

Communication Plan and Management

Introduction to Project Management

Introduction

- Some project managers neglect planning in the quality, human resource, communications, risk, and procurement management knowledge areas.
- It is important to skillfully plan *all* knowledge areas because they are all crucial to project success.

Project Communications Management

Planning Tasks

- Many experts agree that the greatest threat to the success of any project is a failure to communicate.
- Many project managers say that 90 percent of their job is communicating, yet many project managers fail to take the time to plan for project communications.
- **Project communications management** involves generating, collecting, disseminating, and storing project information.
- Key outputs include a communications management plan and a project Web site.

What Went Wrong?

An amusing example of miscommunication comes from a director of communications at a large firm:

I was asked to prepare a memo reviewing our company's training programs and materials. In the body of the memo in one of the sentences, I mentioned the "*pedagogical approach*" used by one of the training manuals. The day after I routed the memo to the executive committee, I was called into the HR director's office, and told that the executive vice president wanted me out of the building by lunch. When I asked why, I was told that she wouldn't stand for perverts (pedophiles?) working in her company. Finally, he showed me her copy of the memo, with her demand that I be fired—and the word "*pedagogical*"—circled in red. The HR manager was fairly reasonable, and once he looked the word up in his dictionary and made a copy of the definition to send back to her, he told me not to worry. He would take care of it. Two days later, a memo to the entire staff came out directing us that no words that could not be found in the local Sunday newspaper could be used in company memos. A month later, I resigned. In accordance with company policy, I created my resignation memo by pasting words together from the Sunday paper.*

Projectzone, "Humor" (<http://corporatedump.com/dilbertmanagers.html>) (2004).

Communications Management Plans

- Because project communication is so important, every project should include a **communications management plan**—a document that guides project communications.
- The plan will vary with the needs of the project, but some type of written plan should always be prepared and address the following items:
 - Stakeholder communications requirements.
 - Information to be communicated, including format, content, and level of detail.
 - Identification of who will receive the information and who will produce it.
 - Suggested methods or guidelines for conveying the information.
 - Description of the frequency of communication.
 - Escalation procedures for resolving issues.
 - Revision procedures for updating the communications management plan.
 - A glossary of common terminology used on the project.

Table 5-7. Sample Communications Management Plan

Communications Management Plan Version 1.0
August 28, 2007

Project Name: Just-In-Time Training Project

1. Stakeholder communications requirements:

Because this project involves many people from all over the company as well as outside suppliers, the project team will use surveys, interviews, checklists, and other tools and techniques to determine the communications requirements for various stakeholders. Employees will have specific communications needs in that several training programs are being totally changed, and they will likely be uncomfortable with that change. Suppliers will have communications needs to ensure that they are developing courses that will meet our organization's needs. Internal experts providing content will have communications needs related to providing useful information, and so on.

2. Communications summary:

The following table summarizes various stakeholders; communications required; the delivery method or format of the communications; who will produce the communications; and when they will be distributed, or the frequency of distribution. All communications produced will be archived and available on the project Web site. As more communications items are defined, they will be added to this list. The project team will use various templates and checklists to enhance communications. The team will also be careful to use the appropriate medium (that is, face-to-face meeting, phone, e-mail, hard copy, Web site, and so on) and follow corporate guidelines for effective communications.

Stakeholders	Communications Name	Delivery Method/Format	Producer	Due/Frequency
Project steering committee	Weekly status report	Hard copy and short meeting	Kristin Maur	Wednesdays at 9 a.m.
Sponsor and champion	Monthly status report	Hard copy and short meeting	Kristin Maur	First Thursday of month at 10 a.m.
Affected employees	Project announcement	Memo, e-mail, intranet site, and announcement at department meetings	Lucy Camarena and Mike Sundby	July 1, 2007
Project team	Weekly status report	Short meeting	All team members	Tuesdays at 2 p.m.

