

Managing a Project Team

Project Skills

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Preface

There are many reasons why managing people in a project environment are different from managing them in a departmental setting. These differences make the this aspect of the project manager's job more complex than his or her departmental equivalent even though they may be responsible for similar numbers of people. This means that a good project manager requires all of the people skills of a line manger together with an appreciation of the additional issues that exist in the project environment.

You will learn:

- Why human resource (HR) management is such an essential component of project management.
- How to identify and document project roles and creating an HR management plan.
- The importance of improving the overall team environment to enhance project performance.
- How to assess performance, provide feedback, resolve issues, and manage changes effectively.
- Why effective communication is vital to project success.
- The principles of good project communication.
- How to develop a communications plan.
- Where communications problems usually occur and how to pre-empt them.

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Introduction

There is nothing more important to the success of a project than the people who make up the project team. Without good people—who possess the knowledge, experience, and motivation to get the job done—all of your other planning will be quickly wasted. Putting together a project team is one of the very first steps of setting up a new project. Without the people to compose a quality team, you won't be able to make very much progress at all into the work that needs to be done.

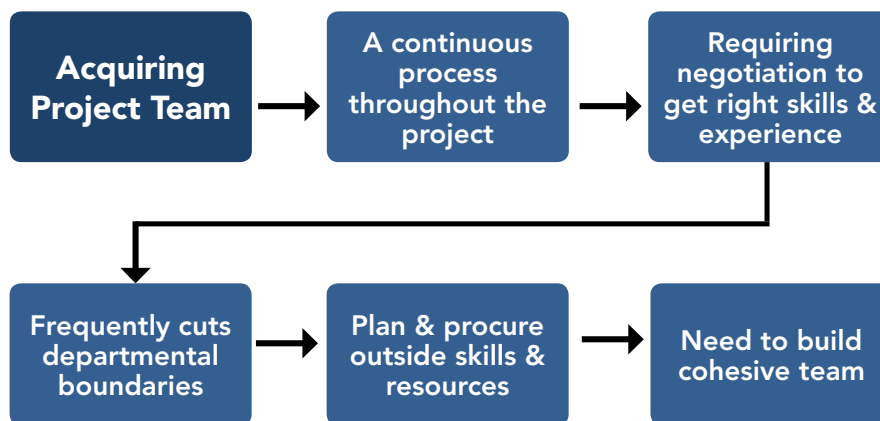


Assembling a good team is important in any phase of business, but it is especially important when managing a project to make sure that the work can get done on time and on budget. The process of acquiring a project team takes place within the executing processes and is concerned with confirming human resource availability and obtaining the personnel needed to complete project assignments.

It is complicated by the fact that individuals with different skills sets will be required at different points throughout the project. For example, a software project may be two-thirds completed before specialist testing personnel are needed. Consequently, acquiring members for a project team continues throughout the executing process group.

Managing a Project Team

Acquiring the project team is often complicated by the fact that the project management team will not usually have direct control over everyone they would like to have involved in the project. They may need to negotiate with others who are in a position to provide the right number of individuals with the appropriate level of knowledge skills and experience.



This situation is very common in projects that cut across departmental boundaries and failure to secure the necessary human resources can affect project schedules, budgets, customer satisfaction and quality, as well as increasing the risk that the project will simply fail to deliver on time and within budget. The impact of any unavailability of required human resources needs to be considered in the planning stages of the project.

There are generally two ways of building a team for a project—assembling in-house talent, and bringing in people from the outside. There are pros and cons to both methods, and a big project will likely need a blend of the two in order to succeed.

In-house Resources

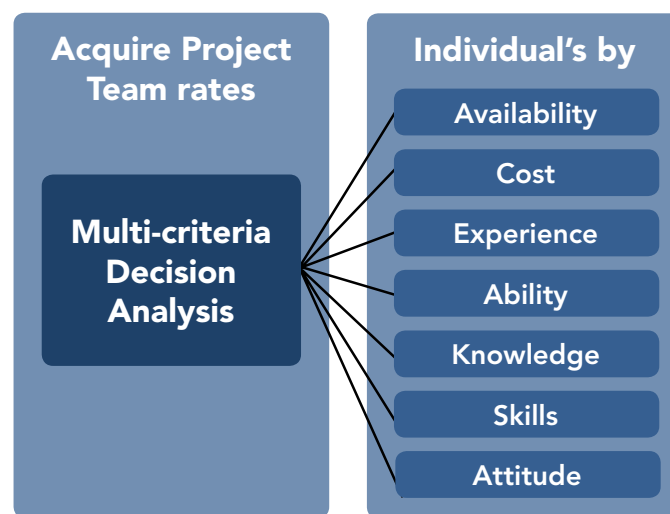
- Using people who are already within the organization is beneficial because they likely have knowledge relevant to the purpose of the project, even if the project is venturing into a new area for the company.
- Many of the skills that they currently use on a regular basis will likely transfer to the project tasks that they take on.
- Additionally, they are already on the payroll and won't cause you to incur some of the other expenses associated with bringing on new talent.

External Resources

However, looking outside the organization is necessary at times depending on what skills will be required.

- Need specialist skills during the project
- One way to have sufficient quantity of a scarce resource.
- You are venturing into a new area that isn't normally dealt with in your organization, bringing in new people who are experienced within that field is almost required for success.

If people are being brought in from outside of the organization, then the [procurement plan](#) should be referenced to ensure such external resources are obtained in accordance with organizational policy.



These new people could come in the way of full-time employees, part-time employees, or even contractors that you work with for a defined period of time. For each potential member of the project team you need to use a variety of different measures in the decision making process.

No matter who winds up composing your team, or where you acquire them from, building the right kind of team for the project is among the very top priorities of a project manager. Technology has made it easier and easier for companies to work with talented

individuals all around the world, so there is really no excuse for not finding the perfect talent for the task at hand.

Projects require specialized resources with the skills, competencies and experience to fill a variety of critical roles. Equally important to determining which skills and how much experience is needed for project roles is the requirement to fill those roles with resources that actually possess those skills and competencies.

This topic deals with getting people on board the project and then, leading and managing them effectively. In this eBook we use the terms:

'Project team' or 'Team members' to refer to those people doing the actual work of the project.

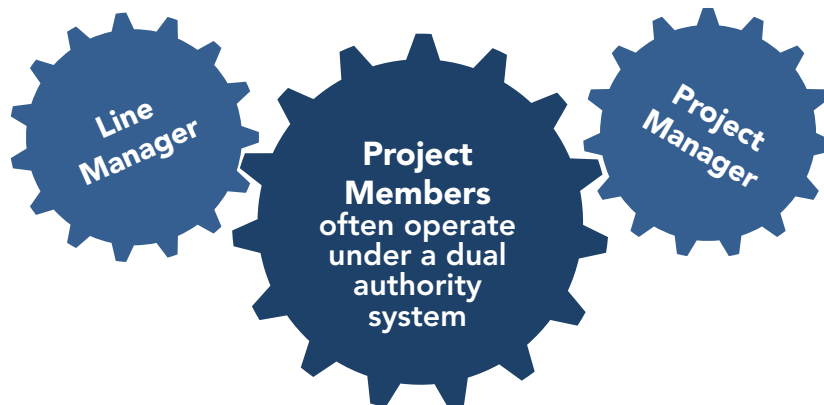
'Project management team' to refer to anyone involved with managing the project.

The project management team is usually a subset of the project team and is responsible for the project management and leadership activities such as initiating, planning, executing, monitoring & controlling, and closing the various project phases.

The number of people assigned to the project may change as the project progresses, particularly when people are needed for their particular technical expertise. The project team should be assigned to the project as early as possible so that they can take some part in the planning process. Even though team members are not responsible for planning as such, many of them will have specific expertise that can help to make the initial estimates more accurate.

Another reason for involving team members in the early stages of planning is that it strengthens commitment to the project, something that is vital for success but which is often overlooked because it cannot be measured objectively and because its importance only becomes apparent when the project hits problems.

This topic is explained in detail in this eBook as it is right at the heart of successful project management because project work is actually done by people, not by project management methodologies, frameworks or software. This is often conducted in a matrix management environment especially in highly collaborative projects that bring individuals from functional departments (e.g. marketing, customer services, finance, etc.) into the project team.



This means that most of the project members operate under a dual authority system—they report to their own line manager as well as the project manager. For you as the project manager this means that you will have to ensure your communication channels between you and the line managers are effective and must be addressed in your [communications management plan](#).

In addition, appreciating that the line managers' priorities are often going to be different to those of your project will help you when discussing the availability of resources. If not handled properly, this has the potential for conflict and confusion, which will inevitably lead to a decrease in performance.

One key aspect of maintaining your team's performance in this matrix structure is getting the 'right' resources at the time required by the plan. If your team members are willing but lack the necessary skills to perform their project role then the whole team's performance will decline.

The success of the matrix team structure is reliant on senior management's support for the project and for establishing the correct procedures and processes that support this type of environment. You can check out the complete range of [project management pdf](#) eBooks free from this website.

KEY POINTS

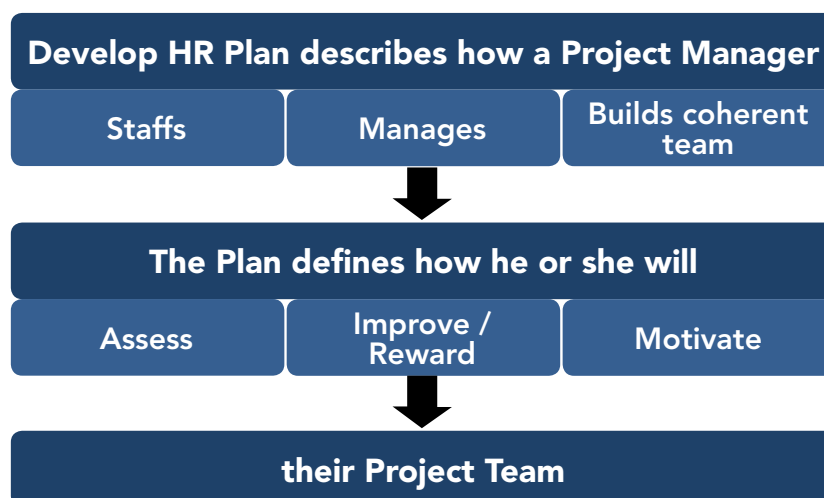
- ✓ The project team should be assigned to the project as early as possible so that they can take some part in the planning process as many of them will have specific expertise that can help to make the initial estimates more accurate.

- ✓ Early involvement also strengthens commitment to the project, something that is vital for success but which is often overlooked.
- ✓ To build a project team a combination of in-house talent, and bringing in people from the outside is the most efficient way to satisfy the demand for skills and expertise.
- ✓ Matrix management and its associated environment are increasingly used to perform projects.
- ✓ Writing a Communication Management Plan is an essential to successfully manage the human element of a project.

Developing the Human Resources Plan

Without the right people available, you might find that the project struggles to stay afloat. Much like assembling a team in sports, building a project team requires that the manager take an overall look at the requirements of the project and then fills the team with people whose skills complement each other perfectly.

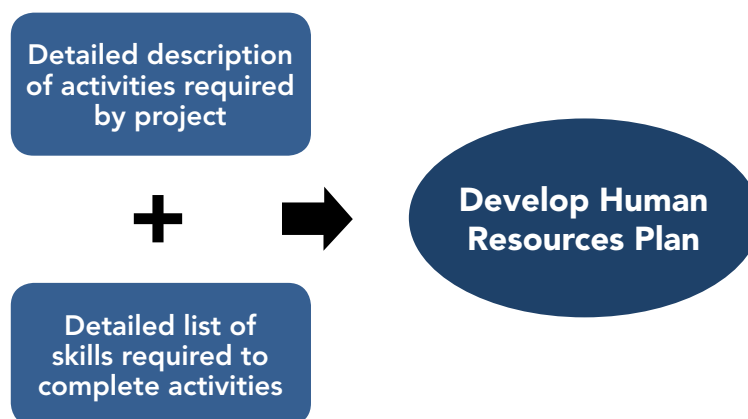
It isn't enough to have great people on a team—those people need to make sense with what they bring to the table and what they can contribute toward the overall end goal of the project. This is why a plan to manage the human resource element of the project must be written and fed into the overall [project management plan](#).



