Crosswind Learning

Crosswind Success Series:
PMP® Exam Bootcamp Manual

www.crosswindpm.com
Tony Johnson, MBA, CAPM, PMP, PgMP, PfMP

7.3. Plan Communications Management (Planning Process Group)

During Plan Communication Management, the project manager **determines the communication needs of all the stakeholders.** Key criteria is the information required by each stakeholder, when it is required, and the format in which it is required. The criteria is then entered into the communications management plan to show the communication requirements of the project stakeholders.

Know the Key Inputs, Tools & Techniques, and Outputs for Plan Communications Management.

Plan Communications Management

Inputs

Project Charter
Project Management Plan
- **Resource Management Plan**
- **Stakeholder Engagement Plan**
Project Documents
- Requirements Documentation
- **Stakeholder Register**
Enterprise Environmental Factors
Organizational Process Assets

Outputs

Communications Management Plan
Project Management Plan Updates
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan
Project Documents Updates
- Project Schedule
- Stakeholder Register

Tools and Techniques

Expert judgment
Communication Requirements Analysis
Communication Technology
Communication Models
Communication Methods

Interpersonal and Team Skills
- Communication Styles Assessment
- Political Awareness
- Cultural Awareness
Data Representation
- **Stakeholder Engagement Assessment Matrix**
Meetings

Figure 7-2: Plan Communications Management Data Flow Diagram
The source for the above figure is the Project Management Institute, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*, (*PMBOK® Guide*) – Sixth Edition, Project Management Institute Inc., 2017, Figure 10-2, Page 366

Plan Communications Management (Planning)		
Key Inputs	Resource Management Plan	The resource management plan is a component of the project management plan that documents: the manner in which the team and physical resources are determined, quantified, and acquired; resource roles, responsibilities, authorities, and competence (skill and capacity); project organizational charts; team resource management (definition, management, control, and release); team training; team development; and control of physical resources (availability and acquisition).

Plan Communications Management (Continued)		
Key Inputs (Cont.)	Stakeholder Engagement Plan	The stakeholder engagement plan is a component of the project management plan that documents the plans and activities required to engage stakeholders in an effective manner.
	Stakeholder Register	The stakeholder register contains information related to identified stakeholders. It includes identification information (name, position, location, project role, and contact information), assessment information (key requirements, potential impact on project results, the phase in which the stakeholder wields the greatest influence, and stakeholder expectations), and stakeholder classification (**internal/external**, **impact/influence/power/interest**, or other classification model).
Key Tools & Techniques	Communication Requirement Analysis	Communication requirement analysis is used to determine stakeholder informational needs. It typically includes a consideration of information and communication requirements from the stakeholder register, the stakeholder engagement plan, organizational charts, responsibility assignment matrixes (RAM), logistics of involved personnel, legal requirements, the development approach, logistics of participants, and internal/external information requirements. The requirements are defined by combining the type and format of the required information with an evaluation of that information's value. Consideration should also be given to the number of communication channels in order to determine the intricacy of project communications. A channel is a physical or electronic connection between a sender and receiver that allows the exchange of information. To determine the number of communication channels, multiply the number of stakeholders by that number minus one, and then divide the result by two. The formula is: $c = n \times (n-1) / 2$.

Plan Communications Management (Continued)		
Key Tools & Techniques (Cont.)	Communication Technology	Communication technology encompasses the methods used to transfer information among project stakeholders, which can include conversations, meetings, databases, documents, social media, email, and websites. The choice of a communication technology is predicated on the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information, the project environment, the availability and ease of use of a technology, and the urgency of the information.
	Communication Methods	Communication methods are used to transfer information among project stakeholders. Methods include: interactive communication (communication between two or more parties exchanging information in real time), push communication (communication sent directly to specific recipients), pull communication (communication used for a large number of recipients that must access content from web portals, intranet sites, e-learning, lessons learned databases, or knowledge repositories), interpersonal communication (communication between individuals, typically face to face), network and social computing communication (communication obtainable from notice boards, newsletters, press releases, email, web portals, phone conversations, and presentations), **small group communication** (communication between groups of **three to six people**), public communication (communication from a speaker addressing a group), and mass communication (communication from a sender to a large, sometimes anonymous, targeted group).
	Stakeholder Engagement Assessment Matrix	The stakeholder engagement assessment matrix is utilized to evaluate the current engagement levels of stakeholders by comparing them to the expected engagement levels of those stakeholders. This comparison can be used to evaluate the need for any additional communication.

