

COMMUNICATION IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: This study aims is to present the main aspects regarding communication in project management. The processes involved in the communication in project management are: communication planning, information distribution, performance reporting and administrative closure. These processes interact with each other and with other processes regarding project management.

Keywords: communication, project, management, plan, manager

1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of the communication in the success of a project is huge. An adequate communication between stakeholders, regarding all aspects involved in project, can generate good results. The common way to define communication is to explain the process of communication.

2. COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The process of communication can be defines as the process of transmission of a message (information) from a sender to a receiver. The elements involved in the communication process are [1]:

- sender;
- receiver;
- message;
- encoding;
- decoding;
- channel;
- noise;
- feedback.

The *sender* is an individual, group, or organization who initiates the communication. There are some factors, depending on sender which influence the communication: the sender's experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skill, perceptions and culture.

The *message* is what the sender wants to transmit to receiver. To reach this goal, the sender converts the ideas into words or expressions. This process of converting an idea in words or expressions is *encoding*.

The channel is the vehicle or a medium through which the message passes. The vehicle can be a paper or a telephone or Internet and so on.

The *receiver* is the destination of the message sent by the sender. The receiver must be able to understand and to interpret the message. The process of understanding by receiver of the message sent by the sender represents *decoding*.

The *noise* is anything that disturbs the communication.

Feedback is the way by which sender can determinate the effectiveness of his message. Using the same phases as the sender, the receiver send a message back to the sender providing information on his level of comprehension of the message

3. COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The management of projects communications includes the whole processes which temporary contribute at the generation, collecting, distribution, stocking and tiding up the information regarding the project [2].

Within the project, communication may have different forms: oral, written and /or nonverbal. The oral communication is used in work meetings, “between you and me” discussions or phone discussions. The written communication is more formal. In order to transmit the written information quick, the fax or even e-mail can be used. To synthesize the written information, tables, schemes or graphs can be used. The nonverbal communication reflects style, attitude and behavior of the transmitter in the moment of the transmission. Often, this type of communication has a greater impact than verbal communication.

During the project, the information can circulate within the organization as well as between the organization and other organizations (suppliers, beneficiary etc.). The first who has access to project information are the team members. Some of this information must be transmitted to the other stakeholders in order to be posted with the development degree of the project.

In order to be well used, the information must not be altered. Reality shows that there are some factors which can block an efficient communication.

An important impediment is tackling different optics, within the communication process, regarding the way in which the ideas are exposed: detailed or general. Some meticulous people has the tendency to detail very much. On the other hand, others prefer to tackle the whole problem without presenting too many details. The existence of such different communication styles at workgroup or organization level makes more difficult the reception of the initial message and has a negative impact on work capacity. That is why is important to use an unitary, lapidary and clear communication style.

Other obstacles for an efficient communication, within a project, can be: information overload, manipulation, influencing the people etc.

Within international projects, cultural differences between people and/or organizations must be taken into account. For instance, some symbol may have different means in different cultures.

An efficient communication is a must during the whole lifecycle of the project. In order to achieve this, the specific communication processes within the project must be taken into account [3]:

- communication planning, which require the determination of the information and communication needs of the stakeholders: who and when may require information, the way they will be transmitted etc;
- information distribution, which requires the transmission of the information to the stakeholders as soon as possible;
- performance reporting which means collecting and semination the information performances;
- administrative closure, which means generation and semination the information regarding the formal closure of the project.

Communication planning

The requirements of communication refer to the whole of the information that can be asked for by the stakeholders, like the ones about: the project management, responsibility of the stakeholders, communication with the media etc.

There are multiple and varied techniques and methods of communication that will be used in the project, starting from face to face discussions and the setting up of meetings with the personnel involved in the project, or starting from simple hand written documents and finishing with the planning and usage of databases etc.

The assumptions are portrayed by those factors that are considered true, real and certain and the constraints are the factors that restrict the project team's options (for example the higher the number of acquisitions is, the harder it is to manage the documents that are needed for the acquisitions).

The most commonly used method in communication planning is the analysis of stakeholders. This method entails the identification of every stake holder's information need and that of the most adequate type and style of communication.

The most important result of communication planning is the communication plan. This plan needs to present a detailed account of what kind of communication will be used in every step of the project, who will transmit, when and who will receive a certain piece of information, where will it be stored, etc. This plan can be formal or informal, detailed or outlined, according to the project's requirements.

Information distribution

The distribution of information entails the implementation of the communication plan, which will facilitate the transmission of information at the right time in the right place. The techniques used for the distribution of information are based on the abilities to communicate and the distribution system of information. The emitter is responsible for the correct transmission of the information, in a suitable format and the receiver needs to make sure that it has understood exactly the significance of the emitter's message.

The information's distribution system takes into account the communication channel and the way in which the information flows (e-mail, fax, phone etc.).

Performance reporting

Performance reporting entails the collection and the broadcasting of information that has been recorded during the project, so that the stakeholders are kept to date with the way in which the allocated resources have been and will be spent in order to achieve the proposed goals.

The most common way of reporting the performance is the report. The report can take into account both the analysis in the way in which the project has been deployed to a certain moment and certain performance indicators of the project. These reports can contain different charts that can show the evolution or the future outlook of the project.

Administrative closure

The administrative closure takes place at the end of the project and it entails the examination of the project's documentation and making sure that every party taking part in the project has formally agreed to the sign-off of the project. After the examination of the documentation and the closure of all the contracts, all the documents are recorded and archived so that they can be easily retrieved.

Many times, in order to assess the degree of customer satisfaction the client is being submitted to a questionnaire. Any complaints or suggestions received from the beneficiary must be seriously taken into account in order to improve the activities on future projects.

4. CONCLUSION

The process of the communication in the success of a project is very important. Effective communication is

important during every phase of the project life cycle. An adequate communication between stakeholders, regarding all aspects involved in project, can contribute to obtain good results.

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