The project manager must define the skills and knowledge required for each role within the team and then assigns the appropriate responsibilities to each role to ensure that he or she has a cohesive team. Successful project human resources management will build and maintain a team that can bring the vision to life. Therefore this process is executed early within the project and is performed iteratively and interactively with other aspects of planning such as time, cost and scope.

The project [Human Resources \(HR\) management plan](#) details the roles, responsibilities, required skills and reporting relationships required for project success. It includes project organization charts and the timetable for staff acquisition and release, and may also include identification of training needs, team-building strategies, recognition programs, compliance considerations and safety issues.

A necessary prerequisite for developing this plan is a detailed description of the [activities](#) required by the project and the skills required to complete them. The plan will need to take into account the availability of, or competition for, scarce or limited human resources because other projects or departments may be competing for resources with the same competencies or skill sets.



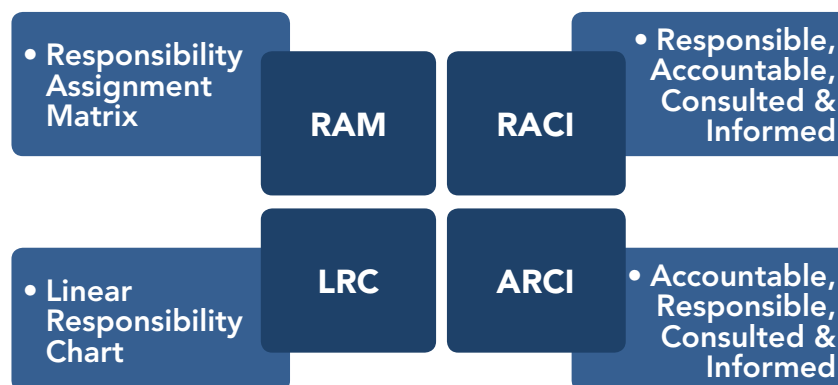
A project manager will often be managing his or her project in a 'matrix' environment, which demands a clear strategy and plan for managing project communications between all relevant parties. Individuals and their usual line-managers need to be reassured that their performance and development is recognized within this dual-reporting relationship.

An essential prerequisite in these circumstances is the support and buy-in of senior executives, without this, procedures will be constantly challenged within the organization as self-interests are given priority over those of the project. A project manager will need to invest considerable time in networking between all the different parties connected to the project. This is how he or she will gain the understanding and be able to show their empathy with each person's personality, professionalism, competency, and perhaps most importantly their 'interest' in the project.

Networking is best done informally, for example by taking someone for lunch or simply chatting over a coffee. It can be tempting not to bother with this because it can seem less important than producing charts and all of the other more tangible outputs of the [project management process](#).

This is invariably a big mistake to make, because people deliver a project, so being able to understand their interest and motivation is critical to your success. By committing sufficient time to produce an HR plan, and its associated management plans of [communications](#) and [stakeholder](#), will minimize conflict and get things done.

An essential section of your HR management plan must be the documenting team member roles and their associated responsibilities. There are several methods that can be utilized, the objective is to ensure that each [work package](#) has an unambiguous owner and that everyone involved in the project has a clear understanding of their responsibilities.



One of the most useful formats is the [responsibility assignment matrix \(RAM\)](#). This is used to illustrate the connections between work packages or activities and project team members. Other names for this type of matrix are:

RAM—Responsibility Assignment Matrix

RACI—Responsible, Accountable, Consulted & Informed

ARCI—Accountable, Responsible, Consulted & Informed

LRC—Linear Responsibility Chart

These can be developed at various levels, for example a high-level RAM can define which particular team is responsible each component of the [work breakdown structure](#). This can then be decomposed within the group to designate roles, responsibilities, and levels of authority for specific activities.

The benefit of the matrix format is that it shows all of the activities associated with each team member and all team members associated with each activity. This also ensures that the HR management plan only shows one person accountable for any one task to avoid confusion as shown below.

| Function | Project Sponsor | Project Manager | Developer | Analyst |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| Project Initiation | C | A | R | |
| Establish Project Plan | I | A | R | C |
| Collate User Requirement | I | A | I | R |
| Define Technical Requirements | I | A | I | R |
| Develop Software Tools | I | A | R | C |
| Test Software | I | A | C | R |
| Install Software | C | A | C | R |

These designations are used to indicate who in the team has which specific function for each deliverable.

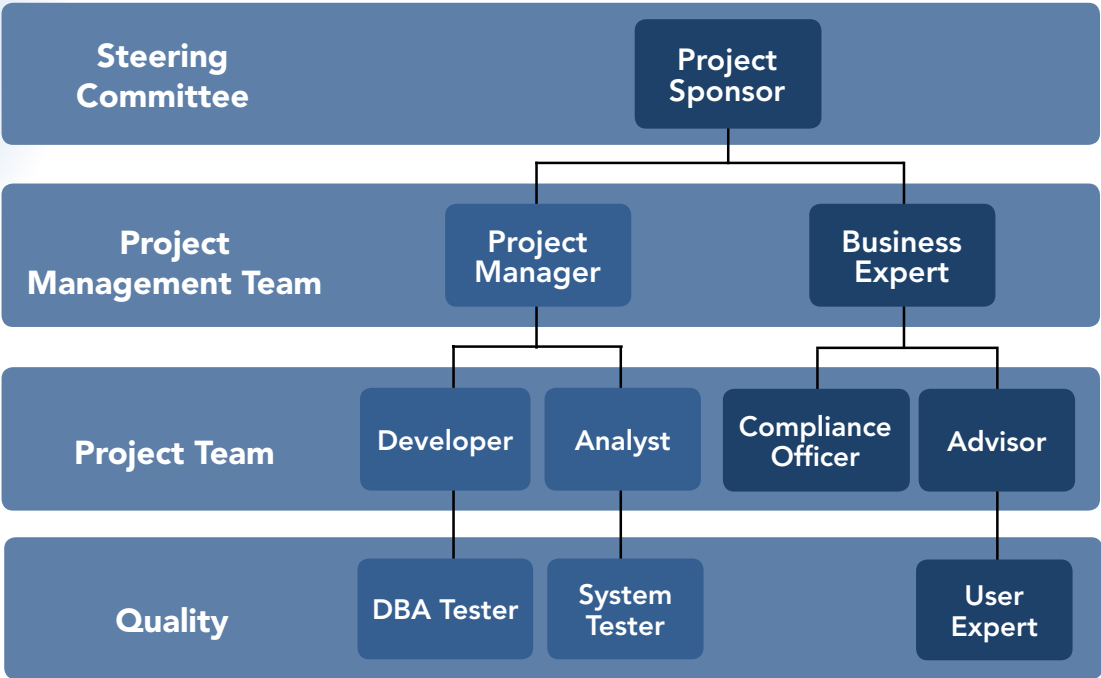
R—Responsible for doing the work

A—Accountable for the work being done

C—Must be consulted for input

I—Must be kept informed of progress and results

This example chart shows the work to be done in the left column as activities with the assigned resources along the top. The RACI is useful when the team consists of internal and external resources to ensure clear divisions of roles and expectations. Traditional organization charts like the one shown below can be used to show positions and relationships in a graphical, top-down format.



It is usually a good idea to draw up an [organizational break down structure \(OBS\)](#) and a chart specifically for each individual project and to show only those departments and functions that are relevant. This will help to make responsibilities and reporting structures clear to everyone involved. This is particularly important for outside contractors who may have no previous experience of dealing with the organization.

A project organization diagram should clearly show the reporting structure for the project with as many levels as needed to express the project organization clearly. At the very least it needs to show whom the project manager reports to and who reports to the project manager for their respective project activities.

Detailed descriptions of team member responsibilities should be specified in position descriptions and role-responsibility-authority forms. Some responsibilities are usually detailed in the relevant sections of the project plan. For example,

[Risk register](#) lists risk owners,

[Quality plan](#) designates those responsible for carrying out quality assurance and quality control activities.



The HR management plan provides guidance on how project human resources should be defined, staffed, managed, controlled, and eventually released. The structure of this important document consists of:

- **Role**—Describes the portion of a project for which a person is accountable as well as their authority, responsibilities, and boundaries. Examples include: engineer, business analyst, expert user, etc. It also describes their knowledge, skills and level of competency needed in order to carry out their role within this project.
- **Responsibility**—Describes the work that a project team member is expected to perform in order to complete the project's activities.
- **Authority**—Levels of authority should match role responsibilities and include the right to assign project resources, make decisions, and sign approvals.
- **Competency**—Describes the skills required to complete specific activities.
- **Project Organization Charts**—This is a graphic display of project team members and their reporting relationships.

- **Staffing Management Plan**—This is a part of the human resources plan within the project plan and describes when and how human resource requirements will be met. It includes:
 - The staff acquisition processes
 - A timetable for staffing requirements
 - A description of how and when staff will be released from the project
 - Staff training and development needs
 - Health and safety policies

The HR management plan can be formal or informal, highly detailed or broadly framed, depending upon the needs of the project. The plan is updated continually during the project to direct ongoing team member acquisition and development actions.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ It is the project manager's job to define roles, associated responsibilities and reporting relationships.
- ✓ These can then be detailed in the project human resources plan.
- ✓ Many project managers find themselves managing people through a series of dual-reporting relationships instead of a more traditional linear management structure.
- ✓ Its associated management plans for Communications and Stakeholders play a key role in ensuring the project manager understands and is able to empathize with the different interests individuals have in the project.
- ✓ The importance of networking at all levels for any project manager.
- ✓ If procedures are not explicitly made clear at the start of the project then this has the potential to create confusion and conflict.
- ✓ Each work package should have an unambiguous owner and that everyone involved in the project has a clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- ✓ A responsibility assignment matrix (RAM) can be used to illustrate the connections between work packages or activities and project team members.
- ✓ The HR plan provides guidance on how project human resources should be defined, staffed, managed, controlled, and eventually released.

Building an Effective Project Team

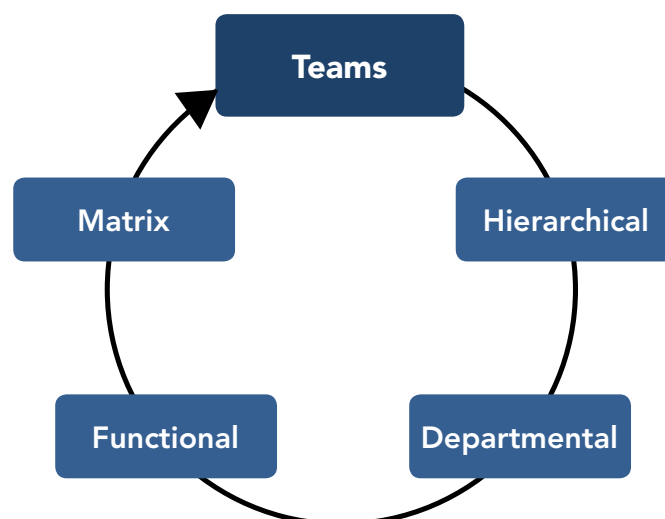
During the executing phase the HR management plan describes how confirming the necessary human resource availability and obtaining the personnel needed to complete project assignments is achieved. It is complicated by the fact that individuals with different skills sets will be required at different points throughout the project and the HR plan outlines how this will be accomplished.

For example,

A software project may be two-thirds completed before specialist testing personnel are needed.

