

Chapter 10: Project Communications Management

Information Technology Project
Management, Sixth Edition



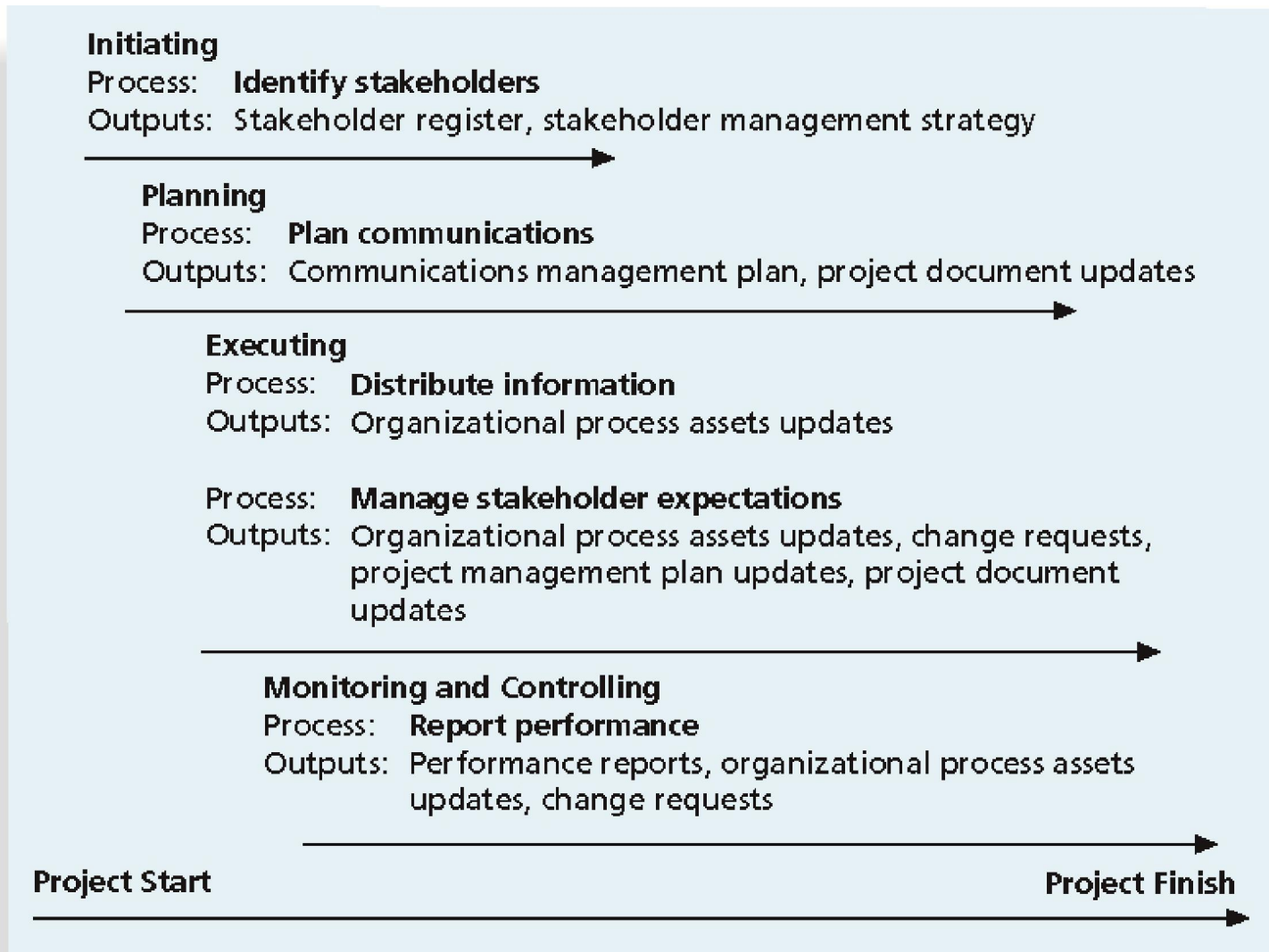
Importance of Good Communications

- The greatest threat to many projects is a failure to communicate
- Our culture does not portray IT professionals as being good communicators
- Research shows that IT professionals must be able to communicate effectively to succeed in their positions
- Strong verbal skills are a key factor in career advancement for IT professionals

Project Communications Management Processes

- ▶ **Identifying stakeholders:** identifying everyone involved in or affected by the project and determining the best ways to manage relationships with them
- **Planning communications:** determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders
- **Distributing information:** making needed information available to project stakeholders in a timely manner
- **Managing stakeholder expectations:** managing communications to satisfy the needs and expectations of project stakeholders and to resolve issues
- **Reporting performance:** collecting and disseminating performance information, including status reports, progress measurement, and forecasting

Figure 10-1. Project Communications Management Summary



Identifying Stakeholders

- ▶ Recall that the ultimate goal of project management is to meet or exceed stakeholder needs and expectations from a project, so you must first identify who your particular project stakeholders are
- ▶ Two key outputs of this process include:
 - **Stakeholder register:** a public document that includes details related to the identified project stakeholders (see Table 3-4 for an example)
 - **Stakeholder management strategy:** an approach to help increase the support of stakeholders throughout the project; often includes sensitive information

