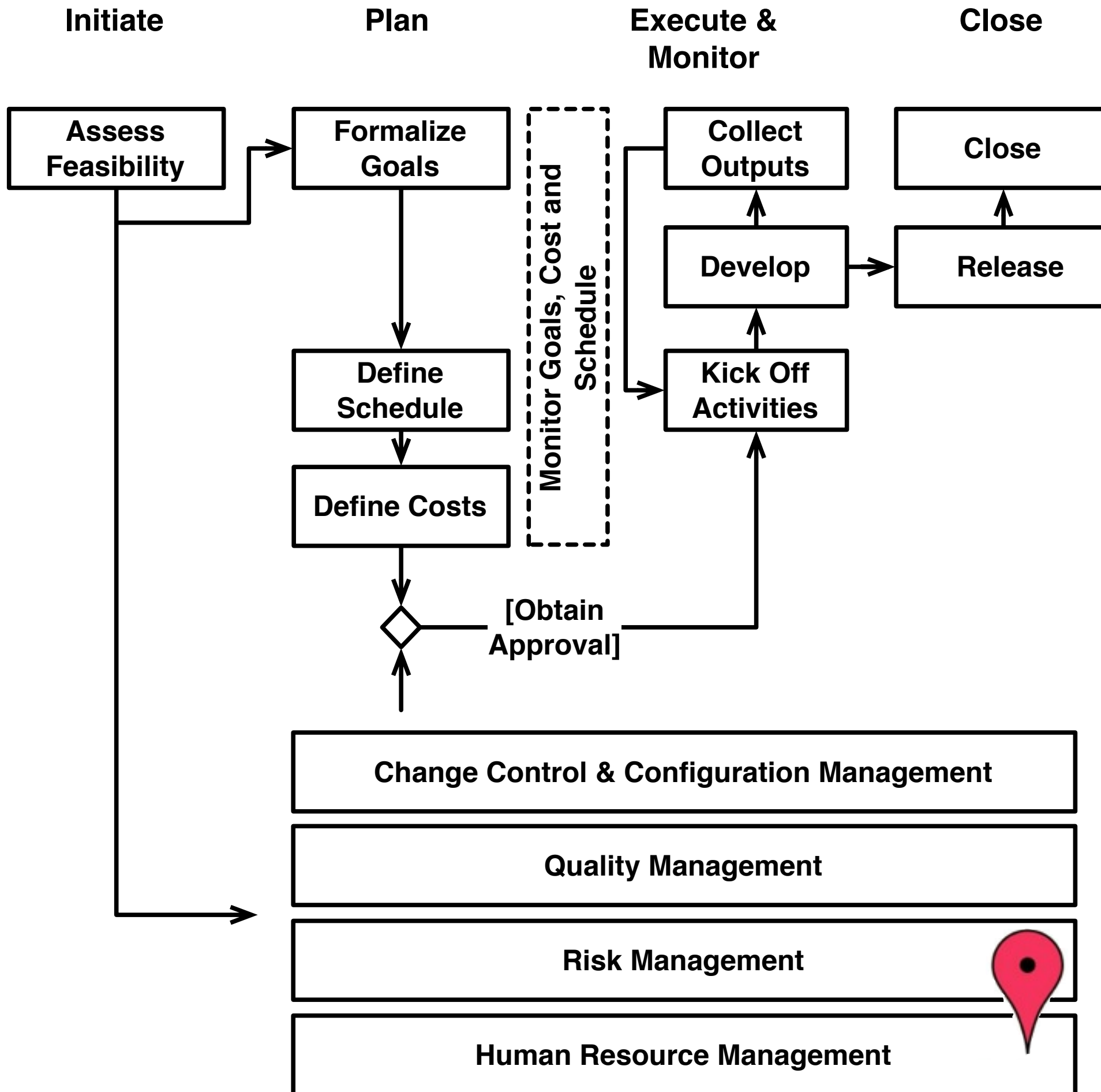


Managing Communication

Goals of the Unit

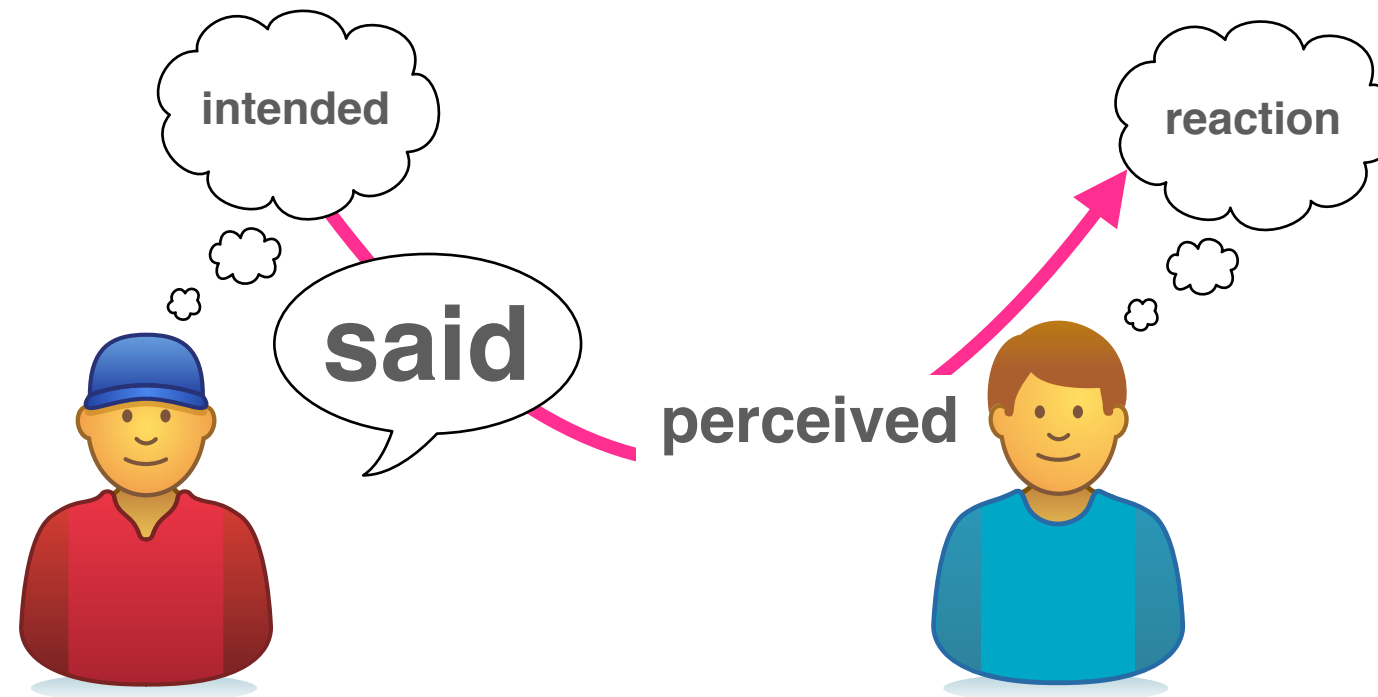
- Understanding why a good communication plan is important in a project
- Learning about communication styles
- Learning how to manage meetings



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

Project name *insert project name*

Release Draft/Final
Date:

PRINCE2

Author:	
Owner:	
Client:	
Document Number:	

Document History

Document This document is only valid on the day it was printed.
Location The source of the document will be found in the Project File (*filepath*).

Revision History Date of next revision:

Version Number	Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked

Approvals This document requires the following approvals.
Signed approval forms are filed in the project files.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version

Distribution This document has been distributed to:

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version

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

WORK PACKAGE	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
WP0. Project Management	AR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
WP1. Case Study Requirements	C	C	C	AR	R	C	C	R
WP2. Network Architecture Definition		AR			C		C	C
WP3. Software Development	AR			R	C	R		C
WP4. Assessment and Evaluation	C	C	R		AR	R	R	R
WP5. Sustainability & Exploitation	R	R	AR	R	R	R	R	R
WP6. Dissemination	R	R	R	R	R	AR	R	R

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