

READER HIGHLIGHTS

PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS
A Critical Factor for Project Success

AUDIENCE

Who this book is for:

- This book is designed for project managers, team members, project sponsors, and all stakeholders who are impacted by project actions, decisions, and outcomes.
- Educators can benefit by using this book in the classroom with students studying project management and project communication.



ABOUT THIS BOOK

Communication is vital for project success. Experts know it. Industrywide research verifies it. Yet projects continue to fail because of poor communication. As a result, stakeholders and organizations don't realize the benefits of their projects and project teams.

This book presents a new way to look at communication within projects. It offers:

- Real-world examples and practical tips to help you put concepts into practice in your project – right away
- Templates, activities, and resources you can use, adapt, and share
- Reflective questions and recommendations to connect what you read to what you know

Make your project communications a critical factor in your project success!

CHAPTERS

- 1.....Introduction
- 2.....Exploring Communication Theories
- 3.....Knowing Your Audience
- 4.....Starting with the Basics
- 5.....Planning Project Communications
- 6.....Managing and Monitoring Project Communications
- 7.....Using Project Communication Tools
- 8.....Communicating Change
- 9.....Managing Conflict through Communication
- 10...Closing

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Understand why project communication is so important
- Know what to expect from this book: what it will cover, who the audience is, how the book is structured, and key definitions
- Trace the evolution of project communications

Why is this important?

Because the *PMBOK® Guide* is written by project management practitioners from around the world and shows us how project communications (and project management knowledge) have progressed, not just from an individual perspective but from a global view.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Figure 1.1 An Overview of the Evolution of the Project Communications Knowledge Area in the PMBOK® Guide



CHAPTER 2

Exploring Communication Theories

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Understand why people communicate by looking at two different communication theories that focus on communication as a way people handle uncertainty
- Evaluate the impact of the quality as well as the quantity of communication in a project
- See the connection between effective communication and stakeholder trust

Why is this important?

Because understanding uncertainty as a motivator can help project managers and stakeholders appreciate the value of communication as a way to manage uncertainty.

CHAPTER 2

Exploring Communication Theories

Table 2.1 Comparison of uncertainty reduction and uncertainty management theories

| Theory | Uncertainty reduction theory | Uncertainty management theory |
|---|--|--|
| Definition of uncertainty | Uncertainty is a cognitive state based on an individual's knowledge, and is separate from emotion. | Uncertainty is both a cognitive (knowledge-based) and emotional state. |
| Evaluation of uncertainty | Uncertainty is always bad. | Uncertainty could be good or bad. |
| Behaviors that result from uncertainty | People will communicate in order to reduce uncertainty. | People may or may not communicate to reduce uncertainty based on how they evaluate the probability, impact, and emotional reaction to the uncertainty. |

CHAPTER 3

Knowing Your Audience

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Explore various recommendations for identifying the audience in your project, including their role, their level of power and influence over the project, and their level of support for the project
- See the value of understanding what is important to the members of your audience—the WIIFM (what’s in it for me)
- Become familiar with stakeholder personas as a communication approach
- Put it into practice: ***Know your audience*** in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

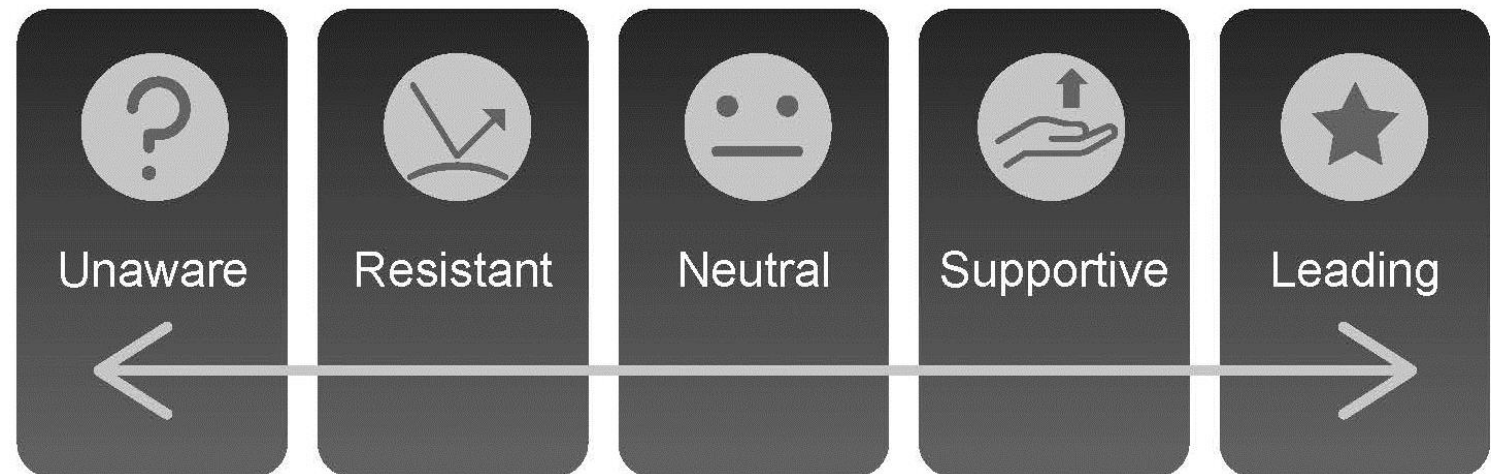
Why is this important?

