

# 8. Communication Management

## 8. 1. Introduction

**Communication** = exchange of information between two entities (transmitter–receiver)

**Condition:** common language

**Recommendation:** feedback

**Model:** transmit, receive, understand, agree, act

Communication is defined by:

**transmitter** >> source of information

**receiver** >> destination of information

**chain of communication (environment)** >> what environment is used for information transmission (mass media, telecommunication, etc.)

**objective/expected result** >> for what purpose is information sent

**content** >> what information is sent

**form** >> in what form information is sent: by words or non-verbal (movements, face expression, etc)

**TIME spent for communication is not lost!!!!**

**TIPS for interpersonal communication:**

- **discuss** with people for knowing them better
- be sure that everybody assumes the **same preconditions** – clarify the initial assumptions and context
- **avoid the lack of clarity**: use analogies, separate the problem in simpler sub-problems
- **listen** the others
- **do not adopt an authoritarian style**; discuss, do not give commands!!!
- if someone has not your opinions, **do not ridicule / criticize**

## Some communication barriers:

- high emotional level for receiver or transmitter
- self-defense against sarcastic, aggressive attitude of transmitter
- filtering of received information
- jargon
- cultural differences
- information overload

## Solutions

- control your emotions
- simplify the language
- listen actively what is communicated to you
- obtain feedback > open questions summarizing the message

## 8. 2. Communication Management Processes

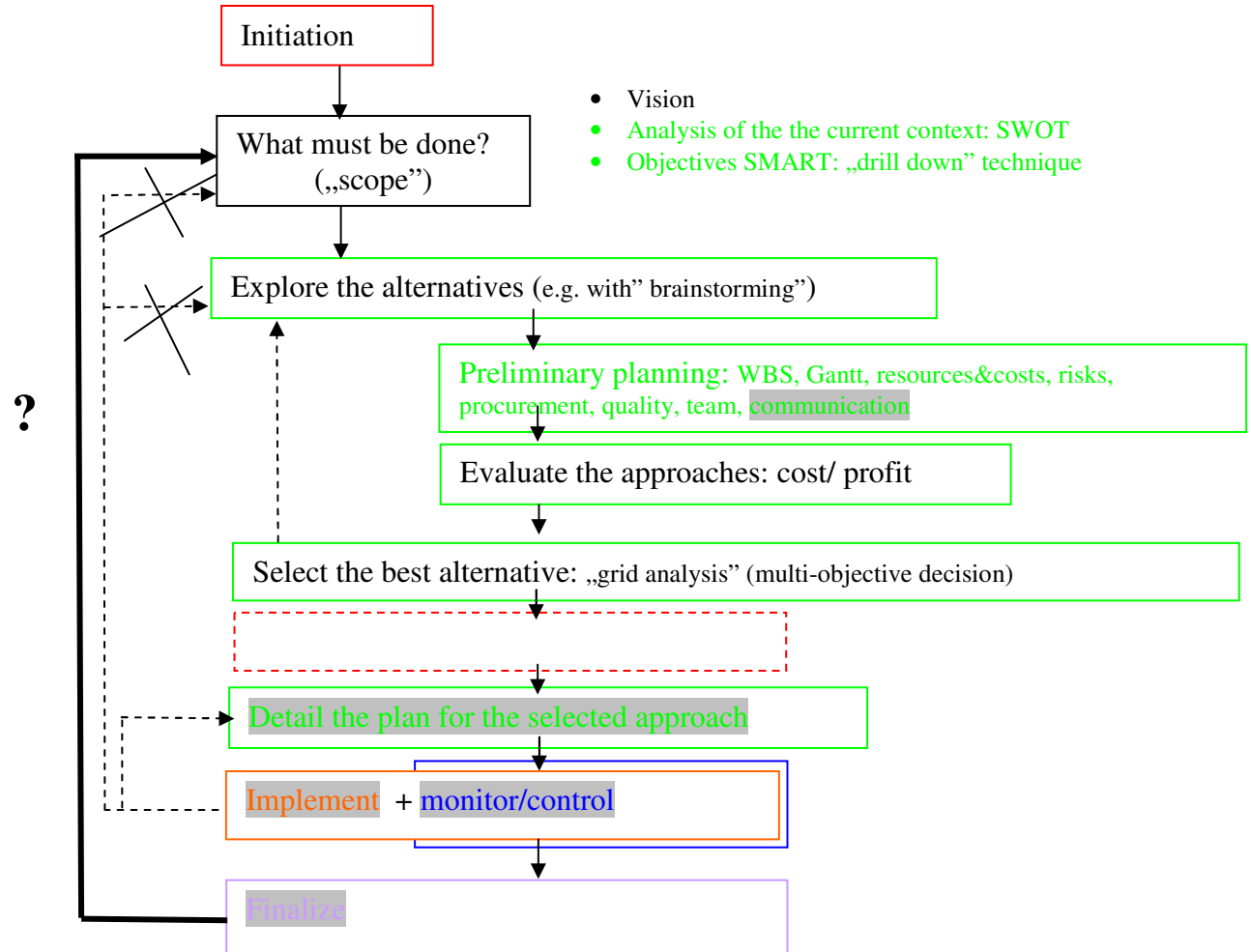
= processes which ensure the **production, gathering storing and dissemination** of appropriate **content** of information, at **appropriate time instants**

