

Messenger

Vol. 9 No. 4

April, 2011

Communication in Projects

Throughout a project, proper communication is vital in order for the project to survive. Without effective communication, deadlines will be missed, changes won't be made, and the project will be late. According to Project Management Institute's *Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, "Project Communication Management includes the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage, and ultimate disposition of project information."

In order for a team to have successful communication, they must develop a project management plan. This plan determines which items of information need to be communicated to all of the stakeholders. It describes how reports will be formatted, the frequency of distribution of these reports, and the individual who has the responsibility for generating and distributing the reports.

The *PMBOK® Guide* gives four major processes within communication planning: Communication Planning, Information Distribution, Performance Reporting, and Administrative Closure. Let's examine each of these.

Communication Planning

Communication Planning involves determining the information and communication needs of the people: who needs what information, when they will need it, how it will be given to them, and by whom. Most of the communication planning is

done in the early project phases, however, it should be reviewed throughout the project. It is linked with organizational planning, lining up with the organizational structure. It will provide:

- A collection and filing structure that details what methods will be used to gather and store various types of information
- A distribution structure that details to whom information will flow and what methods will be used to distribute various types of information
- A description of the information to be distributed
- Production schedules showing when each type of communication will be produced
- Methods of accessing information between scheduled communication
- A method of updating and refining the communication management plan as the project progresses



Information Distribution

During information distribution, needed information is available to project stakeholders in a timely manner. This is where the communication

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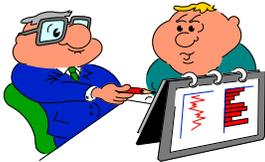
**Communication is the real
work of leadership.
Nitin Nohria
Dean, Harvard Business School**

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management plan will be implemented. During this process, you will also respond to unexpected requests for information. It is at this time that all project records, reports and presentations will be disseminated to appropriate parties. This can be done through project meetings, fax, email, and video conferences, just to name a few.



Performance Reporting

The *PMBOK® Guide* describes performance reporting as “collecting and disseminating performance information to provide stakeholders with information about how resources are being used to achieve project objectives”. This includes status reporting, progress reporting, and forecasting. Status reporting describes where the project now stands. Progress reporting explains what the project team has accomplished. Forecasting predicts future project status and progress. Performance reports organize and summarize the information gathered and present the results of any analysis.

Administrative Closure

“Administrative closure consists of documenting project results to formalize acceptance of the product of the project by the sponsor or customer.” It includes collecting project records and ensuring they reflect final specifications, analyzing project success, effectiveness, and lessons learned, and archiving such information for future use. (*PMBOK®*)

Guide) As a result of Administrative Closure you will have:

- Project archives – a complete set of indexed project records should be prepared for archiving
- Project closure – confirmation that the project has met all customer requirements
- Lessons learned – documentation for next time

As you can see, communication is necessary to have a successful project. Making sure that all information is correctly circulated to all project team members, sponsors, and customers is key to driving the project forward. Failing to follow these processes could lead to loss of time and money.



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GSA Contractor - GS02F-0010V

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