By knowing your audience, you can tailor your communications for them, leading to decreased uncertainty, increased trust, and a greater possibility of project support and success.

CHAPTER 3

Knowing Your Audience

Figure 3.1 The spectrum of stakeholder engagement



CHAPTER 4

Starting with the Basics

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Look at how high-performing organizations and project teams communicate
- Identify things to consider when communicating on projects, including the need for inclusive language
- Distinguish between formal and informal communications
- Examine the scalability of project communications
- Put it into practice: *Project communication basics* in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

Why is this important?

Because it may stimulate new ideas for you to explore or reconfirm effective approaches that may already be working well for you. Make every word and interaction meaningful.

CHAPTER 4

Starting with the Basics

Exhibit 4.1

Sample ground rules for team communications

- The project manager will send a status update every Friday via e-mail by 5:00 p.m.
- Team leaders are responsible for updating any tasks that are impacted by the status update no later than 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning.
- Team members should talk with a team lead for clarification about tasks.
- The project sponsor is responsible for updating the leadership team on the project's status at least once a month or as requested.
- Inquiries about the status of the project that come in to any member of the team should be reported to the project manager.
- The project team will have at least one monthly face-to-face meeting or teleconference for an internal status update. All team members are expected to attend and participate in the

CHAPTER 5

Planning Project Communications

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Understand the purpose, content, and development of a project communications management plan
- Demonstrate how to effectively use a project communications management plan
- Examine a communications matrix
- Put it into practice: ***Planning communications*** in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

Why is this important?

Because a project communications management plan and its evolution help us to stay on track by delivering the right message, at the right time, to the right stakeholders, for the right reasons, using the right communication methods and frequency.

CHAPTER 5

Planning Project Communications

Exhibit 5.1

Communications management plan table of contents—sample outline

Table of contents

1. Overview and Purpose
2. Organizational Policies and Procedures
 - a. Communications Processes
 - b. Technology and Information Storage
3. Stakeholder Communications
4. Communications Matrix
5. Change Control
6. Project Team
 - a. Contact Information
 - b. Roles and Responsibilities

7. Reports

8. Appendix

CHAPTER 6

Managing and Monitoring Project Communications

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Build key skills needed to address stakeholders' practical needs and personal needs when communicating on projects—including a five-step approach
- Measure the effectiveness of your project communications
- Understand the importance of incorporating feedback loops
- Examine lessons learned and retrospectives
- Put it into practice: *Managing and monitoring communications* in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