- communication planning (PA)** the process which establish **what** information is necessary, **who** needs it and who must produce it, **when** it is necessary, **how** should be delivered
- information dissemination (E)** ensure that information is available in time
- performance reporting (C)** collect and disseminate the information regarding the performances achieved within the project

administrative closure (F)

reports may indicate the current state, the progress of the project or may give predictions

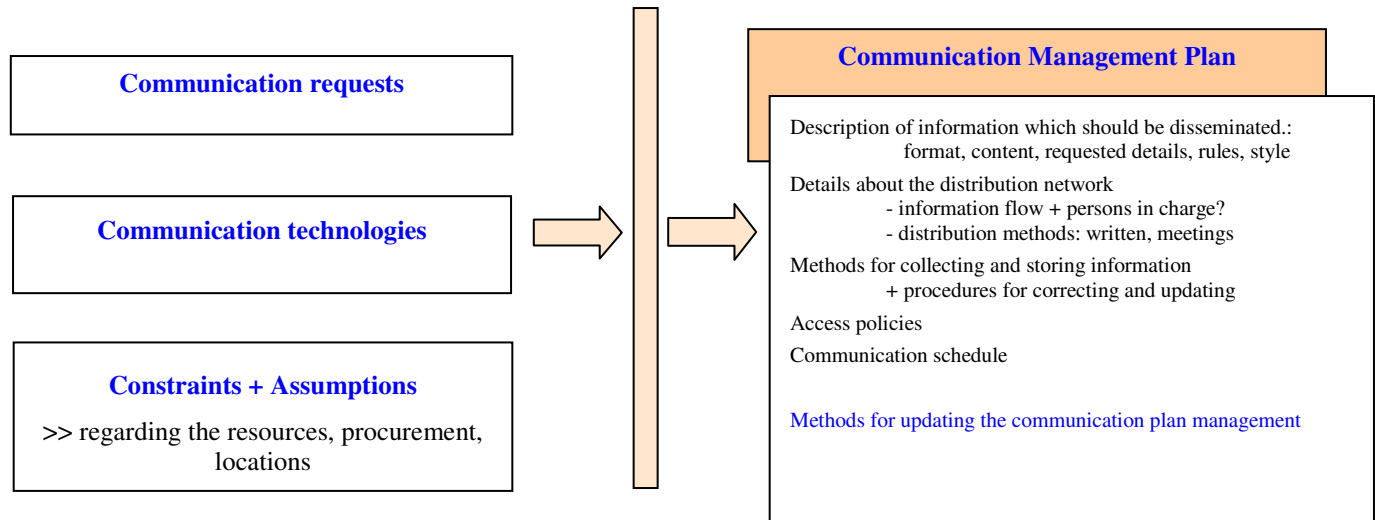
production, gathering and dissemination of information for phase/project ending



## 8. 2. 1. Communication Planning (PA)

= determine the need of communication for all the stakeholders

WHO? WHAT? HOW? WHEN communicate?





