Communication Planning

**Communication Planning Tool - The Importance of Communication**

A Project Manager should spend 90% of their project-related effort involved in project communication. It is a critical success factor for effective project management. The leading cause of project failure comes from ineffective communications!

**Planning for Specific Communications within the Project Lifecycle**

The following are common communications that can be anticipated within the project lifecycle. Plans for how the project team will address these are in the “Communication Management” section of the Project Management Plan.

* **Internal project communications** – includes how the team will use a project folder, whether they will have a common work space such as a war room, how hallway conversations will be documented, internal status updates, whether the team will have an email distribution list to ensure the right team members are copied on the right electronic communications, etc.
* **Communications outside of the project** (external status reporting) – includes what publications are expected (such as regular status reports, or announcements of upcoming milestones or deliverables), the objective of each communication, the publication schedule, and the intended authors, reviewers, and recipients.
* **Standard meetings** – includes when and where they will take place, the primary objective, who will facilitate, who will participate, and where the agendas and meeting minutes will be documented and stored.
* **Communicating issues, decisions or changes** – includes how the project stakeholders can expect to receive communications about issues, decisions or changes. It’s most effective to determine how stakeholders want to receive this information before you need to deliver it!

**Cycle of Communication Processing**

* **What it is:** This illustration shows a common information-processing cycle; not everyone begins the cycle in the same place, and individuals complete the cycle at different paces
* **What to do about it:** Be sure to address each step in the cycle for the most effective communications

**Planning for Specific Communications**

Use the table below to help you organize your thoughts and prepare for significant or high-risk communications. For each communication, identify each participant within the communication, and then use the table below to help you plan for how you will adjust that communication to increase success.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Wii FM What’s in it For Me? | Wii FT What’s in it For Them? | Inter-personal | Commun-ication | Mood | Un-certainty | Risk | Action |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

* NAME: Use one row for each person who will participate in the communication.
* WIIFM: What benefit do I expect for myself from their participation in this communication?
* WIIFT: What benefit will they get out of participating in this communication?
* INTERPERSONAL: How well do they interact with others who are part of this communication?
* COMMUNICATION: How well does their preferred style and mode of communication align with this communication?
* MOOD: What are their mood indicators, and what is impacting their mood at the time of this communication?
* UNCERTAINTY: How well does their tolerance for uncertainty align with this communication?
* RISK: What could reduce the success of this communication for (or because of) this person?
* ACTION: What, specifically, am I going to do to ensure success for this person and this communication