

# Project Communication Planning

## What Is It?

Project communication planning refers to the process that engages the project team in identifying key information that must be communicated to those impacted by the project. Communication planning keeps project team members and stakeholders informed, committed and moving toward action as needed.

## Why Is It Important?

Effective communication helps motivate people to take action. Good communication practices ensure that the team members work together to achieve specific goals and that the project stakeholders (parties impacted by the project) are informed along the way.

## When Is It Used?

The project manager and the team members use communication more than any other force in the project environment. Communication planning and the utilization of the tools associated with it should be an integral part of the project planning process. Project communication supports all phases of the project.

## Who Should Use It?

Project communication requires contributions from the project manager, project team members, the project sponsor and, occasionally, project stakeholders.

The project manager is responsible for ensuring that a communication plan exists for the specific project.

A project team member may be assigned to develop the communication plan. The individual communications activities should be shared by all team members as defined in the plan.

## How Is It Used?

Communication planning starts by identifying the core communication needs for the project:

- Who are the parties impacted by the project (stakeholders)?
- What on-going information needs do they have?
- What are the best ways to provide that information?
- How do we get feedback and measure the effectiveness of the communications?

These high-level considerations are then translated into specific communications initiatives for which accountability should be defined early on.

The Project Communication Plan template on the next page introduces a process for planning the project communications.

The project communications process will:

- Identify the vital background data about the groups and individuals impacted by the project.
- Develop the framework for each communication that is generated.
- Create and delivers a concise and effective communications piece.

- Measure the effectiveness of the communication efforts.
- Obtain feedback.
- Communicate roles and responsibilities (set expectations).

## Quality Checklist

Think about the following as you assess the end result of your project communications planning process:

- Have all impacted parties been identified?
- What information do the impacted parties need?
- Have you considered alternative ways of providing the information based on specific needs and preferences of the audience?
- Is the purpose of your communication clearly defined and understood?
- Is the language used simple and easily understandable? Are key terms and abbreviations defined?
- Have you identified methods for getting feedback regarding the effectiveness of your communication?



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## Project Communication Plan Template

Project Name: < >

Project Manager: < >

Project Sponsor: < >

Stakeholder	Communication Need (What)	When/ How Often	How (Vehicles)	Author/ Owner	Desired Results	Status

Potential Factors Likely to Influence Communications Effectiveness:

Contingency Plans: < >