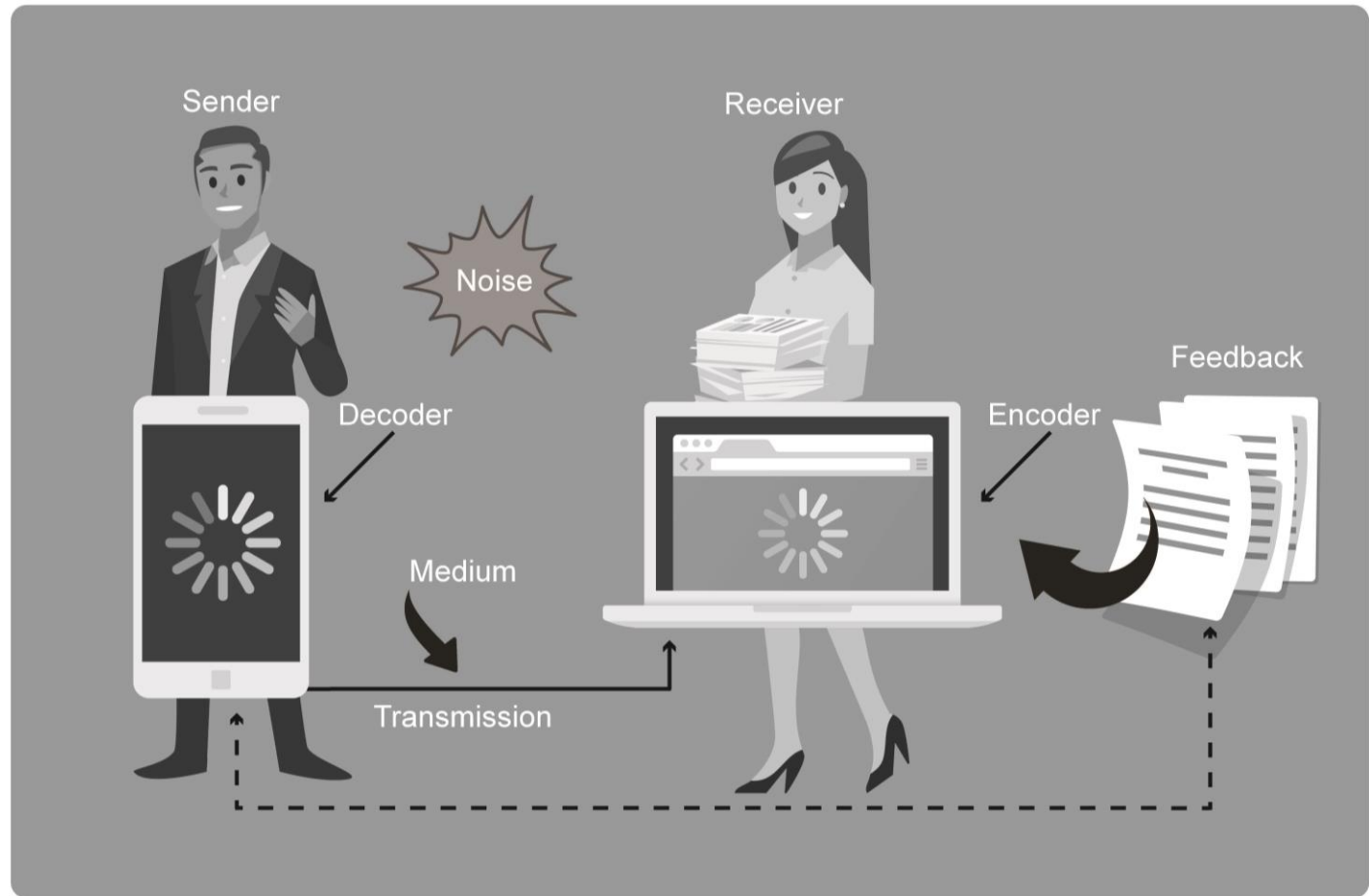
Why is this important?

Getting and giving feedback, having structured conversations, and addressing the personal and practical needs of the project team and stakeholders are all essential in managing and monitoring project communications.

CHAPTER 6

Managing and Monitoring Project Communications

Figure 6.4 Closing the feedback loop



CHAPTER 7

Using Project Communication Tools

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Consider what goes into choosing the right communication tools for your project
- Examine the purpose and benefits of different project communication tools
- Understand the importance of being knowledgeable about whatever communication tools you use for your project
- Put it into practice: *Using communication tools* in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

Why is this important?

Because tools are vital in communicating. In projects, we use a collection of tools when communicating. Even our talents and strengths are a tool. However, remember that our primary focus is on the message and the communication.

CHAPTER 7

Using Project Communication Tools

Figure 7.2 Depiction of synchronous and asynchronous communications



Synchronous Communication (co-located)



Synchronous Communication (virtual)



Asynchronous Communication

CHAPTER 8

Communicating Change

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Understand change management, including three common models of managing change
- Describe how change management and project management work together
- Integrate change management into a project through communications
- Put it into practice: *Communicating change* in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

Why is this important?

Because effective project communications that incorporate change management principles can help projects succeed and help organizations realize the benefits of the project.

