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Having a well thought out and documented Project Communication Management Plan, from the very beginning of a project can often make the difference between success and failure.

Too often project managers (PM's) are approaching their projects without planning, structuring and controlling a communications management plan. Recognizing the impact of what communication brings to the project and the project team is crucial for a successful outcome. Issuing status reports describes where your project currently stands but it does not communicate what the project needs are from the beginning to end.

Think of communication planning as being similar to a plan made in non-business situations. We all do this in our everyday lives. The efforts put forth on the project from the PM and all involved, need to be thought of in advance. Doing so will keep the project deadline on track and prepared for barriers that may come along the way. It will allow the PM and stakeholders to output information to the persons who need it, ensuring that is will be a clear and understandable document which allows stakeholders to take action if necessary.

Six Considerations for Project Communication Management Planning

1. **Consider enterprise environmental factors**
   Take into account the company culture and existing systems the project will have to deal with or can make of use. Use resources already available, rather than creating anew will speed up planning. Look within your company for those who want to be part of the project and avoid those who do not.

2. **Take advantage of and use communications technology, methods and models**
   Modern collaboration tools such as Trello and others can help to keep the project communication and team organized. Engaging with communications technology helps teams track progress on all communication deliverables and allows the whole team to visualize communications on the schedule. It presents deadlines, ownership of tasks, and time span to complete tasks.

3. **Contemplate how to communicate**
   Methods of communication is important to learn as is how to communicate each item in specific about the project. Information can be expressed in different ways; formally, informally, written or verbal, but deciding what approach to use for each instance of communication is more important, because it is situational. There are communication models ranging from complicated to simple. The basic communication model (shown above) can be used when appropriate to the project and components of the project.

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Developing High Impact Project Communications

Do you experience communication-related problems on projects? Does your team struggle with knowing how, when, and what to communicate? Over 90% of what a project manager does is communication-related, and this 2-day course is designed for project managers, program managers, and team members who wish to improve communication effectiveness. This course goes beyond the basics to help project managers integrate all aspects of project communication for a high positive impact on project outcomes.

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Secrets for Dealing with Difficult Teams

As many experienced project managers know, the biggest problem encountered on projects is not related to resources or budget or technology, but to people—more specifically, communication with people. Getting people to work as a unit instead of a group of individuals is both challenging and frustrating, especially when team members are chosen ad hoc or assigned by upper management.

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4. **Refer to lessons learned from past projects**
   Refer to stored information organizational process assets that draws on existing procedures, issues and lessons learned from past projects. Assessing what has and has not worked is ideal for communication planning. No need to reinvent the wheel.

5. **Practice due diligence**
   Consistent due diligence is part of succeeding. Miscommunications are found in the most obvious and logical places so referring back to the project communication documents and communicating the details to the team is suggestively important.

6. **Analyze stakeholder's communication requirements**
   Keep in mind the phrase "to each their own." Ask your stakeholders how they prefer to receive information and give information. As the PM, likely you will need to communicate to individuals on your team using several different methods. Although it sounds like extra work, it is worth it to do so. Do not let miscommunication happen, especially when it results from, simply not asking a question, such as, "How would you like me to pass this information to you?"

Many unique situations will surface throughout your project which may not be plan ready. They will involve many communications so having the ones you can plan for documented in advance, will help when these situations arise.

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