## Recommendations:

- Analyze attentively **the needs of stakeholders** >> correlate with humane resource management
- **Communication requests result from**
  - roles and responsibilities set within the project
  - departments / specializations involved within the project
  - logistic and locations
  - the information which need to be collected from outside of the project
  - etc.

- Are **communication technologies appropriate?**

- Can be used efficiently?

- How frequent updates are necessary?

- How fast an access should be solved?

- Local or distributed access?

- How long is the project?

- Is any change of communication technology expected?

- How many people are involved?

- Is communication technology known or specific training is required?

- **The communication management plan indicates the milestones:**

One can consider:

**Milestones** – at the end of important tasks după; if violated, uncontrollable delays are expected

**Check points** – not critical, usually working meetings (periodic or meeting for preparing important events)

**Review points** – at the end of important long phases for analyzing the results of the projects and making proposals

- Find the best **distribution methods**:
  - meetings, video-conferences,
  - written documents sent by email fax,
  - access to websites, databases
- Implement **a system for information retrieval and sharing** (including technical documents)
  - site, integrated software solutions, documentation written in a distributed manner.

## 8. 2. 2. Information Distribution (E)

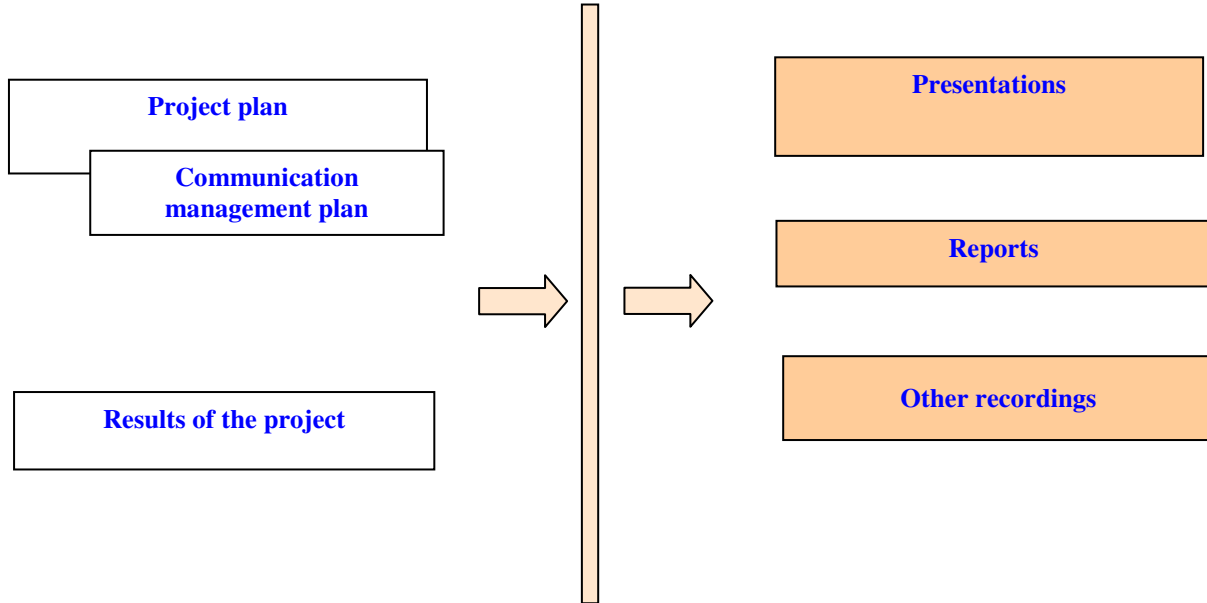
= ensure that necessary information (according to communication management plan) becomes available during the project

+

response to additional request

IS THE COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PLAN MET?