Table 5-7. Sample Communications Management Plan (continued)

3. Guidelines:

- Make sure people understand your communications. Use commonsense techniques to check comprehension, such as having them explain what you mean in their own words. Don't overuse/misuse e-mail or other technologies. Short meetings or phone calls can be very effective.
- Use templates as much as possible for written project communications. The project Web site includes a link to all project-related templates.
- Use the titles and dates of documents in e-mail headings, and have recipients acknowledge receipt.
- Prepare and post meeting minutes within 24 hours of a meeting.
- Use checklists for reviewing product requirements, conducting interviews, and so on.
- Use corporate facilitators for important meetings, such as kick-off meetings and supplier negotiations.

4. Escalation procedures for resolving issues:

Issues should be resolved at the lowest level possible. When they cannot be resolved, affected parties should alert their immediate supervisors of the issues. If it is critical to the project or extremely time sensitive, the issue should be brought directly to the project manager. If the project manager cannot resolve an issue, he or she should bring it to the project steering committee or appropriate senior management, as required.

5. Revision procedures for this document:

Revisions to this plan will be approved by the project manager. The revision number and date will be clearly marked at the top of the document.

6. Glossary of common terminology:

actual cost—The total direct and indirect costs incurred in accomplishing work on an activity during a given period.

baseline—The original project plan plus approved changes.

bid—A document prepared by sellers providing pricing for standard items that have been clearly defined by the buyer.

Etc.