Consequently, acquiring members for a project team continues throughout the executing process group.

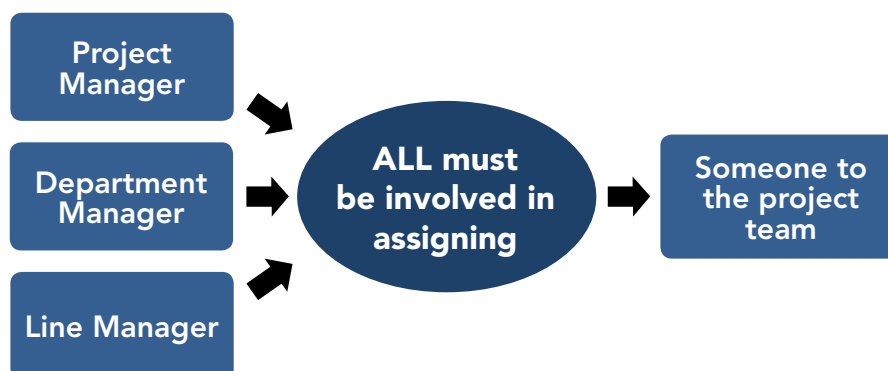
Team working has been an important organizational issue for many years. However, the concept has historically described work within permanent functional teams such as sales, production and design. The rapid growth of project-based work has given rise to the creation of multi-disciplinary teams capable of rapidly accomplishing tasks that span the traditional internal boundaries present in many organizations.



Successful team working requires careful consideration and design, such issues are address within the [HR management plan](#) and its related [communications](#) and [stakeholder](#) management plans. Generally, the more that an organization has tended towards a traditional hierarchical structure, the greater will be the challenge of implementing effective inter-departmental project teams.

Project teams can take on a variety of forms depending on the size of the project and the way in which it is staffed. Project environments range from dedicated and full-time project teams, through to instances where projects have little or no full time resource and operate by using only the resources from existing functional departments.

Organizations that are project orientated tend to maintain a full-time dedicated project resource, which is generically termed a project office. Project office staff will tend to specialize in areas such as: planning, [testing, auditing](#) and the monitoring of time, cost and performance against the plans. These staff will usually report to a single boss, who may be either a project manager or a project office manager.



Departmental staff will be recruited on the basis of the skills and expertise that they can bring to the project. However, the appropriate technical or business skills need to be complemented by an ability and willingness to function effectively in the project environment. These individual's will report to the project manager, but they remain under the overall control of their own departmental, or line manager—they are therefore working in what is called a matrix management environment.

The appointment of departmental staff to projects should be a decision made jointly by the relevant project and departmental, or line, managers. The involvement of line managers in these appointments is important as they have the necessary experience

to highlight critical areas of the project from a technical viewpoint. Furthermore, by involving line managers in the early stages of project planning they are more likely to develop a positive attitude to the project.

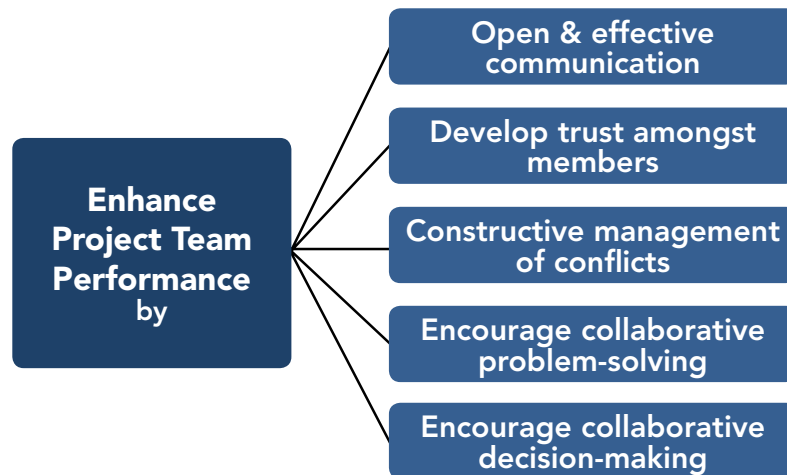
Disagreements may result in the negotiations between the project and the line manager on both the level of staffing required by the project and possibly over the individuals to be assigned. However, only in situations where an impasse has been reached should senior management be asked to arbitrate.

The [human resource plan](#) provides guidance on how project human resources should be identified, staffed, managed, controlled, and eventually released. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of each team member clarifying their authority and relevant competency. Project organization charts are used to show the reporting relationships often using as a [responsibility assignment matrix \(RAM\)](#) or an equivalent method.

The plan also outlines the planned staff acquisition, release plan and resource calendars to show how they will be used on the project. It highlights how any training needs, recognition, rewards, compliance and safety will be met during the life of the project.

If resources are needed that are not available within the organization then they may also need to deal with outside agencies or other suppliers. Many organizations will have a list of preferred suppliers and may also have previously agreed terms and conditions for dealing with them. The [procurement plan](#) should be referenced to ensure that all external resources are obtained in accordance with organizational policy.

The virtual team format makes it possible to form teams of people from the same company who live in widespread geographic areas, use employees who work from home, and include people with mobility limitations or disabilities. It can also cut down on the expense of having the whole team in one place and in travel expenses.



How project team performance will be managed is described in the plan and states how they aim to develop such productivity by using open and effective communication, developing trust among team members, managing conflicts in a constructive manner, and encouraging collaborative problem-solving and decision-making. Team [leadership](#) and team building is such an important and complex topic that an aspiring project manager should take the time to study as much as possible on this subject.

For the purpose of project management there are some general points you should take into account when executing this process. These are:

1. Addressing team member's concerns about joining the project
2. Encouraging ownership of project tasks

Try to arrange a one-to-one discussion with each team member in order to welcome him or her to the team and establish personal contact. A short and informal discussion represents an opportunity to motivate people from the very beginning of their involvement with the project. This opportunity should not be wasted because a positive attitude to the project will deliver numerous benefits in terms of enthusiasm and performance.

Remember, projects have the potential to be seen as dynamic working environments, providing an opportunity to work with personnel from other areas of the organization and enabling staff to gain new skills and enhance their career prospects.

This discussion is also important because it can help reduce the inevitable anxiety and stress by addressing any concerns that new team members may have. It typically is focused on five key issues.

1) Lack of familiarity with other members of team

If the project manager, or their assistants are unfamiliar to the team members then the team members will naturally be concerned about the manager's leadership style and how it will affect their everyday work.

2) Correlation of project needs to their skills and interests

They may be concerned about the nature of the project and whether or not it will match their own level of expertise and professional interests.

3) Technical viability and likelihood of success

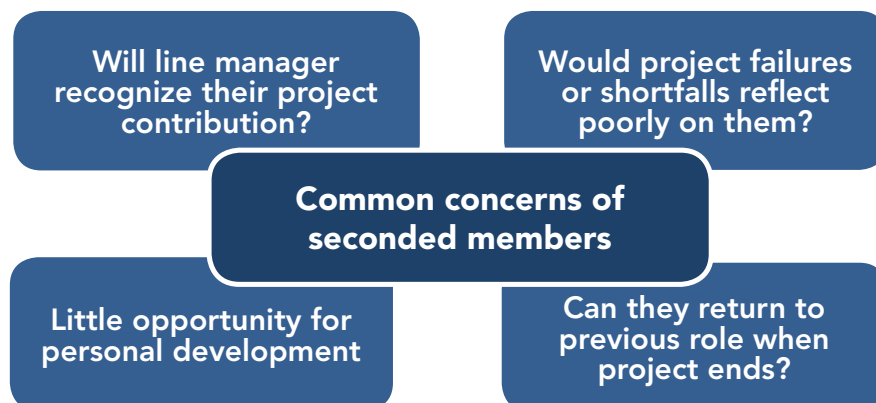
Furthermore they might have private worries about the technical viability of the project and how its failure may reflect on them.

4) Probability of relocation

If involvement with the project involves relocation, either within a building or more remotely, then management should bear in mind that this often causes heightened anxiety and stress amongst project team members.

5) Fair allocation of work

The fair distribution of the workload may be an area of concern, as may the perceived level of proficiency and dedication of some of their new colleagues.



The following concerns are often felt by staff seconded to projects from other departments who may feel increasingly isolated and left behind in relation to their long time colleagues and the departmental practices with which they are familiar. They may be concerned:

1. About the extent to which the efforts they expend on project related work would be recognized and may feel that undertaking project related work might jeopardize their career prospects. They may believe that however hard they work on the project it will not affect their chances of advancement within their own department.
2. That the project itself may not be an outstanding success and that any perceived failure on its part will reflect badly on them as individuals.
3. About what happens to them at the end of the project. Perhaps their department will learn to cope without them develop new procedures whilst they are away.
4. Projects are not seen as training oriented environments in which to develop personal skills.

One of the great challenges of project management is to bring together an effective team and bring it up to speed quickly. This is one of the key aims of any HR project management plan. One way to do this is to encourage their ownership of project tasks by involving all team members or team leaders in the planning and scheduling of the activities that they will work on.

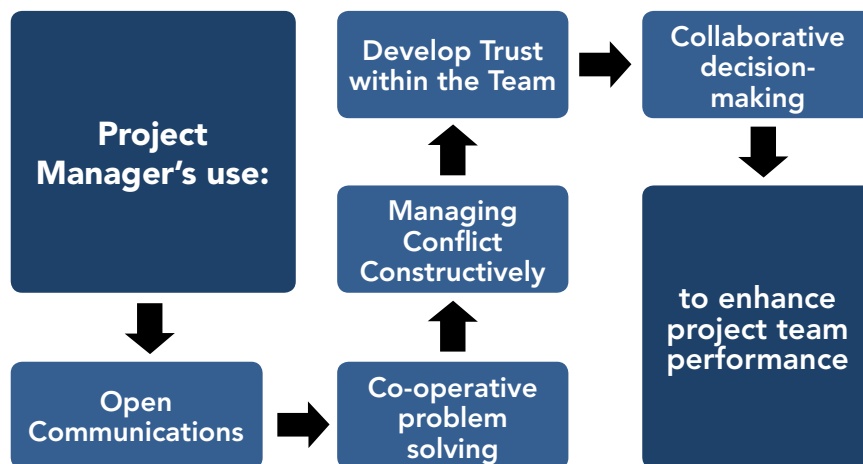
KEY POINTS

- ✓ Individuals with different skills sets will be required at different points throughout the project.
- ✓ This means that the process of building an effective project team is an ongoing one.
- ✓ Team building is such an important and complex topic that an aspiring project manager should take the time to study as much as possible on this subject.
- ✓ Various tools are available such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. These tools give the project manager and the project team insight into areas of strength and weakness.

- ✓ Anxiety among team members is natural and this needs to be addressed as early as possible so that project staff can focus on the needs of the project rather than on their own anxieties.
- ✓ Communications between different team members and stakeholders are a critical part of managing the human resources element of a project.

Developing the Project Team

Even if you are able to assemble a 'perfect' team for your project, there is still work to be done in terms of bringing that team together. Since you are starting up a project that is new to your organization, you will need to mold the team to precisely fit what you are trying to accomplish.