ARE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NECESSARY?



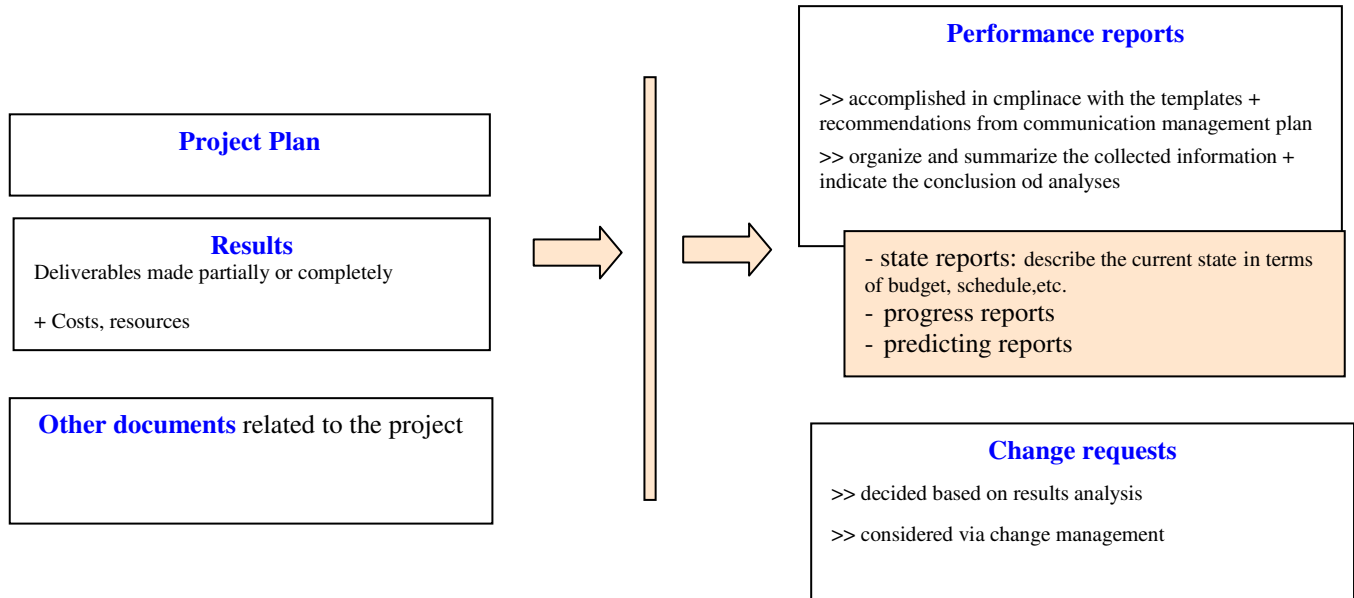
## Recommendations:

- **sustain a correct communication between stakeholders** (as transmitter and receiver)
- **avoid team overloading with unnecessary communications** (many long emails, frequent reports)
- **improve the communication with users/clients, managers, team**

## 8. 2. 3. Performance Reporting (C)

= collect + disseminate information about project performances

### WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCES OF THE PROJECT?





## Recommendations:

- Results can be analyzed by means of
  - **variance analysis**: compare the plan with the results
    - >> usually applied for **costs and schedule**, but it could also refer to objectives & requirements, quality, risks
  - **tendency analysis**: indicates the trend of the project – performance increasing /decreasing

**Earned value analysis**: shows the progress & state of the project + offers an integrated view about project performances related to objectives, schedule, costs/ resources.

