Managing Communication
Goals of the Unit

• Understanding why a good communication plan is important in a project
• Learning about communication styles
• Learning how to manage meetings
Initiate

Assess Feasibility

Plan

Formalize Goals

Define Goals

Define Costs

Define Schedule

Monitor Goals, Cost and Schedule

Execute & Monitor

Collect Outputs

Develop

Kick Off Activities

Close

Close

Release

Change Control & Configuration Management

Quality Management

Risk Management

Human Resource Management

[Obtain Approval]
Information Exchanged in a Project

- **Technical information**, which is necessary to carry out the work in the project
- **Project status information**, which is necessary to understand whether activities are being carried out as planned
- **Project decisions**, which are necessary to ensure the proper choices are taken and the project moves in the right direction
- **Project action items**, which are necessary to ensure the plan is implemented
- **Project advertisement**, which is necessary to ensure stakeholders are informed and engaged.
Communication

• Watch for:
  – medium (e.g., formality level)
  – standards/noise, culture/perception
  – communication style

• Watch for feedback (a natural error correction code! :-))
Communication Styles

• Individuals have different communication styles
• Understanding one’s communication style can help reduce the communication “noise”
• A common classification
  – Aggressive
  – Passive
  – Assertive
Communication: other issues

- **Cost of information & Information flooding**
  (information has a cost related to its production and consumption, which is both material and emotional)

- **Information is volatile**
  (consider variations to previous decisions: how do I make sure everyone is informed?)

- **Transparency**
  (who has to be informed about a specific news? For instance: shall I tell my team that the company is about to fire people?)
Planning
Communication and Information Distribution
Communication Planning

Goal: delivering the right information to the right people at the right time. Ensure information flows effectively and efficiently in the project.

- Output: a document
- Possibly: tools to support the implementation of the communication plan
Communication Planning

Different levels of detail:

- Define the lines, type and time of communication
  * Who receives what from whom and when
  * How information is circulated: email, share repositories, documents, spoken

- Define a distribution policy for the different types of information
  * Document lifecycle (DRAFT, FINAL, ...)
  * Document distribution (internal, external)

- Manage and control documents
  * Document repository
  * Document versioning
  * Distribution lists
  * Log distributed documents
Some Tools

• **Planning Communication**
  – Project Roster: who is whom and list of contacts
  – RACI matrix: provides a way to understand who receives what
  – Document plan: list of documents which will be produced

• **Making information available**
  – Document repositories: Dropbox, Groupware (SharePoint), ...
  – Email + mailing lists (however: book-keeping); information retrieval (consider you mailbox with ten revisions of the same document)
  – Versioning systems: they work very well with text files; a bit more complex with binary files
Info Set, Example (PRINCE 2)

### TITLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>insert project name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release</td>
<td>Draft/Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRINCE2

### Document History

**Document Location**

This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

The source of the document will be found in the Project File (filepath).

**Revision History**  Date of next revision:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Revision date</th>
<th>Previous revision date</th>
<th>Summary of Changes</th>
<th>Changes marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approvals**

This document requires the following approvals.

Signed approval forms are filed in the project files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date of Issue</th>
<th>Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Distribution**

This document has been distributed to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date of Issue</th>
<th>Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: authorship, circulation (and control of), info-set maintenance, integration with version control systems/document management systems, validity (and the PRINCE approach)
Project Structure and Communication

• The project structure influences how information flows in a project

• Example. The RACI matrix describes roles in a project and, consequently, the management and technical information flow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK PACKAGE</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
<th>P6</th>
<th>P7</th>
<th>P8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WP0. Project Management</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP1. Case Study Requirements</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP2. Network Architecture Definition</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP3. Software Development</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP4. Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP5. Sustainability &amp; Exploitation</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP6. Dissemination</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structuring Meetings
The costs of meeting

• Intangible cost (http://www.fastcompany.com/26726/seven-sins-deadly-meetings)
  – Meetings perpetuate an organization's culture and tell we are part of an organization. Boring meetings full of boring people => we work for a boring company.
  – Bad meetings are a source of negative messages about our company and ourselves

• Tangible cost
  – Scenario: 5 people participating to a 2 hours meeting => effort: 10 man-hours
  – Suppose the average hourly cost of the participants is 50 euros/hour => Cost of the meeting is 500 euros
Structuring Meetings

• To be successful:
  – Check whether you can achieve the same goal in a different way
  – Define clearly goals and attendees
  – Choose a meeting structure (and make it clear)
  – Define an agenda
  – Define duration and make sure it is kept (e.g. **STAND UP MEETINGS**)
  – If possible, distribute material in advance
  – Keep the meeting focused; appoint a moderator
  – Write meeting minutes; record actions and people responsible; follow up on the minutes
Types of Meetings

- **Kick-off meeting**: to launch a project of an important portion (e.g., a work package)
- **Decision Taking meeting**: to choose on a project matter (technical or managerial)
- **Status Reporting meeting**: to report on the project or on the status of a project deliverable
- **Audit and Review meeting**: to review some project outputs or the project status
- **Brainstorming**: to collect ideas
Meeting Minutes Structure

• **Coordinates:**
  – Date and location
  – Attendees
  – Invited people that did not attend the meeting (if required)
  – Roles assigned (if relevant; e.g. moderator)

• **Agenda**

• **Recap of the Discussion (if required)**

• **Actions:**
  – ID, Action, Due Date, Responsible, WP Reference