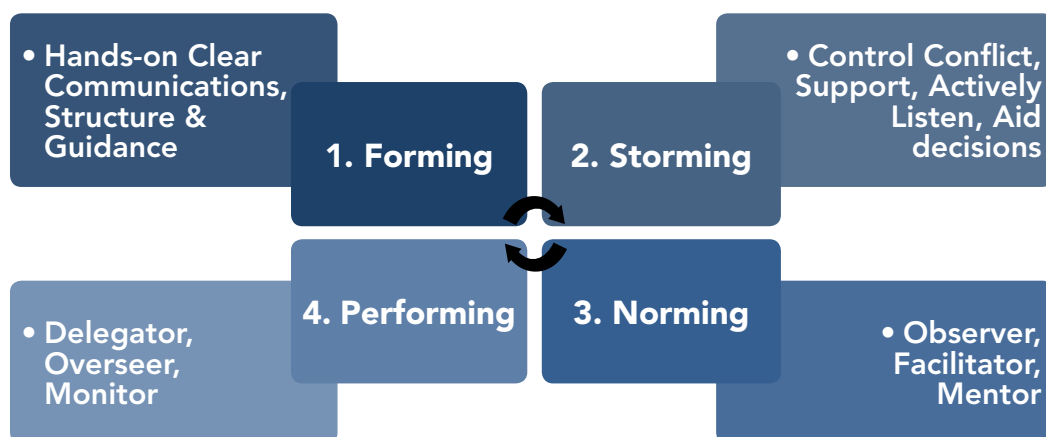
As project manager there are several ways you can enhance the performance of your team they are:

- Open & effective communication
- Develop trust amongst members
- Constructive management of conflicts
- Encourage collaborative problem-solving
- Encourage collaborative decision-making.

While all the skills and experiences that you need might exist within the team members, developing the team is still important to get all of them into the right roles and understanding what they are trying to do. This is especially crucial during big projects where they may be a number of smaller groups that report to their own supervisors before answering to the lead project manager.

If at all possible, the majority of the team development should take place before the project has actually started and be documented in the [HR plan](#). You want to be able to hit the ground running within any project, but that is only possible when everyone on the team knows what their role is and what is expected of them. Ideally, the team will feel like a cohesive unit before the project is even officially underway.

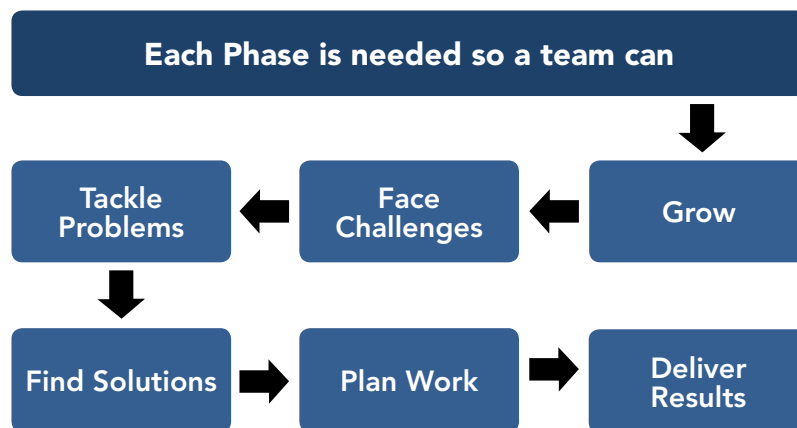
Developing a climate of open and frank communication will lead to an increased sharing of ideas between team members. They are then more likely to collectively develop more effective decision-making and project control processes.



One of the most influential studies in this area is Bruce Tuckman's (1965). He proposed the four-stage model called Tuckman's stages for a group, the diagram above shows the four stages of the ideal group decision-making process and the project managers role in that stage.

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing

Tuckman maintained that these phases are all necessary and inevitable in order for the team to grow, to face up to challenges, to tackle problems, to find solutions, to plan work, and to deliver results. This model has become the basis for subsequent models and it is important to understand the process of each stage and its concepts so that you can apply it to your workplace. To read more about other team development models download the [Team Development](#) eBook from this website.



Generally speaking behavioral guidelines are more important when the project team is being drawn from diverse backgrounds that have different behavioral norms. Early commitment to clear guidelines decreases misunderstandings and increases productivity. All project team members share responsibility for enforcing the rules once they are established.

Recognizing and rewarding desirable behavior is an important part of successful team building. In most cases, the project manager will not have the authority or funding to give out monetary rewards. The opportunity to gain new skills can add long-term earning potential and in many cases will represent a more significant reward in monetary terms than a one-off cash bonus. Where a training course has already been commissioned it is usually possible to offer additional places on it at minimal cost.

Similarly, changing someone's role description from 'Expert User' to 'Senior Expert User' explicitly acknowledges that they have taken on more responsibility and is something that they can use to enhance their resume.

Various tools are available such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. They help project managers assess the team

preferences, aspirations, how they process and organize information, how they tend to make decisions, and how they prefer to interact with people.

The criteria by which performance will be assessed should be objective, based on agreed project objectives wherever possible and where possible take a wider view of things. The evaluation of a team's effectiveness may include indicators such as:

- Improvements in skills that allow individuals to perform assignments more effectively,
- Improvements in competencies that help the team perform better as a team,
- Reduced staff turnover rate, and
- Increased team cohesiveness where team members share information and experiences openly and help each other to improve the overall project performance.



These performance assessments may suggest specific training is needed or that changes are required within the project organization. This information needs to be reflected back into the organization so that these new enhanced skills can provide increased benefits for future projects or operational work by the individuals concerned.

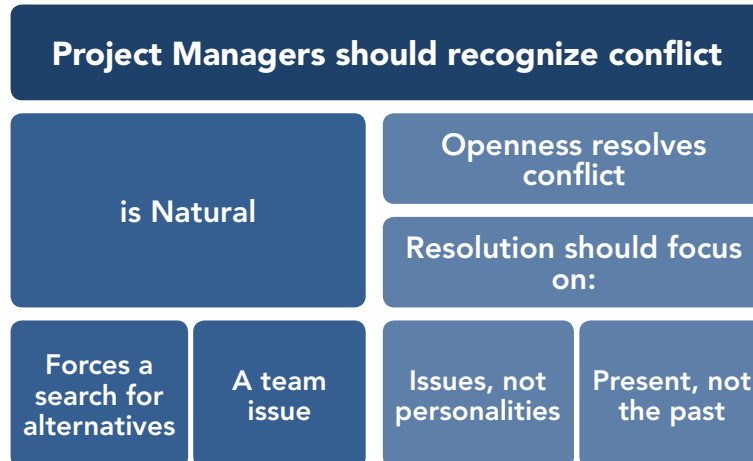
KEY POINTS

- ✓ Individuals with different skills sets will be required at different points throughout the project.
- ✓ This means that the process of building an effective project team is an ongoing one.
- ✓ Team building is such an important and complex topic that an aspiring project manager should take the time to study as much as possible on this subject.

- ✓ Various tools are available such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. These tools give the project manager and the project team insight into areas of strength and weakness.
- ✓ Anxiety among team members is natural and this needs to be addressed as early as possible so that project staff can focus on the needs of the project rather than on their own anxieties.

Dealing with Conflict in the Project Team

As any experienced [leader](#) can attest, expecting a team of people to work together seamlessly from the start of a project to the end is likely unrealistic. Teams are made up of individuals who have their own personalities, feelings, backgrounds, and more. Conflict is an inevitable consequence of project work; where there is constant pressure to achieve targets within strict time and resource constraints.

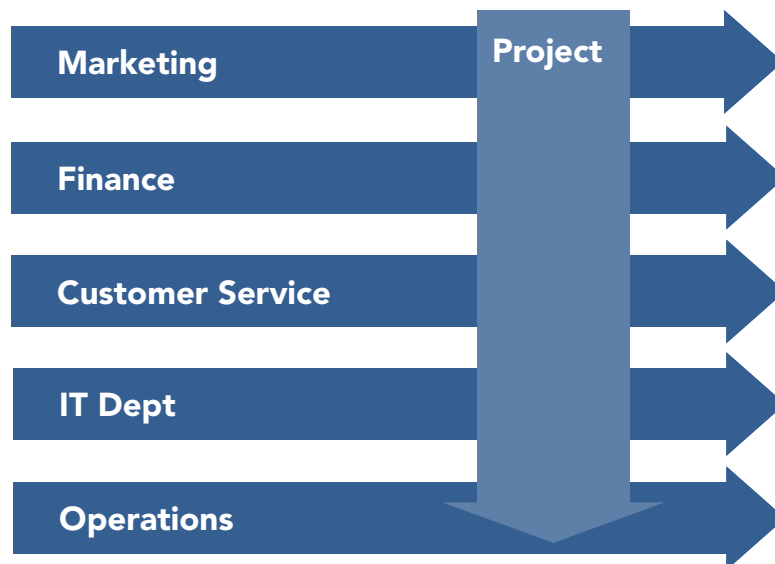


There are many more examples of why conflict occurs during project and all successful project managers need to be aware of how best to deal with it. Generally speaking conflict should be addressed early and usually in private, using a direct, collaborative approach. It is important to recognize that:

- Conflict is natural and forces a search for alternatives,
- Conflict is a team issue,

- Openness resolves conflict,
- Conflict resolution should focus on issues, not personalities, and
- Conflict resolution should focus on the present, not the past.
- Conflict often arises from necessary decisions that inconvenience people

In a pure project environment, the human resources decision-making authority rests with the project manager. However, in a matrix environment where resources are being borrowed from other departments, all major decisions will be reached by agreement between the project manager and the relevant line manager.



Conflict arises because project managers tend to view their own project as taking priority whereas departmental managers will tend to view things from a departmental perspective. This becomes especially evident when a project falls behind schedule and external departments are then expected to extend their commitment of personnel to it.

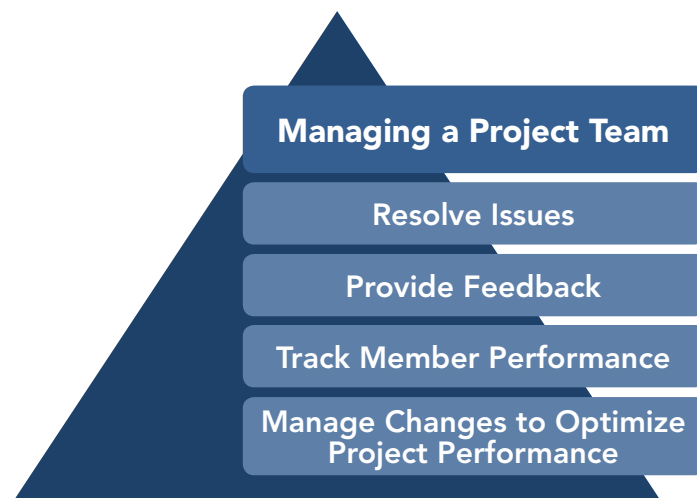
Another issue is that it is in the project manager's interest to minimize each external departments billing to the project but departmental managers often try to secure as much of the projects budget as possible.

In addition, technical conflicts are common where a department is supporting the project in a technical capacity and project manager rejects the solution preferred by the department on technical, cost or scheduling grounds.

As well as conflicts between the project management team and people outside of the project, there are often internal conflicts to deal with. In these cases the project manager will usually have the final say. He or she must step in and handle these kinds of conflicts to make sure that progress is being made and the project is continuing to move in the right direction.

The aim should always be to resolve things in a way that everyone involved can live with rather than coming down too firmly on one side at the expense of the other. The effect of doing the latter may be to alienate one of the protagonists to such an extent that they leave resulting in valuable time and effort being wasted replacing them.

Even if your [team](#) is getting along well from a personality standpoint, there is still management to be done. Overseeing the productivity and reliability of each of your team members is important to stay on track to meeting the deadline of the project as a whole. Only when the individual people that make up your team are on track will the project be able to move forward properly.