For the time interval considered by the analysis:

**Planned value (PV)** = cost planned for the specified time interval

**Actual cost (AC)** = real cost obtained during the specified time interval

**Earned value (EV)** = cost estimated for the activities carried out during the specified time interval

>> cost increasing can occur because cost estimations were not correct or more activities than planned have been accomplished

**Cost variance:  $CV = EV - AC$**  >> indicate cost increasing

**Schedule variance:  $SV = EV - PV$**  >> indicate delayed activities

**Cost performance index:  $EV/AC$**

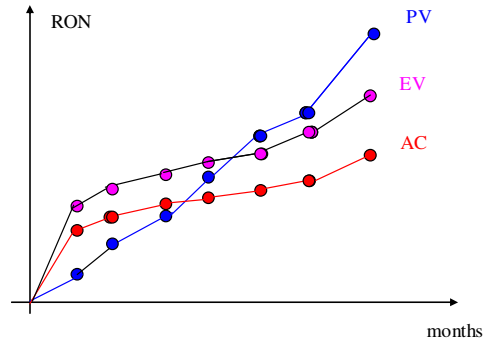
**Schedule performance index:  $EV/PV$**

### Suggestions:

- associate PV for each activity and/or leaf working package of WBS [RON hours of work]
- define EV computation rule for activities /deliverables started, but not finalized:
  - rule 0/100 – for any unfinished item, add 0 to EV
  - rule 50/50 – for any unfinished item, add 50% of total estimated cost
  - rule 25/75 – for any unfinished item, add 25% of total estimated cost

**Advantages:** simple, indicate the progress of the project

**Disadvantages:** it does not explain the causes of variations, no information about quality, depends on EV computation rule



- Performance reports must be discussed with the team in dedicated meetings!!!!

## 8. 2. 4 Administrative closure (F)

= document the results at the end of the phase/project for obtaining the formal accept of client/sponsor

**collect** the documents + information recorded during the project

+ **verify** if the documentation reveals the final state + update

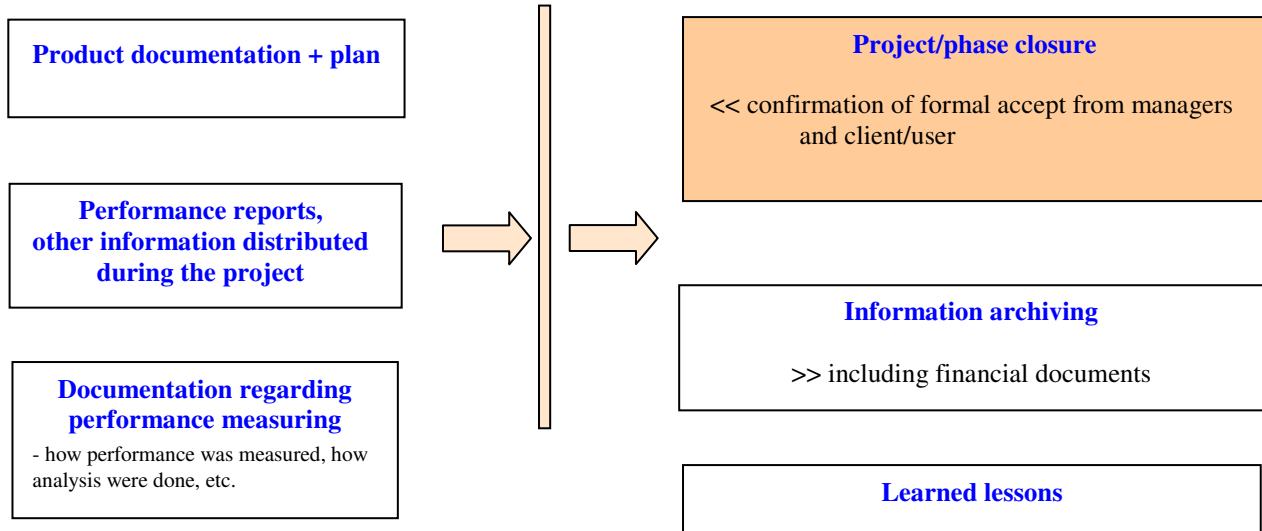
+ **analyze** the project: success? efficient? learned lessons

+ **archive** the information for later access (+ indexing)

WHAT HAVE YOU OBTAIN?

HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE ACCEPT?

WHAT TO ARCHIVE?



## Recommendations:

- Even for internal projects, with informal accept, ensure a final **audit** for revealing the results and the impact of the project (including incomes, team progress), learned lessons

>> attention: income will decrease after a time interval

(„Law of Diminishing Returns”: if a production factor increase and the other remain constant, returned value decrease or remain constant after a time interval)

## Communication by emails

- Chose a relevant subject – avoid repeated reply
- Keep the text concise, simple, direct
  - + Indicate by link where additional details could be found  
(avoid long, boring texts)
- Indicate the **actions** which must be done + **deadlines**
- Set **priorities**
- Use the phone for urgent, important issues



## Suggestions for organizing efficient meetings:

- announce **the goal of the meeting** in advance (together with an agenda)
- invite only necessary people
- set the **meeting coordinator** (not necessarily the PM)
- prepare the meetings: list of questions, what/who presents
- do not use laptops + notes during the meeting (reduced involvement)
- do not be late – bad example
- in small groups the speaker can remain sitting on chair, in big groups the speaker must stand up
- **at the end: conclusions** – what must be done in the following
- **after the meeting disseminate to all the participants** a summary of discussions + decisions

You must organize periodic meetings with the team (bi-monthly)!!!!!!

**Types of meetings:**

- **strongly interactive** meetings (brainstorming, discussions about design, a difficult situation): 2-8 persons, the goal is finding solutions
- **reporting meetings**: 5-15 persons, the goal is disseminating information + feedback
- **general analysis meetings**: 10-100 persons, the goal is presenting current status and next directions

## Kickoff meeting

**Goal:** overview of the project presented to main stakeholders

- Invite managers to introduce you
- Organized + friendly + send **enthusiasm and team spirit**
- Project presentation (about 15 min): objectives + results + impact, schedule + costs (general)
- Present participants – good opportunity to know each other

### **TIPS:**

- main message: everybody is important for the project, something great is beginning
- prepare a surprise – common photo for the site, etc
- plan the meeting before a break (e.g. lunch break) – celebrate the event at the end

## **Presentations for managers**

- be a seller: WIIFM (What Is It For Me)
- put the emphasis on impact, benefits, not technical characteristics
- start with the end: present the expected results, advantages
- design the presentation from general -> detail

### **TIPS:**

Understand what the audience wants

The main message should be repeated during the presentation

Avoid boring, equal voice

Presentation should be simple, clear

Use diagrams + photos

Do not use too much animation

Look to the audience during your presentation

## Communication with your managers

- **make a team with them** (you have a common goal: the success of the project)
  - understand what they expect from you,
  - offer only correct, clear reports
  - create direct communication channels (no intermediary persons)
  - avoid the direct communication between your managers and your team
- **if the managers is too indulgent, do not relax**, you can lose

Managers fears:

- postpone decisions and overanalyze the phases, if they don't know the field
- >> in IT: dislike new technologies

## **Possible types of managers:**

- **Uninterested** – they do not listen your opinions
  - insist on written communication + send email to confirm information received in a discussion
  - create communication channels with other managers
- **Aggressive**
  - do not get mad before them
  - show that you are offended when they are aggressive
  - chose written communication
  - create communication channels with other managers
- **Excessively prudent, postpone decisions**
  - set deadlines – written,
  - come with alternatives and suggestions
- **Keen for perfection + want to do everything by themselves**
  - delimitate clear responsibilities + expected requirements

details regarding how to communicate with your team >> human resources management

# Revision

## *Definitions, taxonomy:*

Communication – with team and managers, meetings preparation  
milestones/checking points/review points  
distribution methods, information retrieval and sharing system  
trend/ variance analysis, EVA

*Communication management processes:* communication planning (PA),  
information distribution (E), performance reporting (C), administrative  
closure (F)

## *Documents*

Communication management plan  
State/progress/ predicting - Performance reports  
Presentations