Project Human Resource Management

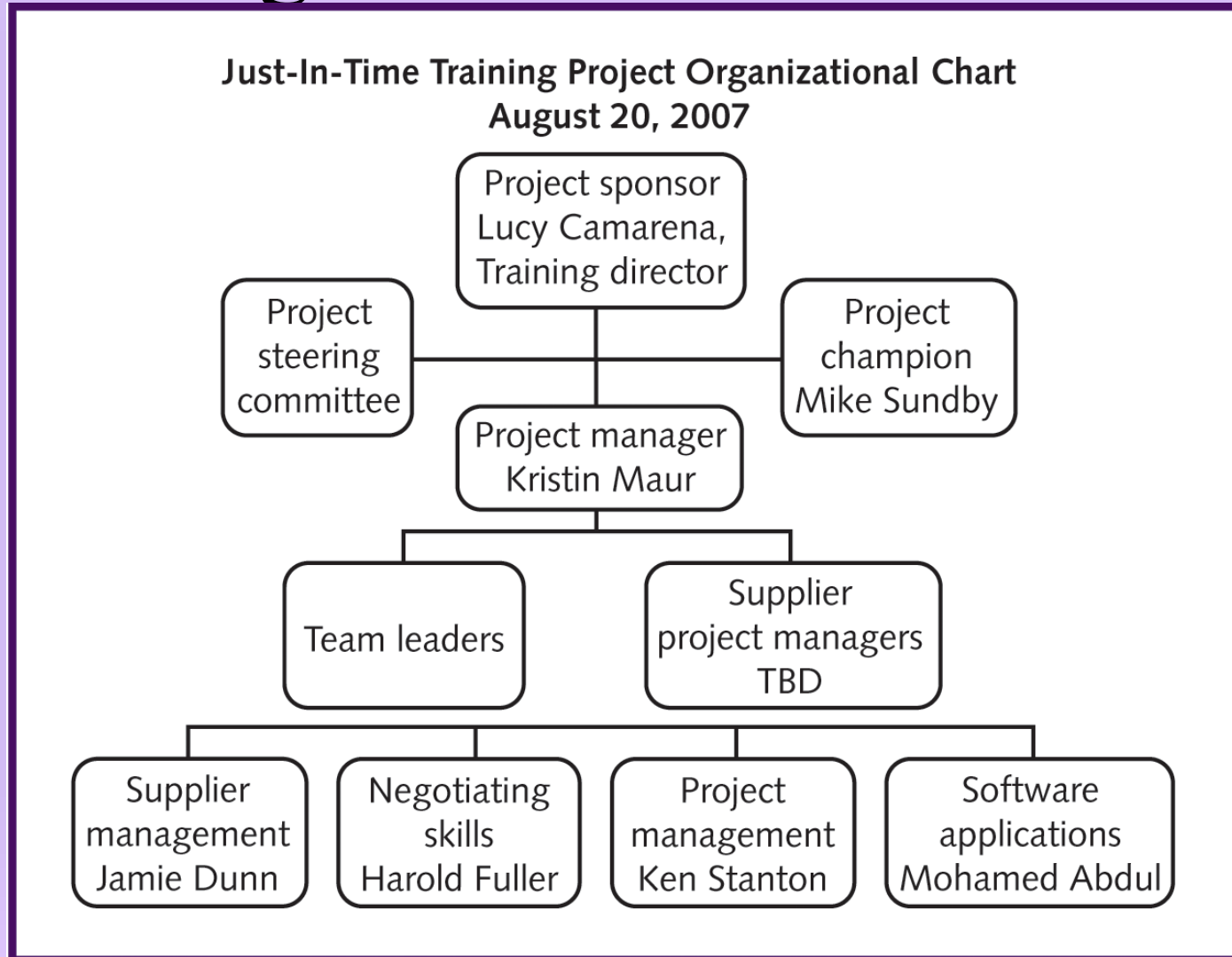
Planning Tasks

- Many corporate executives have said, “People are our most important asset.” People determine the success and failure of organizations and projects.
- **Project human resource management** is concerned with making effective use of the people involved with a project.
- Key outputs produced as part of project human resource management planning include a project organizational chart, a responsibility assignment matrix, a resource histogram, and a staffing management plan.
- Other topics, such as motivation and dealing with people problems, are discussed in Chapter 6.

Project Organizational Charts

- Similar to a company's organizational chart, a **project organizational chart** is a graphic representation of how authority and responsibility is distributed within the project.
- The size and complexity of the project determines how simple or complex the organizational chart is.

Figure 5-1. Sample Project Organizational Chart



Responsibility Assignment Matrices

- A **responsibility assignment matrix (RAM)** is a matrix that maps the work of the project as described in the work breakdown structure (WBS) to the people responsible for performing the work.
- For smaller projects, it is best to assign WBS activities to individuals; for larger projects, it is more effective to assign the work to organizational units or teams.
- **RACI charts** are a type of RAM that show **R**esponsibility, **A**ccountability, **C**onsultation, and **I**nformed roles for project stakeholders.

Table 5-5. Sample RACI Chart

**Just-In-Time Training Project RACI Chart
August 20, 2007**

Tasks	Kristin	Jamie	Mohamed	Supplier A
Needs assessment	R	A	C	I
Research of existing training	I	R, A	C	I
Partnerships	R, A	I	I	C
Course development	R	C	C	A
Pilot course	R	C	I	A
Course administration	I	R	A	I
Course evaluation	I	R	A	I
Stakeholder communications	R, A	A	C	C

R: Responsible
A: Accountable
C: Consulted
I: Informed

Staffing Management Plans

- A **staffing management plan** describes when and how people will be added to and removed from a project.
- It describes the types of people needed to work on the project, the numbers needed for each type of person each month, and how these resources will be acquired, trained, rewarded, and reassigned after the project.

Table 5-6. Sample Staffing Management Plan

Staffing Management Plan

August 20, 2007

Project Name: Just-in-time training project

Introduction

The main goal of this project is to develop a new training program that provides just-in-time training to employees on key topics, including supplier management, negotiating skills, project management, and software applications.

Staffing Requirements

This project will require the following internal staff:

- Project manager (PM) (assigned 3/4 time)
- Project team members from the training department (two people assigned half-time) to help with all project training
- Project team member from the supplier management (SM) department (assigned half-time) to assist with supplier management training
- Information technology (IT) department staff to help with technical support and software applications training
- Project management (PM) staff to help with project management training
- Contracting department staff to assist in administering project contracts

See the resource histogram in Atch A for projected staffing needs over time.

Staff Assignments

The project manager will work through functional managers to assign individuals to the project. The project manager will interview potential candidates to determine suitability. If particular expertise is required for part of the project, the functional managers will plan to make experts available. Employees will be paid overtime if needed.

Training, Rewards, and Reassignment

Ideally, people assigned to this project will have appropriate experience or be willing to learn quickly on the job. The project manager will do his or her best to provide a challenging and enjoyable work environment. Assignment to the project will not affect an individual's salary, but the project manager will write a performance evaluation and recommend appropriate rewards. If an individual is not performing as expected, the project manager will work with him or her and the appropriate functional manager to determine reassignment.

Atch A: Resource histogram