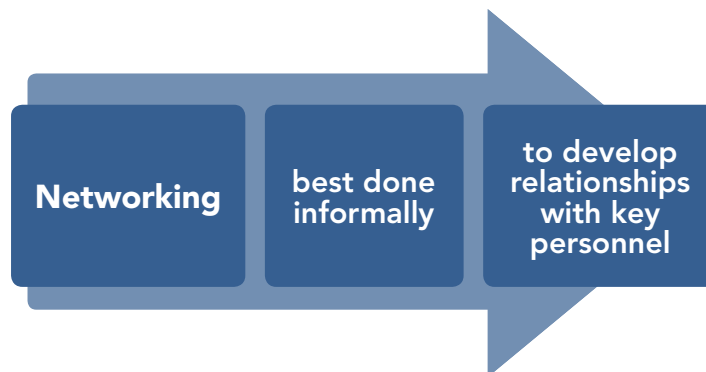


The skill of a good project manager really starts to show through when they are able to get the best out of each and every person on the team. Project [HR management](#) is critically important for reasons that should be relatively obvious. Without a good team of people working on a project, it is going to have trouble getting traction and is unlikely to ever be completed.

People are what make projects move forward, even more so than resources like equipment or money. If you are serious about being successful with your next project, you should leave no stone unturned in finding the best possible team that is available to you.

Part of this success relies on your ability to manage the working relationships of the different groups of people involved in the project—team members, contractors, [stakeholders](#) and the sponsor. Managing the [communications](#) between each of these groups is vital to the success of a project. Being able to plan what to communicate to who and when is critical for a project manager.

Those who are proficient project managers have developed the ability to quickly and accurately discern the personalities, competence, knowledge and skills so that they can assess the level of interest and influence each individual working on the project has. One of the most efficient tools used is that of 'networking' with all those involved in the project environment.



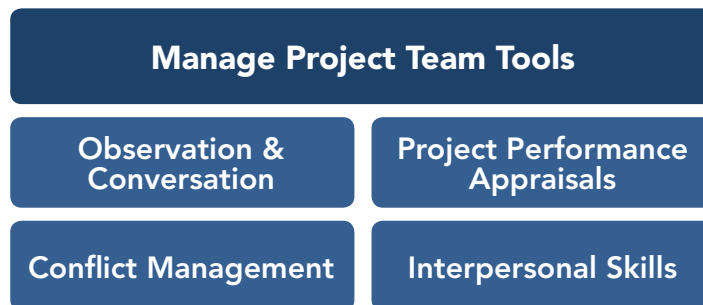
Networking is most effective when conducted informally such as during a break, travelling to meetings or over lunch. This enables the project manager to fully understand the interest and motivation of the different individuals needed to complete the project on time and within budget. By building up this depth of understanding of the people working in your project environment you can minimize conflict and get things done, because it is people who deliver a project.

It can be tempting not to bother networking because it seems less important than producing charts, updating plans and all of the other more tangible outputs of the [project management process](#), but is a dangerous approach because important snippets of how people really feel are more often than not revealed this way.

Effective networker's [actively listen](#) to the words, mannerisms and postures of the other person are able to communicate more efficiently with other project team members and stakeholders. Managing human resources is probably one of the most complex areas for a project manager requiring a wide range of interpersonal skills, it must not be neglected or overlooked.

Whilst such issues cannot be removed completely, the damage they cause can be reduced or contained by following certain management principles:

- Track team member performance
- Create and enforce an efficient reporting structure
- Provide constructive feedback
- Resolve issues without apportioning blame
- Manage changes to optimize project performance.

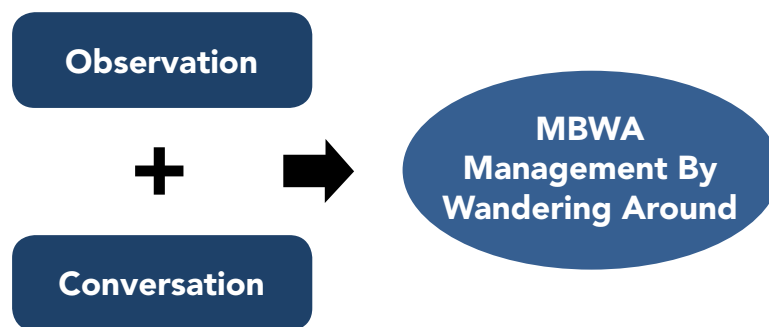


Project managers have to have excellent communication, conflict management, negotiation, and leadership skills to be successful. There are management tools you should use to enhance and develop your skills one such tool is conducting performance appraisals for those on the project team. Our online library has free eBooks, checklists and templates on [leadership](#), [communications](#), [appraisal](#), [coaching](#) and [people skills](#) to help you develop the necessary skills.

It provides an excellent opportunity to [clarify roles and responsibilities](#), as well as give constructive feedback to team members. This process often enables the project manager to discover unknown or unresolved issues enabling he or she to address the latter by establish training requirements or setting future goals.

Whether or not appraisals are appropriate will depend on the nature of the project. Generally speaking they would be appropriate in the case of a long-term project staffed by permanent employees of the organization but would not be used in a short-term project or one that was staffed by outside contractors.

Many developing problems can be addressed before they get out of hand by a project manager who 'knows instinctively' when something is up rather than waiting for it to be formally reported. If you take the time to talk briefly and informally with team members (on your way to get a coffee for example) you will develop a feel for the normal atmosphere of the project. This approach to management is sometimes referred to as 'management by wandering around' (MBWA).



The emphasis is on the word *wandering* as an impromptu movement within a workplace, rather than a plan where employees expect a visit from managers at more systematic, pre-approved or scheduled times. There are several other benefits to MBWA:

1. It doesn't take up much time (maybe 15 minutes a day).
2. You get to learn more about individual team members and you may find them making suggestions for improvements that they wouldn't make through formal channels.
3. Generally speaking people like to see their managers mixing with them, which is good for morale.

Human beings are very sensitive to changes in non-verbal behavior. So, if you feel that something is not quite right then asking people if they have any problems or concerns can often bring issues to light that would have serious consequences if you remained unaware of them until they were formally reported.

The success of project managers in managing their project teams often depends a great deal on their ability to resolve conflict. Different project managers may have different conflict resolution styles. Factors that influence conflict resolution methods include:

- Relative importance and intensity of the conflict,
- Time pressure for resolving the conflict,
- Position taken by players involved, and
- Motivation to resolve conflict on a long-term or a short-term basis.

A key part of managing such conflicts and motivating the project team comes down to the ability to communicate clearly to everyone involved in the project. Careful planning of [project communications](#) will ensure success at all levels of involvement from team members, to contractors from sponsor to stakeholders.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Conflict is an inevitable consequence of project work; where there is constant pressure to achieve targets within strict time and resource constraints.
 - ✓ A well thought-out communications management plan is critical for the success of any project manager and his or her project.
 - ✓ As well as conflicts between the project management team and people outside of the project, there are often internal conflicts to deal with.
 - ✓ Many developing problems can be addressed before they get out of hand by a project manager who 'knows instinctively' when something is up rather than waiting for it to be formally reported.
 - ✓ This can be achieved by taking the time to talk briefly and informally with team members (on your way to get a coffee for example).
 - ✓ The ability to identify and resolve conflict is an essential skill for a project manager.
-

Planning Project Communications

Communication is one of the great keys to success in life in general. Whether you are talking about communication personally or professionally, being able to deal with other people in a productive, efficient and empathetic manner is essential to your well-being. As a project manager, the need to be an effective communicator is fundamental to the role.



With a variety of interested parties related to the project, and a team to lead, there is no doubt that good communication should be near the very top of your priority list. Project communications management is the process of putting a plan in place to help you properly communicate with everyone that has a stake in the project.

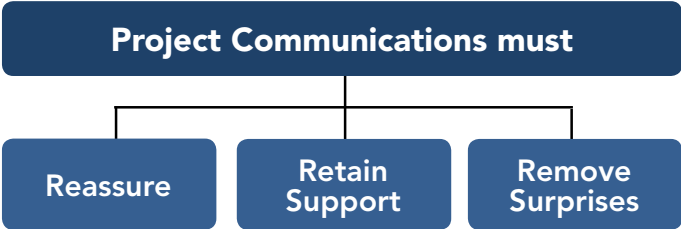
Just as with anything else related to project management, it is important that you build this plan ahead of time so it can be followed as carefully as possible throughout the work. It will form a strong integral component of the [HR Management](#) and [Stakeholder Management](#) plans.

The [communications management plan](#) is the corner stone of how you plan to manage the different working relationships within your project. A project manager has to communicate on two broad levels:

The high-level or strategic considerations' between the project manager, sponsor, senior management, the media and other influential stakeholders.

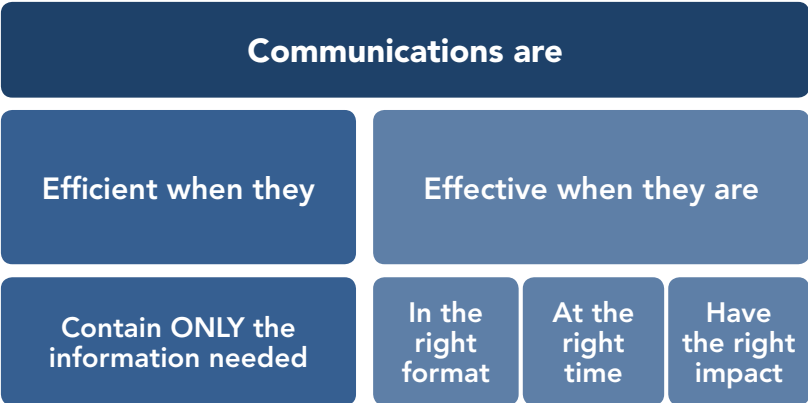
Low-level and practical communications between project teams and team members.

This requires project managers to have a clear perspective of each of their different audiences and to intuitively know the most effective way to accomplish the 3R's of project communications (shown in diagram below). To achieve this with such diverse recipients of his or her communication they must adapt the message to suit that recipient's situation and environment where the exchange is taking place—i.e. team meeting, contract negotiation, executive meeting etc.



The project manager's interpersonal skills need to be highly developed so that they are able to read an individual's response to their communication. This enables he or she to alter their next communication to ensure that the recipient is behind the content of the exchange and willing to play their part in the action required. Adaptability and flexibility are essential skills for all project managers.

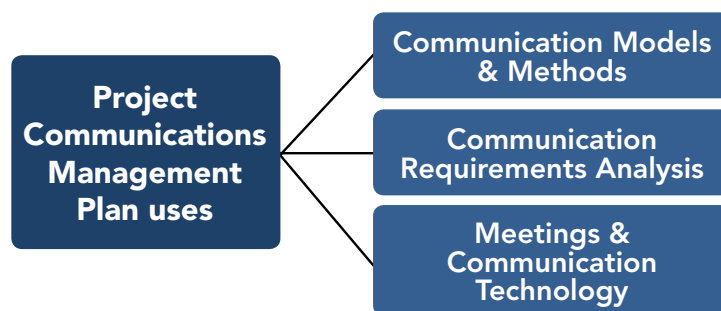
Remember, effective communication means that the information is provided in the right format, at the right time, and with the right impact. Efficient communication means providing only the information that is needed. This process is performed early in the project and it is revised and refined as the project progresses. You can check out the complete range of [project management](#) eBooks free from this website.



Projects generate a great deal of data and a key component of planning the project's actual communications requirements is to limit both the quantity of information being circulated and the communication paths that are used. Those who take a casual approach to their project communications will have a confused and frustration team failing to achieve the project objectives.

To determine the types and frequencies of communication needed for each of the project audiences and to be written down in its own project management plan the project manager will conduct a communication requirements analysis. This consists of holding several meetings with different parties to understand their communication needs.

Once these have been documented then an assessment can be made of the 'best' models, methods and technologies to be used during the project to satisfy these different needs. These findings will constitute the basis of the [communications plan](#) for the project.



