### Chapter 9

Project Communications Management

# Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of good communication on projects and describe the major components of a communications management plan
2. Discuss the elements of communications planning, including information distribution, performance reporting, and administrative closure
3. Discuss various methods for distributing project information and the advantages and disadvantages of each
4. Understand the relationship between the number of people involved in a project and the complexity of communications
5. Discuss sources of conflict on projects and strategies for managing them
6. Understand important aspects of verbal, non-verbal, and written communication and how to develop these skills
7. Describe various types of project documentation and understand the value of using templates for aiding in project communications
8. Describe how software can enhance project communications

# Chapter Outline

**Importance of Project Communications Management**

**Communications Planning**

**Information Distribution**

Using Technology to Enhance Information Distribution

Formal and Informal Methods for Distributing Information

Determining the Complexity of Communications

**Performance Reporting**

**Administrative Closure**

**Suggestions for Improving Project Communications**

Using Communication Skills to Resolve Conflict

Developing Better Communication Skills

Running Effective Meetings

Using Templates for Project Communications

Developing a Communications Infrastructure

**Using Software to Assist in Project Communications**

# Lecture Notes

## Importance of Project Communications Management

In Project Human Resource Management, every person is unique in what motivates him or her. Everyone is also unique in how they communicate. Information technology professionals are not known for being particularly strong communicators; communication skills are critical and can definitely be developed. Most people agree that it is their communications skills that help them advance the most in their careers. Interviewers are often looking for communications skills at job interviews.

Following are four important points for communication:

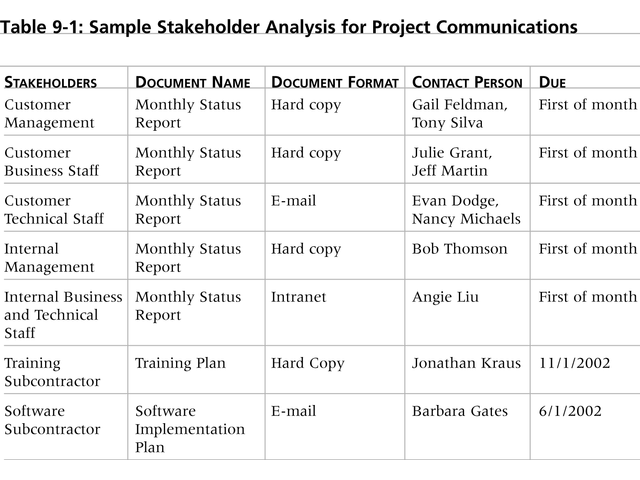
1. **Communications planning**: determining the information and communications needs of the stakeholders
2. **Information distribution**: making needed information available in a timely manner
3. **Performance reporting**: collecting and disseminating performance information
4. **Administrative closure**: generating, gathering, and disseminating information to formalize phase or project completion

## 1. Communications Planning

Most people have not heard of a communications management plan. It is also important to analyze project stakeholders' communications needs and preferences. Following are few observations for communication planning.

* 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

The sample for stakeholder analysis for project communications is shown in Table 9-1.



Important points for communication planning:

* A description of a collection and filing structure for gathering and storing various types of information
* A distribution structure describing what information goes to whom, when, and how
* A format for communicating key project information
* A project schedule for producing the information
* Access methods for obtaining the information
* A method for updating the communications management plans as the project progresses and develops
* A stakeholder communications analysis

## 2. Information Distribution

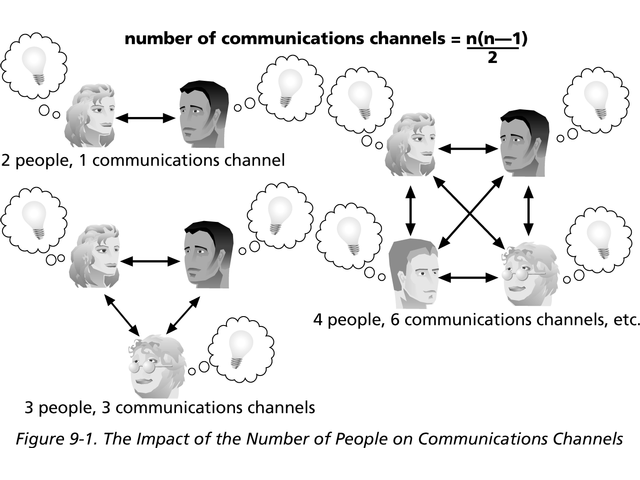
The various methods for distributing project information, using different forms of technology, and using informal and formal information distribution. The following two points in this regard:

* 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

Table 9-2 provides interesting information by useing different communications media.