Table 10-1. Stakeholder Management Strategy

Name	Position	Internal/ External	Level of interest	Level of influence	Potential management strategies
John Huntz	Project Manager for largest project under Peter	Internal	High	High	John does a great job, but he often upsets other PMs with his harsh approach. Keep him in line and remind him he is part of a bigger team.
Carolyn Morris	VP Telecommunications, Peter's boss	Internal	High	High	Carolyn is the first woman VP at our company and still likes to prove herself. Keep her informed of key issues and never surprise her!
Subbu Thangi	Dept. Head State of Oregon	External	Low	High	Subbu is in charge of a lot of state issues, like getting permits to install fiber-optic lines. He has a lot on his plate, but he doesn't seem concerned with our projects. Schedule a short, special meeting with him to increase visibility and discuss key issues.
Tom Morgan	CEO of major Telecomm. Customer	External	Medium	High	Tom is the sponsor of several of our projects. Give him the status on all of them at once to use his time efficiently.

Planning Communications

- Every project should include some type of **communications management** plan, a document that guides project communications
- Creating a stakeholder analysis for project communications also aids in communications planning (see Table 10-2 for an example)

Table 10-2. Sample Stakeholder Analysis for Project Communications

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.

Communications Management Plan Contents

- Stakeholder communications requirements
- Information to be communicated, including format, content, and level of detail
- The people who will receive the information and who will produce it
- Suggested methods or technologies for conveying the information

Communications Management Plan Contents (continued)

- Frequency of communication
- Escalation procedures for resolving issues
- Revision procedures for updating the communications management plan
- A glossary of common terminology

Distributing Information

- Getting the right information to the right people at the right time and in a useful format is just as important as developing the information in the first place
- Important considerations include:
 - Using technology to enhance information distribution
 - Formal and informal methods for distributing information

What Went Wrong?

- ▶ Telecommunications throughout Asia were severely disrupted on December 26, 2006, after earthquakes off Taiwan damaged undersea cables, slowing Internet services and hindering financial transactions, particularly in the currency market
- ▶ International telephone traffic was restricted from some countries, and Internet access slowed to a crawl

Distributing Information in an Effective and Timely Manner

- Don't bury crucial information
- Don't be afraid to report bad information
- Oral communication via meetings and informal talks helps bring important information—good and bad—out into the open

Importance of Face-to-Face Communication

- Research says that in a face-to-face interaction:
 - 58 percent of communication is through body language
 - 35 percent of communication is through how the words are said
 - 7 percent of communication is through the content or words that are spoken
- Pay attention to more than just the actual words someone is saying
- A person's tone of voice and body language say a lot about how he or she really feels

Encouraging More Face-to-Face Interactions

- Short, frequent meetings are often very effective in 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

Table 10-3. Media Choice Table

HOW WELL MEDIUM IS SUITED TO:	KEY: 1 = EXCELLENT		2 = ADEQUATE		3 = INAPPROPRIATE	
	HARD COPY	TELEPHONE CALL	VOICE MAIL	E-MAIL	MEETING	WEB SITE
Assessing commitment	3	2	3	3	1	3
Building consensus	3	2	3	3	1	3
Mediating a conflict	3	2	3	3	1	3
Resolving a misunderstanding	3	1	3	3	2	3
Addressing negative behavior	3	2	3	2	1	3
Expressing support/appreciation	1	2	2	1	2	3
Encouraging creative thinking	2	3	3	1	3	3
Making an ironic statement	3	2	2	3	1	3
Conveying a reference document	1	3	3	3	3	1
Reinforcing one's authority	1	2	3	3	1	2
Providing a permanent record	1	3	3	1	3	1
Maintaining confidentiality	2	1	2	3	1	3
Conveying simple information	3	2	1	1	2	3
Asking an informational question	3	2	1	1	3	3
Making a simple request	3	3	1	1	3	3
Giving complex instructions	3	3	3	2	1	2
Addressing many people	2	3	3 or 1*	2	3	1

Galati, Tess. Email Composition and Communication (EmC2) Practical Communications, Inc. (www.pracom.com) (2001).

*Depends on system functionality

Personal Preferences Affect Communication Needs

- ▶ Introverts like more private communications, while extroverts like to discuss things in public
- ▶ Intuitive people like to understand the big picture, while sensing people need step-by-step details
- ▶ Thinkers want to know the logic behind decisions, while feeling people want to know how something affects them personally
- ▶ Judging people are driven to meet deadlines while perceiving people need more help in developing and following plans

Other Communication Considerations

- ▶ Rarely does the receiver interpret a message exactly as the sender intended
- ▶ Geographic location and cultural background affect the complexity of project communications
 - Different working hours
 - Language barriers
 - Different cultural norms

Determining the Number of Communications Channels

- ▶ As the number of people involved increases, the complexity of communications increases because there are more communications channels or pathways through which people can communicate

- ▶ Number of communications channels = $\frac{n(n-1)}{2}$

where n is the number of people involved

Figure 10-2. The Impact of the Number of People on Communications Channels