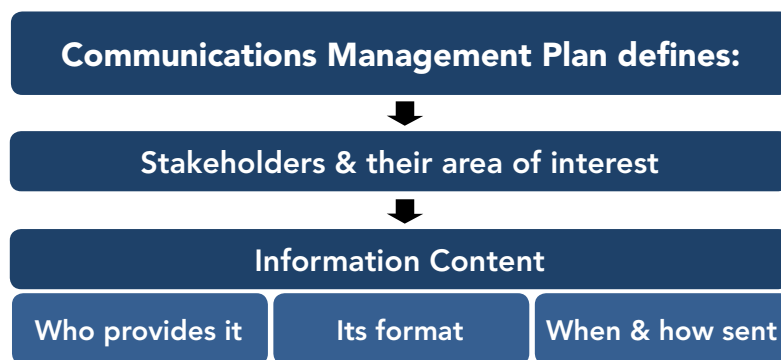
The functional management plan for project communications is an essential part of the [project plan](#). Therefore, during the planning phase sufficient time should be allocated to it so that the following information can be well documented and presented to the project team.

- Information to be communicated, including language, format, content, and level of detail
- Reason for the distribution
- Time frame and frequency for the distribution
- Person responsible for it
- Person responsible for authorizing release of confidential information
- Person or groups who will receive the information
- Escalation procedure for issues requiring additional authority

- Methods or technologies used to convey it
- Resources allocated for communication activities
- Glossary of common terminology

Within any project there is one particular audience that requires special attention in terms of how, when and what is communicated to it and that is the Stakeholders. This group of individuals or bodies must all be clearly identified and their level of interest, influence and impact they can have on the project recorded meticulously in the [stakeholder register](#), another key document that inputs into the project management plan.

It is critical that a project manager understands the level of interest, influence and impact each stakeholder can have on the project.



Once armed with this information a [stakeholder management plan](#) can be created that enables he or she to appropriately manage these individual relationships. This functional plan avoids delays in people receiving essential information and guarantees that sensitive or confidential data is handled correctly. Those initial plans will likely morph along the way, so be prepared to adapt to changes in the project and make sure they are reflected with appropriate changes in your communication plan.

There are three concerns the communications management plan and its supporting functional plans for stakeholder and human resources address and they are:

Who needs information?

What information do they need?

When do they need it?

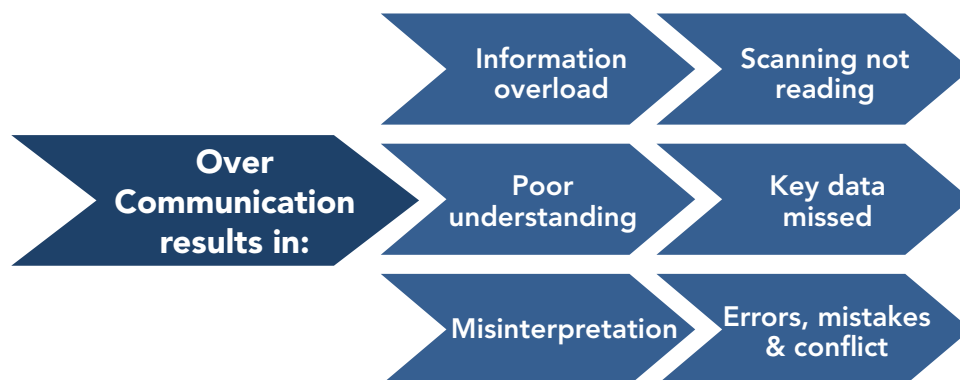
To get this point just right, it is important to create a schedule at the start of the project and stick to it as closely as possible, unless something changes. For example,

- *Project sponsor/ your direct supervisor receives updates every Friday.*
- *Board of directors receives updates on the first Friday of every month.*

A significant danger of projects is to *over communicate* with people, it's a natural tendency, no one wants to hear the words from other members of the project team:

'But you didn't tell us!' or 'We didn't know about that!'

Consequently, people usually act to protect themselves from these accusations by sending what they believe is important information to everyone they feel might possibly have an interest in it.



This has become a more frequent occurrence with the universal adoption of email. You are a mere click away from sending a message to everyone connected to the project! But project managers must refrain from this tendency by taking the time to think and plan *who really needs to know* about the matter. The information typically used to determine project communication requirements includes:

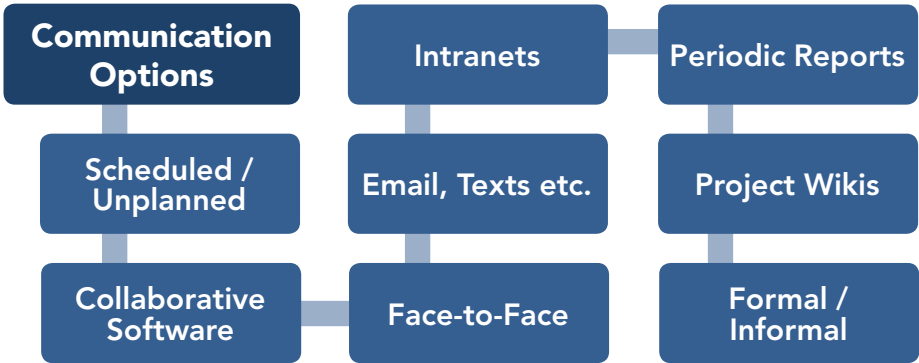
- Organization charts and the [Organizational Breakdown Structure](#) (OBS)
- [Stakeholder Register](#): responsibility relationships, logistical considerations & stakeholder information
- Stakeholder management strategy.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ Identifying the information needs of all those involved in the project with specific focus on stakeholders
- ✓ Determine a suitable means of meeting those needs are important factors for project success.
- ✓ This tendency leads to project people being swamped by too much information most of which is irrelevant to them.
- ✓ Effective communication means that the information is provided in the right format, at the right time, and with the right impact.
- ✓ Efficient communication means providing only the information that is needed.
- ✓ Most people will tend to over-communicate in order to protect themselves from accusations of not sharing important information.

Optimizing Project Communications

Having decided who needs to receive what information and when the next consideration is what is the best method to use for this communication. Later sections of the project communications management plan explain who is going to perform the update and how this will be accomplished.



There are many ways to communicate, including unscheduled and informal face-to-face meetings, periodic reports, project wikis, collaborative software, video-conferencing and

email. When deciding on the appropriate technology for each type of communication the project manager should ask himself or herself...

- How time-sensitive is the information?
- Does communication need to be interactive?
- Should the information be 'pushed' or 'pulled'?
- What technology is actually available?
- What technologies are the stakeholders familiar with?
- How much expenditure can be justified?
- Does the environment 'force' certain decisions?

Project managers often want produce special reports at pre-defined milestones that will be reported on outside of their specific communications schedule that has been created. For example, halfway through the project they might deem it appropriate to send a special update to all interested stakeholders.

If information is time-sensitive or frequently updated then you will need to make a decision about whether it needs to be available immediately, or would regularly issued reports suffice?

Where the information to be sent may invite discussion for example then he or she may feel it is best done interactively in a meeting, phone call, or a video-conference. The alternative is usually a seemingly endless round of emails that can be both time consuming and frustrating particularly when there are more than two parties involved. You also need to take into account what technology is available and to know if the relevant stakeholder(s) also have access to it.

People often communicate with little or no thought for the existing knowledge of their audience. For example, they use jargon that the audience/receiver is not familiar with or make assumptions about the level of expertise they have. This is illustrated below.

Message without encoding

SR cannot supply DBAs with DB2 experience, recommend using SK for this. Please email your response ASAP. Thank you.

Message after encoding

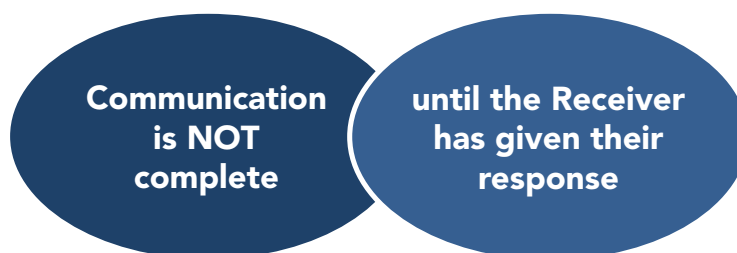
Our freelance staff agency Systems Resources (SR) cannot supply Database Administrators (DBA's) with the database experience (IBM DB2) that we need for this project. I recommend we use Software Knowledge (SK). Please email your response ASAP. Thank you.

This basic communication model also contains the concepts of:

***Noise** is anything that interferes with the transmission and understanding of the message (for example, unfamiliar technology or lack of background information).*

***Decoding**, that is the work required to translate the message back into meaningful thoughts or ideas.*

The reason for encoding is simply to eliminate noise from the message and to make the process of decoding it as straightforward as possible for the receiver. It also illustrates that communication cannot be considered complete until the receiver has fed their response back to the sender.



Note that the encoded message in the example makes this clear by specifically asking for a response. The original sender can then decide whether the message has been understood in the way that they expected. If it has not, they can do something about it before it becomes a problem.

These methods can be broadly classified into 'interactive', 'push and 'pull', all of which were alluded to in the discussion of communication technology above.

Interactive communication includes meetings, phone calls and video-conferencing. This is the most efficient way reach a consensus between different parties.

Push communication includes emails, memos, reports, voice mails and press releases sent to stakeholders who need to know the information. This ensures that the information is distributed but does not certify that it actually reached or was understood by the intended audience.

Pull communication includes blogs, wikis and other software that supports collaborative working. It can be used for things like technical standards or support where people need to be able to access sub-sets of the information at their own discretion.

The project manager decides, based on communication requirements, what, how, and when communication methods are to be used in the project. This process requires discussion and dialogue with the project team to determine the most appropriate way to update and communicate project information, and to respond to requests from various stakeholders for that information.

Almost all of the processes that form part of project [schedule management](#) will involve [meetings](#) between the project manager, the team and other stakeholders in order to make decisions about the activity definitions and associated estimates. How well these meetings are conducted will have a major impact on how smoothly the project runs.

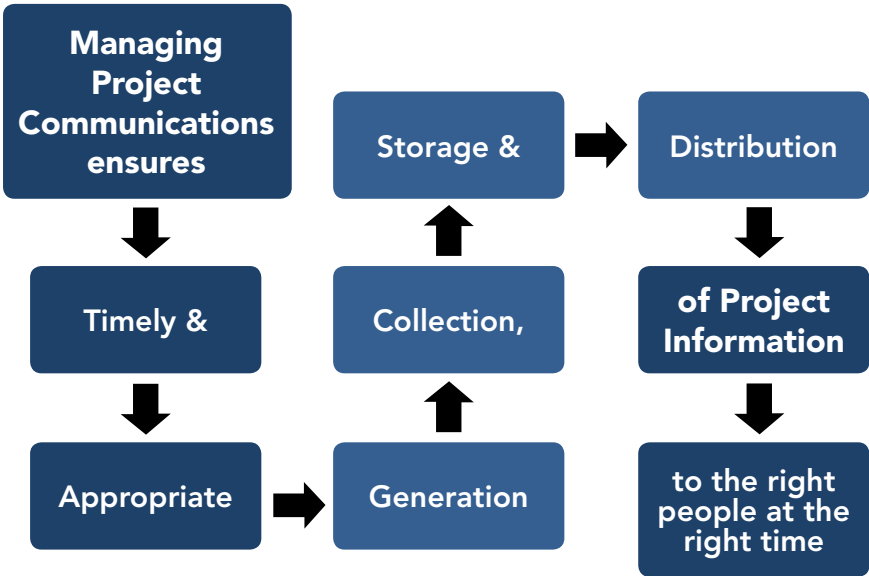
KEY POINTS

- ✓ Understanding the different communication methods available and selecting those most appropriate to the project..
- ✓ Knowing how to ensure message are encoded so that when decoded the message is clearly understood.
- ✓ Communication is only complete when the receiver has fed their response back to the sender and it matches their expected and desired response.
- ✓ How to discern the most effective communication method—'interactive', 'push or 'pull'—for the technology used on the project.