| Plan Communications Management (Continued)		
Key Outputs	Communications Management Plan	The communications management plan is a component of the project management plan that documents the planning, structure, implementation, and monitoring/control of communications. It contains: stakeholder communication requirements; the information to be communicated, including language, format, content, and degree of detail; the case for conveyance of the information; the timeframe for and frequency of the distribution, including the manner in which any acknowledgment or response will be effected; the person responsible for communication of the information; the person responsible for authorizing the release of confidential information; the recipients of the information and their needs, requirements, and expectations; the resources allocated for communication related activities, along with a calendar and budget; the technological methods used for conveyance of the information, including memos, email, press releases, and social media; the methods for updating the communications management plan; a glossary of common terms; flow charts regarding the project's information flow, workflows, meeting plans, and a list of reports; constraints imposed by legislation, regulation, and/or technology; and the guidelines and templates for project status meetings, project team meetings, and email.

Situational Question and Real World Application
The failure to effectively execute the Plan Communications Management process can result in communication breakdowns. Issues such as failure to send appropriate information to appropriate people at the appropriate time can arise from this failure.

7.3.1.   Communications Management Plan

The communications management plan defines the communication needs of the stakeholders, the format and frequency of communications, and the person responsible for delivery.

The plan can include communication rules, project expectations, reporting and meeting schedules, change processes, and contact information for the team.

Know what a communications management plan is and what it is used for.
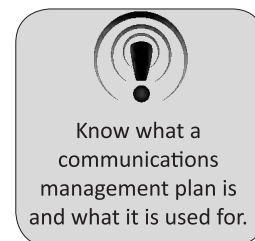
The plan helps the project manager and team do the following:

- Determine communication needs for the project stakeholders
- Establish and utilize communication infrastructure for distributing project information
- Report project performance to the appropriate stakeholders
- Address communication issues that arise on the project

7.3.2. Communication Control

Controlling communication is vital to project management success. The project manager must stay current regarding communication activity and be kept in the project communication loop.
Remember, approximately 90% of a project manager's job involves communication.

Be familiar with the percentage of a project managers job that involves communications.

7.3.3. Communication Model

The basics of communication are covered in the Communication Model. The three main components are:

- Sender
- Message
- Receiver

Be familiar with the Communication Model (sender, message, and receiver).

The medium is another component to consider because it sets the format of the message and can impact communications positively or negatively.

Given the global nature of projects and diversity of people involved in projects today, breaks in the model are not uncommon.

The key responsibility of the communication sender is to correctly encode (communicate) the message to the communication receiver(s) so that they can correctly decode (understand) it.
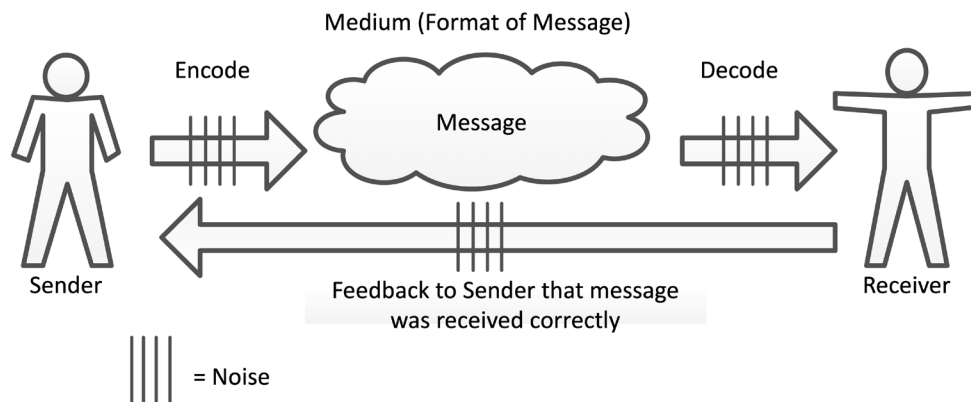
Figure 7-3: Sender/Receiver Interaction
The source for the above figure is the Project Management Institute, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*, (*PMBOK® Guide*) – Sixth Edition, Project Management Institute Inc., 2017, Figure 10-4, Page 373
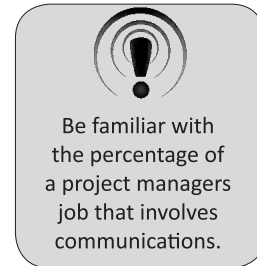
7.3.4. Communication Channels Formula

Communications are a complex part of any project. The greater the number of people involved in a project, the greater the number of communications that will be sent and received.

The formula for this relationship is **N x (N - 1) / 2** with N being the number of people on the project.