CHAPTER 8

Communicating Change

Table 8.1 Stakeholder change map template

| Stakeholder | What should they know about the need for this change? | How will the project impact them? | What support will they need to take the actions required for project success? | What will reinforce the change with this group, even after the project ends? |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|
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CHAPTER 9

Managing Conflict through Communication

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- Examine two different types of conflict and how they can affect the project and the team
- Explore strategies for understanding and resolving conflict within the project team
- Consider ways to communicate with stakeholders when they do not support the project, when their expectations conflict with one another, or when the project deviates from the plan
- Put it into practice: ***Managing conflict through communication*** in traditional, agile, and virtual project teams

Why is this important?

Because like other problem-solving situations, we must address conflict with different strategies—using what works and/or adjusting when the approach does not work. Bottom line: Don't take it personally.

CHAPTER 9

Managing Conflict through Communication

Table 9.1 Interpersonal and task conflict

| Type of Conflict | Sources | Effects |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Interpersonal conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source is unrelated to the team's task• Emotional in nature• Arises from personal dislike, annoyance, personality incompatibility | Negative: Can lead to decline in performance and productivity, withdrawal from collaboration, departure from the team, project failure |
| Task conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source is related to the team's task• Cognitive in nature• Arises from difference in perspective | Positive: Can lead to creativity, new solutions, more flexibility in thinking Negative: Can escalate and/or evolve into interpersonal conflict if unresolved |

CHAPTER 10

Closing

The purpose of this chapter is to help you:

- See where we have been and where we are going from here
- Know how to put this information into a personalized action plan
- Explore different ways to communicate the value of project management

CHAPTER 10

Closing

Table 10.1 Action plan template

| Skill to work on | Steps to implement | Due date | Chapters to review | What does success look like? | Done ✓ |
|------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------|
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APPENDIX

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|------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| APPENDIX A | Evolution of Project Communications | A brief overview of the evolution of the Project Communications Management Knowledge Area in the PMBOK® Guide |
| APPENDIX B | Resource Guide | A list of additional resources on project management and communication |
| APPENDIX C | Templates | A consolidation of the templates presented throughout the book |
| APPENDIX D | Key Questions | A full list of the reflective questions from each chapter |
| APPENDIX E | Sample Ground Rules | A sampling of ground rules for project teams |

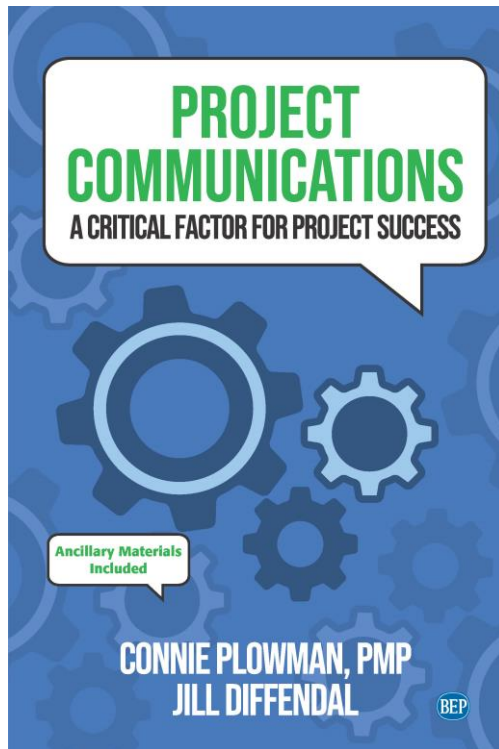
MEET THE AUTHORS



Connie Plowman is a certified project management professional (PMP®) and an experienced chief operating officer. She puts her communication skills to use in her leadership roles—as a corporate executive, educator, volunteer, mentor, and project advocate. She is a project management instructor and guest speaker, helping to develop the skills of emerging project managers and business leaders. As a participant on diverse global project teams, Connie has experienced how effective communication can truly drive project and team success.



Jill Diffendal is a seasoned writer, editor, communicator, and administrator with a passion for engaging audiences across a wide range of industries through traditional, electronic, and new media. She has spent her career communicating with people around the world through both operational and project-based work, focusing on stakeholder engagement and realization of benefits. As a communication subject matter expert, she emphasizes—and has experienced first-hand—the value and benefit that effective communication brings to projects, teams, and organizations.



CONTACT US!

BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS

www.businessexpertpress.com/

CONNIE PLOWMAN, PMP

plowmanconnie@gmail.com

www.linkedin.com/in/connieplowman/

JILL DIFFENDAL

jill.diffendal@gmail.com

www.linkedin.com/in/jill-diffendal/