Managing Project Communications

Communications form an essential part of any project and unlike technical areas, for example estimating and risk assessment; communication is something that the project manager has to take direct personal responsibility for. The lack of a [communication plan](#) is often the biggest single mistake the project manager can make because completing a complex project successfully requires teamwork, and teamwork requires good communication.

The aim is to create a communication infrastructure so that everyone involved has access to the right information at the right time.



Communication is usually thought of as a general management skill rather than one that is specific to project management. Whilst this is true, there are some features of projects that can cause communication problems and make a communication plan both desirable and necessary.

Projects can create a huge volume of data that needs to be collected, collated and analyzed. The findings of these tasks must then be disseminated appropriately to each individual connected with the project so that they can perform their role and move the project closer to the end product. Without careful thought put into how, what and when such data is distributed to other project members' communications will create confusion and chaos resulting in frustration and poor productivity.

Poor planning frequently results in people being '*over communicated*' with especially as emails, texts, electronic documents are too easy to quickly copy to 'everyone' and avoid having to sufficient time to think about who really needs to have the information it contains.

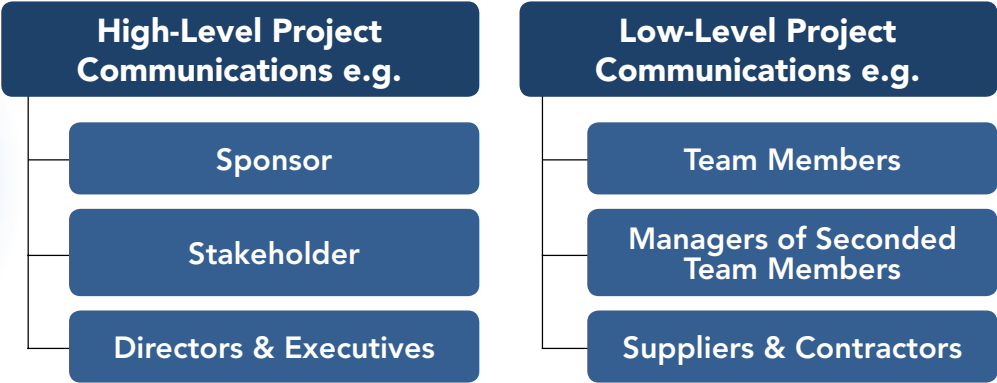
This creates its own problems and can severely damage the productivity of the project team because recipients:

- Get so much they don't know what is pertinent and needed.
- They scan to get a feel for its content rather than read it properly.
- Key data is missed because it is lost amongst so much information.
- Messages aren't clear so errors occur through poor understanding.
- Conflict arises from different groups interpreting the data differently.

It is important to avoid these pitfalls and project managers can achieve this by carefully assessing who needs to know what and then planning when and how this will happen. There are many groups of people that need to be communicated with and each requires different levels of information and frequency.

There is one group of individuals that play a major role in any project and as such require their own management plan and those are the project [stakeholders](#). A 'stakeholder' is any person or organization that is actively involved in a project, or whose interests may be affected positively or negatively by execution of a project. The importance of communications between them cannot be overstated. The level, content and frequency of such communications form the bedrock of a projects success.

As the diagram below shows they fall into two general types; those needing high-level strategic information and those needing low-level functional information.



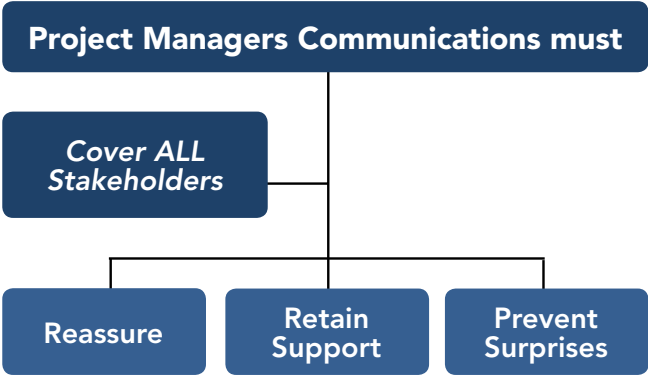
The communications management plan defines the format, content (including language, level of technicality), level of detail for each communication and to whom it is circulated to. It describes the purpose for the communication as well as the individual responsible for writing and sending it at a stated period in time or project phase. This plan also has a glossary of the terms that will be used in project communications to avoid confusion. Finally, it states the resources that will be allocated to this functional area of project communications.

A project manager must be sure to identify and list all potential stakeholders for a project. In addition to those on the project team potential stakeholders include a varied selection of people and groups as shown in the diagram below.

Stakeholders can be internal to the organization or external. In many projects the public at large will become a stakeholder to be considered during the project. The challenge for the project manager when the public is a stakeholder will be to act while considering public needs. Often there is no direct representative of the public to be consulted during project planning and execution.



A project manager’s job consists of making decisions and then communicating these to the appropriate stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner. In order to make these decisions the project manager is dependent on the effective flow of information from and between the stakeholders. In addition to merely informing them, the project manager should actively manage the way that this information is disseminated in a way that reassures people and keeps them onside.



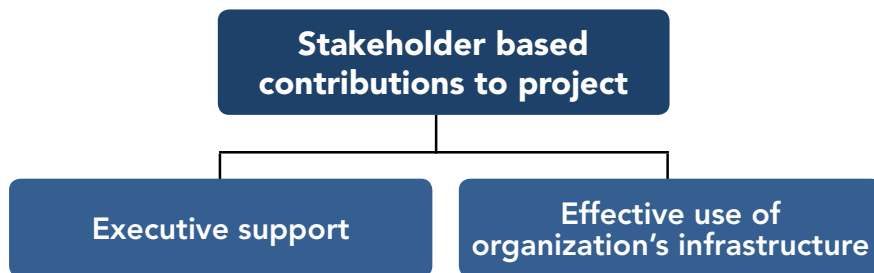
If this is not done in a systematic way, stakeholders may see or hear something regarding the project and draw their own erroneous conclusions about how it will negatively affect them. This can result in political problems that could have been averted if the project manager had kept everyone informed and reassured.

Stakeholder management plan defines the processes a project manager will use to identify the people, groups, or organizations that could impact or be impacted by their project. Identifying the stakeholders' needs to be done very early in the project because the cost of making changes increases as the project progresses.

It is important to identify and engage the stakeholders' as early as possible so their requirements can be fully understood from the outset. Their satisfaction should be managed as a key project objective and stakeholder involvement should be supported by:

- An emphasis on quality relationships in which the parties:
 - Are aware of their responsibilities
 - Where communication between them is clear and comprehensive.

Stakeholder-based contributions to project success include executive support and effective use of the organization's infrastructure to support the project.



A project manager must document relevant information for all **identified stakeholders**. This information may include the stakeholder's interests, involvement, expectations, importance, influence, and impact on the project's execution as well as any specific communications requirements. It is important to note that although some identified stakeholders may not actually require any communications they should still be identified.

One of the key objectives of any project must be managing and maintaining stakeholder satisfaction. This management is a continual process of communication between the project manager and the stakeholders, in order to:

- Understand their needs and expectations
- Address issues as they occur

- Manage conflicting interests
- Foster their engagement in project decisions & activities.

Project managers must give due consideration to the **people issues** surrounding projects and recognize that the appropriate involvement and management of stakeholders is almost always a critical success factor.

By successfully managing your stakeholders, you will be better able to keep a lid on scope creep, ensure project requirements are aligned, understand tolerance for risk, and mitigate issues that would otherwise delay the project. Good stakeholder management is a testimony to your influence in an organization, and a key component to a healthy project environment.

This whole area of project HR management (including the sub plans for communications and stakeholder management) is important because it helps an organization to achieve its strategic objectives by creating a positive relationship with everyone involved through effective management of their expectations.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ A project manager's job consists of making decisions and then communicating these to the appropriate stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner.
- ✓ Projects can also create a huge volume of data that needs to be collected, collated and analyzed.
- ✓ Communication is something that the project manager has to take direct personal responsibility for.
- ✓ A comprehensive communications plan can help the project manager get these tasks under control.
- ✓ Project managers must give due consideration to the people issues surrounding projects and recognize that the appropriate involvement.
- ✓ Management of stakeholders is almost always a critical success factor and as such requires its own management plan to ensure project objectives are attained within budget and to schedule.

Identifying Project Stakeholders

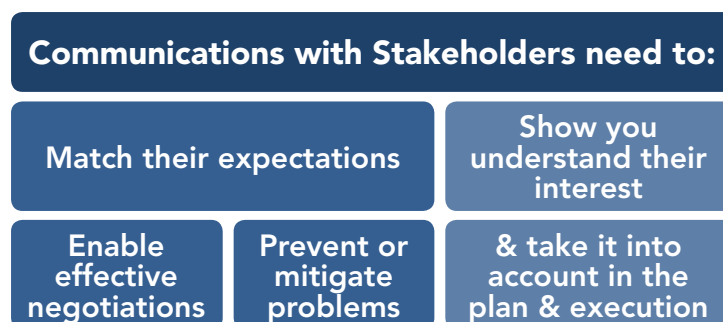
The process of identifying the stakeholders of a project takes place before the detailed planning stage of the project begins. This is because it is an essential input to the project plan. It is a two-stage process and each stage has its own purpose.

1st To identify who the individual [stakeholders](#) are.

2nd To analyze the project's relationship with each stakeholder to establish their:

- *Level of engagement or interest in the project*
- *Level of influence on it.*

Both of these factors together will determine the best strategy to use when engaging them throughout the course of the project.



The important thing is to understand what it is that the stakeholder is seeking to protect, profit from or enhance. You can then structure your communications to let the person know that you are aware of their interest in the project and are taking it into account.

A stakeholder is defined as *anyone with an interest in the project, irrespective of whether that interest is positive or negative*. There are three broad categories of stakeholders:

Involved—this group would include the project manager, sponsor, and team members.

Affected—this group is more diverse and includes both internal and external entities, for example, other departments within the organization, customers, suppliers, regulatory bodies etc. In the case of a construction project, those affected might include also neighboring premises and the wider local community.

Exerting Influence—this group includes the press (local and national), environmental groups and other ‘interest’ groups (for example worker’s rights) as well as departments within the performing organization that are not directly affected by the project but may wish to influence it in some way. This last group would typically include legal, financial and public relations departments.

Grouping stakeholders in this way is simply an aid to identifying them. These groups often overlap, and in the case of a software project the end-users would be both affected by the project and able to exert influence on it. The key issue is to make sure that all stakeholders are identified so that their influence can be assessed and planned for.

By understanding what each stakeholder wants from the project, and communicating with them according to their expectations, you can negotiate with them effectively and prevent problems from arising or at least mitigate the effect of any that do arise.

Ideally for each stakeholder, you will understand:

- 1) The ‘stake’ the stakeholder has in the project.*
- 2) What the project needs from the stakeholder.*
- 3) What the stakeholder expects or requires from the project.*

It is important to identify the stakeholders early in the project, and to [assess](#) and analyze their levels of interest, expectations, importance and influence. They should then be classified according to their: Interest, Influence & Involvement. The assessment should be periodically reviewed during project execution to allow for changes.

The [project charter](#) is created early on in the initiating process group and formally authorizes a project or a phase and specifies initial requirements that satisfy the stakeholder’s needs and expectations. It should answer the following questions:

1. What is the project going to do?
2. What is the [business case](#) for doing it?
3. Who wants it done?
4. Where is the money coming from?
5. Who is going to manage the work?
6. Who is going to do the work?

The project charter may describe some of the stakeholders along with their interests either in the project itself or the end-product/deliverable. As such, it can provide information about internal and external parties involved in and affected by the project, such as project sponsor(s), customers, team members, groups and departments participating in the project, and other people or organizations affected by the project.