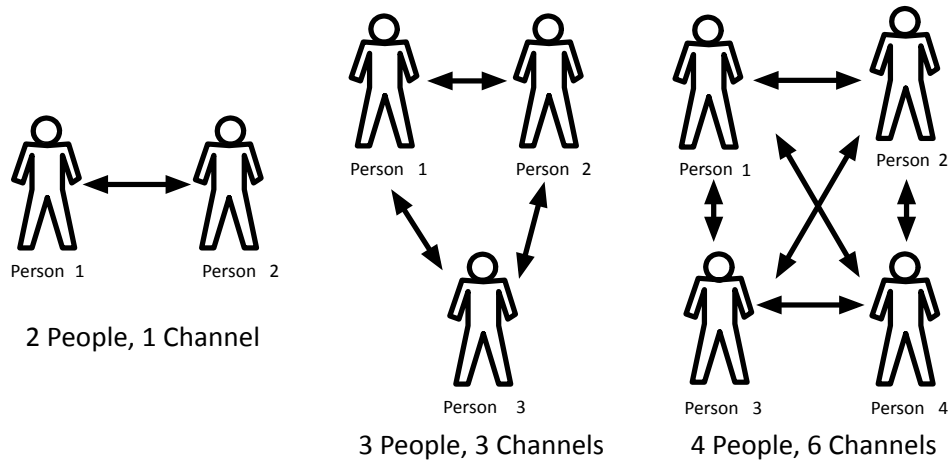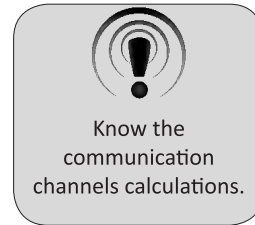Figure 7-4: Communication Channels shows how communications grow as people are added to the project.

Know the communication channels calculations.

2 People, 1 Channel

3 People, 3 Channels   4 People, 6 Channels

Figure 7-4: Communication Channels

It is very important to know how to calculate the total number of communication channels, the total communication channels if team members are added or removed, and the number of channels added/subtracted if team members are added or removed. It is also important to note that a part-time team member is no different than a full-time team member when calculating communication channels. For example, a team consisting of three full-time members and two part-time members, is considered a five member team in the calculation.

Total number of channels	Total number of channels when team members are added/removed	Number of channels added/removed when team members are added/removed
Use the standard formula.	Use the standard formula for new total number of people.	Use the standard formulas for original number of people and for new total number of people then subtract the difference.
$N^{original}$ x ($N^{original}$ - 1) / 2	N^{new} x (N^{new} - 1) / 2	(N^{new} x (N^{new} -1) / 2) - ($N^{original}$ x ($N^{original}$ -1) / 2)
Sample for team of four: 4 x (4 - 1) / 2 = 6	Sample for two members added to team of four: (4 + 2) x ((4 + 2 - 1) / 2) = 15 Or 6 x ((6 - 1) / 2) = 15	Sample for two members added to team of four: 15 - 6 = 9

Note that a reference to team members may include or exclude the project manager, depending on the wording used. Reference the chart below for examples.

PM has a team of six (count seven people)	The PM is described as "outside" the team, and the total count must be adjusted to include the PM in the communications channels.
The team has six people (count six people)	The PM is described as within the team. No adjustment to the total count is necessary.

7.3.5.   Communication Methods

The methods utilized to share information among stakeholders are:

- **Interactive**, which enables an **exchange of information** between multiple parties and fosters a common understanding between participants
- **Push**, which **distributes information** but does not ensure that the information was received or understood
- **Pull**, which **provides information** in a centrally accessible location such as the Internet

7.3.6.   Communication Blockers

Communication blockers are factors that disrupt the message that the receiver is trying to interpret from the sender.

7.3.7.   Meeting Rules

Meeting rules are commonly abused. As a result, perception of how to effectively conduct meetings is often inaccurate.

Some basic rules for conducting meetings are:

- When a meeting is scheduled, an agenda should be created and distributed beforehand to give people a chance to review and prepare; this agenda should allocate a portion of time for each topic
- All relevant documents should be distributed prior to the meeting
- Everyone should review the agenda and prepare for the meeting
- During (or before) the meeting, the leader (facilitator) should be established to conduct the meeting and ensure adherence to the agenda; the leader (facilitator) does not always need to be the project manager
- If the leader/facilitator decides to honor a request to add a non-agenda item to the meeting, the item should be added at the end of the meeting or moved to a future meeting
- From an exam readiness perspective, if the project is a priority and a meeting has been scheduled, functional issues (generally speaking) should not delay the meeting

Chapter 7
Communications