

Communications Plan

Scope

The purpose of this reference document is to ~~describe the Communications Plan, which serves to~~ establish a good internal and external communication strategy and determine the information needs of all project stakeholders – who needs what information, when they will need it, how it will be given to them, and by whom. The complexity of the project and impacts to stakeholders will determine the appropriate level of detail for the Communications Plan for the project. The Communications Plan for the project is a supporting plan that facilitates the implementation of the Project Management Plan (PMP). Communications, *Quality Management*[REF1024], *Risk Management*[REF1023], and *Change Management*[REF1025] Plans are developed concurrently in the iterative Program/Project Planning Phase.

~~The initiation of *PMP Development*[PROC1012] triggers the development of the Communications Plan.~~

Distribution

Project Manager (PM)

Project Delivery Team (PDT)

Public Affairs Office (PAO)

Ownership

The ~~BP/P2 Program Office~~Configuration Management Board is responsible for ensuring that this document is necessary and that it reflects actual practice.

Responsibilities:

The Project Manager initiates the development of the Communications Plan and is responsible for incorporating it into the project's Project Management Plan (PMP). The PM will may consider asking for Public Affairs Office support, as a member of the PDT, for the development of the Communications Plan based on the complexity and sensitivity of the project.

The PDT is responsible for assisting the PM in determining all stakeholder project communications requirements.

Communications Plan Format & Content:

The Contents of the Communications Plan could include but not be limited to the following:

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- Project Stakeholder Communication Requirements - An analysis of communication requirements of all project stakeholders such as Partnering.
- Project Stakeholders Communication Strategy
- Key Messages for Project Stakeholders
- Method to eEvaluate Effectiveness of Communication Strategy – Document in lessons learned during project execution and project closeout.
- Reporting Relationships – Describe in sufficient detail project reporting relationships
- Collection and filing - How will project information be gathered and stored. To include describing the criteria to be used to determine the frequency that Project Delivery Team will progress and update project activities.
- Communication Distribution Structure – Who gets what type of information, what methods will be used to distribute various types of information. If applicable, discuss the use of web sites and other technology.
- Description of information of to be distributed – What is the content of information distributed.
- Production schedules – When will each type of communication be produced.
- Criteria to determine the frequency to conduct Project Delivery Team performance review meetings.
- Method of accessing information between scheduled communications.
- Methods for updating and refining the Communications Plan as the project progresses and changes.

Communications Plan Methodology

1. Identify project stakeholders.

The PDT needs to ask who is affected by the project? Who affects the project? How and why? Consider geography, economics, quality of life, and political sensitivity when determining internal and external interested parties. Document this information for easy access by the PDT, review and update as needed.

2. What are the problems, concerns and/or issues?

Issues to be considered include but not limited to include:

- Technical
- Institutional
- Political (Tribal, Federal, State, Local)
- Environmental
- Economic/Fiscal
- Cultural
- Safety and Health
- Legal
- Other

How do these problems/concerns/issues affect the project?

3. Listen, understand, and verify expectations, problems, concerns, and issues.

How to get to the issues:

- Talk with local sponsors/customers
- Look at existing documents
- Talk with interest groups

The customer has a significant role in the development of the Communications Plan.

4. The PM initiates the development of ~~prepares~~ a draft communication requirements document that outlines and analyzes information needs of project stakeholders, then designs a communication strategy for each stakeholder with linkages to appropriate project milestones.

Determine key decision points in the project/study, according to the following:

1. Information requirements/expectations.
2. Project schedule milestones.

3-Note impacts, and risk (addressed in Risk Management plan)

Analyze the relationship between key decision points in the project and the stakeholders' concerns.

Develop key messages for each key decision point that consider the following characteristics for an effective message (ensure a match with project goals and objectives):

Timeliness
Clarity
Honesty
Sensitivity
Relevance

Openness
Consistency

Consider use of the following:

~~Public Affairs Office personnel~~

Request professional assistance, such as facilitators to conduct meetings

Note potential schedule/budget constraints

Plan for 360-degree feedback with interested parties

Use of Partnering during the design phase (Design Charetts) or the construction phase

5. PM and PDT review and comment on draft stakeholder communication requirements document.
6. PM consolidates PDT review comments of communications requirements document, and adds enough additional information to address the recommended Communications Plan contents.
7. PM submits Communications Plan to the PDT for review.
8. PM and Project Delivery Team review the Communications Plan.
9. When the Communications Plan is finalized, the PM incorporates it into the project's PMP by pasting it into the appropriate data field in P3e.
10. Evaluate effectiveness and document in *Lessons Learned[PROC1021]*, as required throughout the life-cycle of the project.
 - a. ~~Did~~ How well did the strategy allow us to define the playing field?
 - b. ~~Did~~ How well did the strategy allow us to frame the issues?
 - c. ~~Did~~ How well did the strategy bind us to our partners publicly?
 - d. Was the majority of the dialogue fact-based, rather than emotional?