Stakeholder Analysis involves identifying which stakeholders should receive project communications, what communications they should receive, and how often they should receive them in relation to their levels of interests, expectations, and influence. Remember, not all stakeholders need the same treatment. There will be significant differences in their interest in the project and some will be more important and influential than others.

Stakeholder analysis can be broken down into two stages:

Stakeholder Identification—create a list of who has an interest, involvement or influence on the project. For each stakeholder define their level of authority and level of interest.

Stakeholder Impact Assessment—assess the type of impact they could have on the project and then prioritize and group the stakeholder list created in the first stage.

On completing this analysis the project manager is then in a position to develop a practical and effective **stakeholder management plan** and strategy.

The first action is to start making a list of anyone in a decision-making or management role that is impacted by the project, such as the: sponsor, project manager, and primary customer and to interview them. As a result of these interviews others will be added to your list to interview. You continue with this activity until you have added all potential stakeholders and have placed them in a quadrant of interest and authority grid.

| | | Authority | |
|----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Low | High |
| Interest | High | | |
| | Low | | |

To ensure that the list is as comprehensive as possible you should also seek input from those with specialized training or knowledge of the subject area such as:

- Senior Management*
- Project Managers who have worked on projects in the same area*
- Experts in the business area*
- Industry Groups*
- Professional & Technical Associations.*

The strategy a project manager needs to adopt for each quadrant needs to take into account its level of interest and authority, which influences the level of impact it can have on the project. This knowledge will form a key element of how you manager each of your stakeholders.



Low (Interest)—Low (Authority) quadrant. These stakeholders need a simple strategy that will reassure them that the project is meeting their needs. They need the lowest level of management.

Low (Interest)—High (Authority) quadrant. This stakeholder group can wield significant power over your project and how you manage them must ensure they are kept informed accordingly retaining their valuable support. It requires a nominal amount of management time due to their low interest in the project, but must be specific to the stakeholder's role in the project.

High (Interest)—Low (Authority) quadrant. Neglecting this group just because their authority is low is a bad management strategy. Their interest in the project is high so your management efforts are greater than the previous group and focus on convincing them that their interests are being serviced.

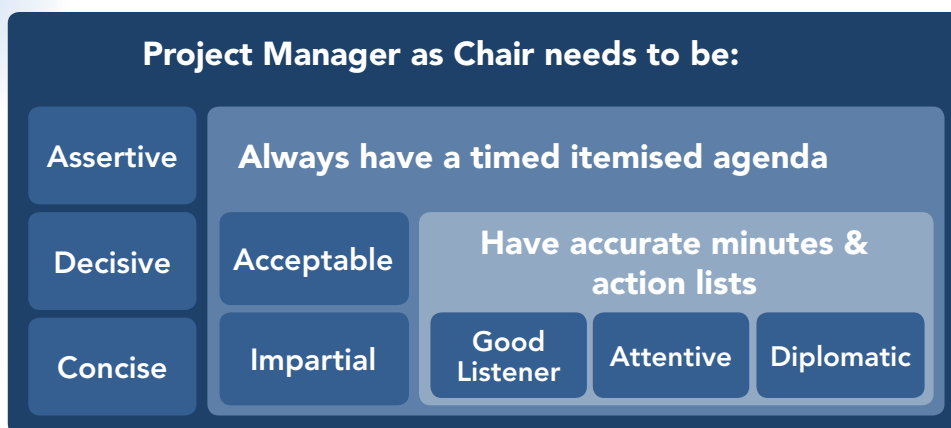
High (Interest)—High (Authority) quadrant. As you would expect these stakeholders need the project manager to carefully and closely manage their ways to keep them informed and supportive as the project progresses.

The initial level of stakeholder analysis gives a broad qualitative analysis of the stakeholder's power and interest so that the broad strategy of engagement can be determined. The analysis then looks into the type of relationship a project manager should have with each type of stakeholder.

Profile analysis meetings are used to develop understanding of major project stakeholders. Four key characteristics of effective and productive meetings are where everyone displays:

1. An understanding of the issues and topics being discussed.
2. Listens attentively and impartially.
3. Act with diplomacy to ensure all contributions are heard.
4. Avoids diversions by focusing on the discussion topic.

Almost all of the processes that form part of project management will involve [meetings](#) between the project manager, the team and other stakeholders in order to make decisions about the activity definitions and associated estimates. To learn about becoming an [effective chair](#) download our free eBook on this topic.



How well these meetings are conducted will have a major impact on how smoothly the project runs. The diagram above shows all the key characteristics the project manager, as chair of many of these meetings needs to display for them to be productive.

Such meetings will form the basis of how you identify your project’s stakeholders. The names of these individuals, groups and bodies are recorded in the [Stakeholder Register](#), which includes classification and assessment information. This contains all details related to the identified stakeholders an example is shown in the table below.

| Stakeholder Register | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Name | | | | |
| Job Title | | | | |
| Role | | | | |
| Contact Information | | | | |
| Location | | | | |
| Category | <i>Internal</i> | <i>Supporter</i> | <i>Neutral</i> | |
| | <i>External</i> | <i>Resistor</i> | <i>Other</i> | |
| Major requirements | | | | |
| Main expectations | | | | |
| Classification | Interest | Low | Med | High |
| | Influence | Low | Med | High |
| | Involvement | Low | Med | High |

This information is based on perception and explicitly describes each stakeholder from the perspective of the project at a specific point in time. This makes the register a potential to be a source of controversy and a document that must be treated with sensitivity.

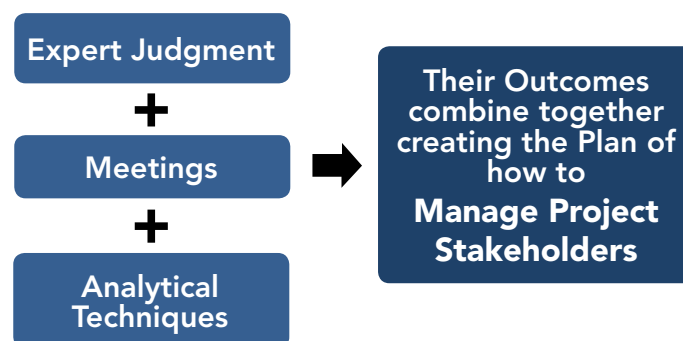
Even though it is a legitimate document, in that it helps the project manager to communicate with all those listed, its accessibility and circulation must be strictly controlled to perhaps one or two trusted project staff in addition to the project manager.

For example,

A departmental head might be described as having a negative attitude to the project because it will have an adverse impact on them personally. However, he or she could feel that they are being unfairly misrepresented in a way that could damage their future prospects within the organization.

Stakeholder analysis is so important that a wide variety of experts are consulted to help analyze the actual level and the desired level of engagement level of the various stakeholders. These experts are the same ones that were consulted in the previous step to identify the stakeholders and analyze their interest and/or influence on the project in order to determine the general strategy for engaging them.

Information from several subsidiary plans of the overall **project plan**, such as the **scope plan**, **change management plan**, **human resources plan**, and **communications plan**, are helpful in analyzing the engagement level of stakeholders.



In order to assess the level of engagement required from each stakeholder at each stage of the project, the following experts should be consulted:

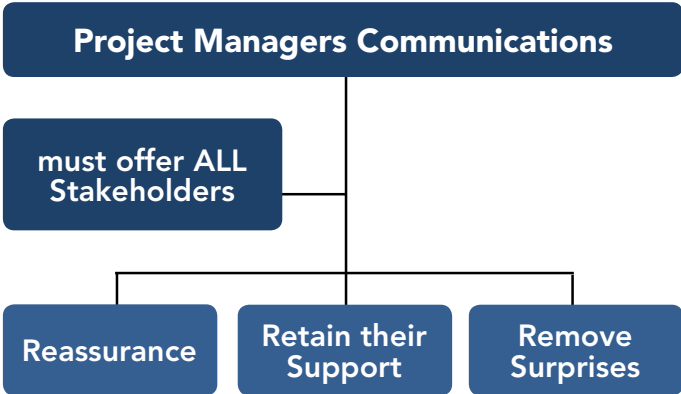
- Senior management
- Project team members
- Other functional units within the organization
- Identified key stakeholders
- Project managers (who have worked on similar projects)
- Subject matter experts (SMEs) in business or project area
- Industry groups or consultants
- Professional and technical associations
- Regulatory bodies, non-governmental associations (NGOs)

KEY POINTS

- ✓ The communications to all project stakeholders are so important that in more complex project it requires its own management plan that forms a subset of the project HR management plan.
 - ✓ A stakeholder is defined as anyone with an interest in the project, irrespective of whether that interest is positive or negative.
 - ✓ They may be individuals or organizations that are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be affected by the execution or completion of the project.
 - ✓ It is important to identify the stakeholders early in the project, and to analyze their levels of interest, expectations, importance and influence.
 - ✓ The stakeholder register includes classification and assessment information based on perception and explicitly describes each stakeholder from the perspective of the project.
-

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

During the execution phase of a project the classification of stakeholders information needs must be managed in accordance with the [stakeholder management plan](#) as shown in the diagram. This ensures that stakeholders' engagement remains constant throughout the project because their needs and any issues that affect them are addressed appropriately.



By reducing resistance from stakeholders and gaining their support, a project manager can increase the chances for success on a project. The contents of the stakeholder plan for a significant input into how project communications are handled. The methods of communication to be used for each stakeholder are identified in the [communications plan](#) that also includes an explanation of how they will be put into practice.

In the event of a serious issue coming to light the best approach is usually a face-to-face meeting in which it can be dealt with diplomatically to everyone's satisfaction. In these situations a project manager needs to portray excellent communication and people skills to ensure that their message is clearly and positively delivered. Our free [communication skills eBooks](#) will ensure that your communications and presentations are effective.



The important thing is that the project manager should have the ability to build trust and relationships. An individual's capability in building successful working relationships is now recognized as relating to their level of emotional intelligence (EI). This is at the heart of both individual success and project team productivity. It must also be reflected in the way in which project communications are designed and executed.

All of the information provided to stakeholders should be at the level of detail documented in the communications plan. This plan describes the methods or technologies to be used and lists the resources allocated for communication activities. In addition, a process for identifying issues that cannot be resolved at a lower staff level will need to be worked out so that issues can be escalated.

Also, if the requirements for communicating with the stakeholders change, these must be reflected in the communication plan. Any changes in the engagement of specific stakeholders need to be included in updates to the stakeholder register, and the organization should keep the experience with stakeholders on the current project in mind for inclusion in lessons learned documentation, which may help stakeholder management on future projects.



The importance of a project communications plan cannot be overstated and as project manager your preferred style of [communication](#) will have an impact on all your exchanges. The contents of the Project Communications plan and its impact throughout the whole project life cycle is how others will judge your performance as project manager. This individual's credibility and professional standing will be formed on this plan's successful implementation.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ A project manager can increase the chances for success on a project by reducing resistance from stakeholders and gaining their support.
 - ✓ It is here that the methods of communication identified for each stakeholder in the communications plan are put into practice.
 - ✓ The ability to create good working relationships within your project environment is heavily influenced by your ability to manage project communications.
-

Summary

Project management is a complex activity that requires a structure, procedures and processes that are appropriate to your project. This will enable you to manage the inevitable changes that occur throughout a project's lifespan in a professional manner to ensure success. Each project function describes the expertise, skills and tools needed for your project.

So much work is now run as projects and so few people have the necessary skills to manage them properly that there is a huge demand for good project managers and that demand is increasing all the time.

The other project management skills eBooks available from www.free-management-ebooks.com/skills-project.htm provide you with an opportunity to read a more in-depth description of each functional area.

- Principles of Project Management
- Project Management Processes
- Managing the Project Scope
- Managing the Project Schedule
- Managing the Project Budget
- Managing Project Quality
- Managing Project Risk

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