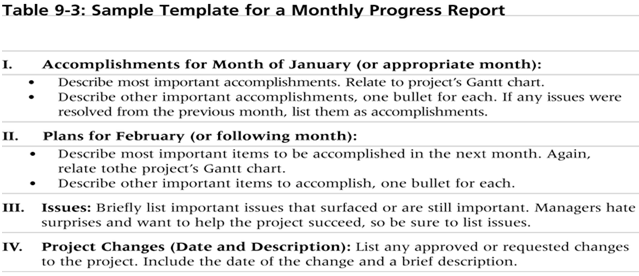
It is often assumed that adding more people to a project will automatically help accomplish more work. The issue of the complexity of communications as the number of people involved in a project increases. The formula for determining the number of communications channels ((n(n-1))/2). Figure 9-1 illustrates this concept. Those who study data communications and networks class, they should be familiar with this formula.



## 3. Performance Reporting

The importance of performance reports and status review meetings in project management, Project Integration Management, such as how important it is to align projects with organizational goals and to have top management support. Holding status review meetings is a powerful tool for accomplishing both, as well as an effective way to keep all stakeholders informed of what is happening on the project. **The difference between status reports, progress reports, and project forecasting.** The earned value analysis is a tool for showing progress in terms of meeting project scope, time, and cost goals and can be used to estimate completion time and cost. Few important points in this regard:

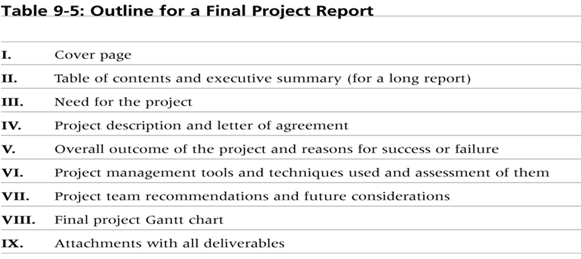
* Performance reporting keeps stakeholders informed about how resources are being used to achieve project objectives
  + **Status reports** describe where the project stands at a specific point in time
  + **Progress reports** describe what the project team has accomplished during a certain period of time (see table 9.3)
  + **Project forecasting** predicts future project status and progress based on past information and trends
  + **Status review** meetings often include performance reporting

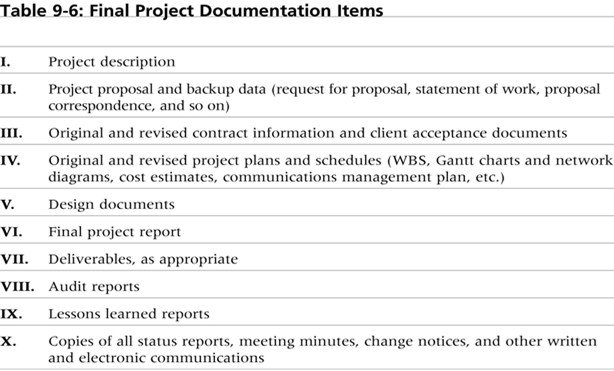


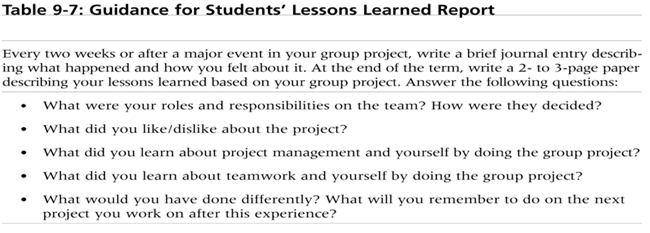
## 4. Administrative Closure

Administrative closure is done poorly on many projects. How important it is to prepare project archives, obtain formal acceptance of projects, and document lessons learned on projects. Often write a final project report to archive what they have done; the instructor determines acceptance by assigning grades, see Tables 9.5 to 9.8. Following important in this regard:

* A project or phase of a project requires closure
* Administrative closure produces
  + project archives
  + formal acceptance
  + lessons learned









**Using Software to Assist in Project Communications**

Summarize the different types of software that can assist in project communications⎯e-mail, the Web, workgroup software, Project 2010, mobile computing software, and so on. Review some Project 2010 features, such as inserting comments and hyperlinks by specific project tasks and saving files as html documents, as described in Appendix A. Also mention the importance of keeping the latest project information up-to-date and avoiding information overload by using too much technology.

