Consult	Collaborate	Empower
Project Team	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Client Group					
Stakeholder Group					
External / Public Audience					

Managing Stakeholder	
Stakeholder	Communication
Item 1	Item 1
Item 2	Item 2
Item 3	Item 3
Item 4	Item 4

Stakeholder Roles and Other Project Participants		
Stakeholder	Message Information Needed	Due
Project Sponsor		
Project Manager		
Communications Manager		
Project Team Member		
Quality Team Member		
Procurement Team Member		
Legal		
Other Stakeholder		

Source: [http://oit.osu.edu/projmanage/PDF\\_files/P\\_Comm\\_PI\\_1.00.pdf](http://oit.osu.edu/projmanage/PDF_files/P_Comm_PI_1.00.pdf)

## Communication Management Plan: An Example

Ohio State University—Office of the CIO

Project Management Framework

Ohio State University—Office of the CIO

Project Management Framework

### Communication Management Plan—Activity Definition

#### Purpose:

The objective of this activity is to make sure that team members, customers and stakeholders have the information they need to do their jobs. Proactive communication is important on all projects. Communication is also a vital way to manage stakeholders' expectations about how the project is progressing and who needs to be doing what. A Communication Plan allows you to think through how to communicate most efficiently and effectively to the various constituents. Communication needs to be in the right format, to the right target audience with sufficient amount of information and at the right time.

#### Participants:

Communicator: The person who is the source of the information  
Audience: The people who receive the information

In general, the Project Manager, project team members, stakeholders, and the customer are participants and could play the role of the communicator or the audience at any point in time.

#### Inputs:

Project Overview Statement [1], Work Plan [1], Project Approach [2], Governance document [4]

#### Process:

1. Determine what are the target groups (internal and external) and the composition of each group.
2. Determine, for each target group, what information needs to be communicated i.e. the purpose of the communication.
3. Determine the frequency of the communications.
4. Decide on the format/vehicle of communication.
5. Determine who will be responsible for the communications.
6. Identify expected results of the communication.
7. Remember to include the Project Manager as an audience for communications e.g. status reports, issues, risks, 2-way communication.

#### Outputs:

Communication Management Plan

### Communication Planning—Guidelines

These guidelines help in determining stakeholder communication requirements and ensuring that these requirements are met appropriately. Communication could be categorized in the following ways:

1. Internal/external
2. Driven top down or bottom up or at the same level

1. Determine the stakeholder i.e. the target groups (internal and external) and the composition for each group. They could be the sponsor, the operating unit Head, the project team, the Project Manager, the Project Management Office, the functional manager, other departments within OSU like the Help Desk, the customer, or external vendors. The stakeholders should include anyone who needs or will need that information.

2. Determine what information needs to be communicated to the audience. Some examples could be:

- Status Information
- Weekly Deliverables & Issues
- Project Issues
- Completion of tasks/Schedule delay
- Change in scope
- Meetings
- Notification of Service Implementation
- Notes taken during meetings (identify meetings in which notes need to be taken)
- Communication of change
- Communication with regulatory agencies
- Request for Input
- Change Request forms

3. Determine the audience for each communication type.

4. Determine the frequency of communication.

The frequency could be daily/weekly/bi-weekly/monthly/after a certain milestone.

5. Determine the medium of communication. It could be E-mail, verbal, conference calls, meetings, written memos, newspapers, OSU website, OIT/ TELR website, formal presentations, or status reports.

The communicator could be the Project Manager, the project team, the customer, the sponsor, or the functional manager.

7. Identify the purpose of the communication. The information could be mandatory, or to provide information, to build buy-in, etc.
8. Be sensitive to the needs of your audience.

9. You may tailor the same communication for different target groups.

10. Designate a person to record notes during meetings.

Source: [http://oit.osu.edu/projmanage/PDF\\_files/P\\_Comm\\_PI\\_1.00.pdf](http://oit.osu.edu/projmanage/PDF_files/P_Comm_PI_1.00.pdf)

## Communication Management Plan: Part of PMP Exam



The screenshot shows a website for 'PMP Exam Prep Ace It' with the tagline 'get it right to get ahead'. The page is titled 'Communications Management Plan'. It includes a sidebar with navigation links: Home, About Us, Site Map, Products, AceIt FEATURES, Free Trial Version, Purchase AceIt, Classroom Courses, Services, PMP® Certification, Project Management Tips, PMP® Exam Tips, News & Events, PM Tools & Techniques, Project Charter, Business Case, Change Management Plan, Communications Mgmt Plan, Links, and Contact Us. The main content area lists four key elements of a Communications Management Plan: 1. Who you will communicate with, 2. What is to be communicated, 3. When the communication will happen, and 4. How the information is to be distributed. It also includes sections for Overview, Assumptions, Project Stakeholders, and Information Requirements.

**Communications Management Plan**

Your project's Communications Management Plan contains these key elements:

1. Who you will communicate with. This may be on an individual basis, such as your executive sponsor, or on a group basis.
2. What is to be communicated. This will be determined by your stakeholders information requirements.
3. When the communication will happen.
4. How the information is to be distributed.

**Overview**

Capture this information from your project's Scope Statement. The Scope Statement appears in a number of the project plans such as the Change Management Plan and the Risk Management Plan. You can simply cut and paste this section from any of those documents if you have prepared them first.

**Assumptions**

The assumptions referred to here should be assumptions that could affect the execution of your communications management plan. For example, if your plan relies on the implementation of a web site and the implementation is not part of your project, you should identify the assumption that the web site will be ready for your project.

**Project Stakeholders**

Identify individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups here. If your project has a Business Sponsor and an Executive Sponsor, identify them here individually by name. Identify the various groups by group name. For example if your software project includes a team of Java developers and a team of C++ Developers identify them by those team names. The purpose of identifying the stakeholders is to identify their needs and satisfy them so project teams, sub-teams, vendors, sub-contractors, and any external stakeholders don't have to be identified individually. The term "external stakeholder" refers to any group external to your organization who has a stake in the project. An example of such a group would be any community group (e.g. Friends of the Buffalo-headed Duck) who have a stake in the environment altering project you are performing. The term may also refer to groups within your company but external to your organization.

**Information Requirements**

This section may be filled out in steps. If your organization doesn't have historical

Source: <http://threeo.ca/communicationsmgmtplanc564.php>

## Chapter 7

# Project Communications Planning.

## Additional Information



## Art of Communications

Communication can include several definitions:

- an exchange of information,
- a verbal or written message,
- a technique for expressing ideas effectively,
- a process by which meanings are exchanged between persons through a common system of symbols and/or sounds

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## Steps to Conducting the Communication Planning Process

1. **Review the stakeholder analysis** and add information if necessary pertaining to communications management and complete the stakeholder communications matrix.
2. Define content for **status reports and timing**
  1. Establish who on the project team is responsible for **collecting data** for status reports
  2. Establish who on the project team is responsible for **creating the reports** and disseminating the reports
  3. Establish key project team contacts for each stakeholder to serve as **first contact references**
4. Finally, accumulate information from previous steps and build the **Communications Management Plan**

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