PMP Bootcamp: Mastering Project Communications – Connecting for Success

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Instructions: Effective communication is the lifeblood of any successful project. It's about ensuring the right information reaches the right people at the right time, in the right way, to facilitate understanding and action. This worksheet explores how to plan, manage, and monitor project communications.

Core Concept Reminder (from PMBOK 7 & Rita):

- **PMBOK 7th Edition:** The "Stakeholder" and "Team" performance domains heavily rely on effective communication. Principles like "Effectively Engage with Stakeholders" and "Build a Culture of Accountability and Respect" are underpinned by good communication. Tailoring the communication approach is essential.

- **Rita Mulcahy's PMP Exam Prep (11th Ed.):** Emphasizes that communication is a PM's primary job. It's not just about sending information, but ensuring it's received, understood, and has the desired impact. Planning communications is a proactive step to prevent misunderstandings.

Part 1: Understanding Communications Management – The Big Picture

1. **Communications Management Overview:**

   o Involves the processes necessary to ensure timely and appropriate planning, collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, monitoring, and ultimate disposition of project information.

   o **Goal:** To enable effective information flow among project stakeholders.

2. **Examples of Factors Affecting Project Communications (Things that can make it tricky!):**

   o **Stakeholder diversity:** Different needs, expectations, languages, cultures.

   o **Geographical dispersion:** Virtual teams, different time zones.

   o **Organizational structure:** How information flows within the company.

   o **Technology availability and literacy:** Access to and familiarity with communication tools.

   o **Project complexity and urgency:** More complex/urgent projects often need more frequent/detailed communication.

   o **Communication styles:** Individual preferences (e.g., email vs. phone call).

   o **Question:** How might "geographical dispersion" of a project team specifically impact communications, and what's one way to mitigate this?

- ▪ Impact:

  _____

- ▪ Mitigation:

  _____

3. **Desired Outcomes from Successful Communication Management:**

   - o Stakeholders are appropriately informed and engaged.

   - o Decisions are made in a timely manner based on accurate information.

   - o Misunderstandings and conflicts are minimized.

   - o Project objectives are clearly understood by all.

   - o Effective collaboration among team members.

Part 2: Planning for Success – Communications Planning

Purpose (Plan Communications Management): The process of developing an appropriate approach and plan for project communication activities based on the information needs of each stakeholder or group, available organizational assets, and the needs of the project.

1. **Why is it crucial to *plan* communications rather than just communicating ad-hoc?**

   _____

   _____

2. **Communications Requirements Analysis:**

   - o A key part of planning is determining the information needs of project stakeholders.

   - o **What kind of questions would you ask to determine a stakeholder's communication requirements?** (List two)
     a. _____
     b. _____
     (Examples: What information do you need? How often? In what format? Who should send it?)

3. **Key Artifacts (Outputs) of Communications Planning (Plan Communications Management):**

   - o **Communications Management Plan:**

- **What it is:** A component of the project management plan that describes how project communications will be planned, structured, monitored, and controlled.

- **Key information it typically contains (The "5 W's and an H"):**

  - **W**ho needs what information? (Stakeholder analysis)

  - **W**hat information do they need?

  - **W**hen will they get it? (Frequency)

  - **W**here will information be stored/accessed?

  - **W**hy is this information being communicated? (Purpose)

  - **H**ow will it be communicated? (Method/Format/Medium – e.g., email, meeting, report)

- List one other piece of information it might contain: _____
  (Other examples: Person responsible for communicating, escalation paths, glossary of terms, constraints)

  - **(Updates to) Project Management Plan & Project Documents.**

Part 3: Making it Happen – Managing Effective Communications

Purpose (Manage Communications): The process of ensuring timely and appropriate collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, monitoring, and the ultimate disposition of project information. This is where you *execute* the Communications Management Plan.

1. **Key activities in Managing Communications:**

   - Creating and distributing project communications as planned.

   - Ensuring information is clear, concise, and understood.

   - Facilitating discussions and meetings.

   - Managing stakeholder expectations.

2. **Methods for Communication (Tools & Techniques - many are also in other processes):**

   - **Communication Technology:** Email, IM, video conferencing, project management software, shared drives.

     - *Consideration:* Choose technology appropriate for the message, audience, and urgency.

- o **Communication Skills:** Active listening, feedback, presentation skills, non-verbal communication, cultural awareness, political awareness.

  - *Why is "Active Listening" so critical for effective communication?*

- o **Communication Methods (Revisited):**

  - **Interactive:** Two-way (e.g., meetings, calls). *Best for complex issues, building consensus.*

  - **Push:** One-way, sent to recipients (e.g., emails, memos). *Best for general updates.*

  - **Pull:** Information placed centrally for access (e.g., intranet, SharePoint). *Best for large volumes, reference info.*

- o **Interpersonal and Team Skills:** (e.g., conflict resolution, meeting management, facilitation).

- o **Project Reporting:** Collecting and distributing project performance information (status reports, progress reports).

3. **Artifacts (Outputs) of Manage Communications:**

- o **Project Communications:** The actual communications that have been distributed (e.g., performance reports, stakeholder notifications, meeting minutes, presentations).

- o **(Updates to) Project Management Plan & Project Documents** (e.g., Issue Log, Lessons Learned, Stakeholder Register).

Part 4: Is it Working? – Monitor Communication Effectiveness

Purpose (Monitor Communications): The process of ensuring the information needs of the project and its stakeholders are met. This involves checking if the planned communications are having the desired effect.

1. **Key questions to ask when monitoring communication effectiveness:**

- o Are stakeholders receiving the information they need?

- o Is the information clear and understood?

- o Is the frequency and format appropriate?

- o Are communications leading to the desired actions or understanding?

- o Is the Communications Management Plan still relevant, or does it need updates?

2. **Methods for Monitoring Communications (Tools & Techniques):**

   - o **Stakeholder Engagement Assessment Matrix:** Can show gaps in engagement, which might be due to ineffective communication.

   - o **Project Management Information System (PMIS):** Can track distribution and sometimes receipt/acknowledgment of communications.

   - o **Data Analysis (e.g., Lessons Learned Register review):** Past issues might indicate communication problems.

   - o **Interpersonal and Team Skills (especially Observation, Conversation, Feedback):**

     - ▪ *How can direct feedback from stakeholders help monitor communication effectiveness?*

   - o **Meetings:** (e.g., project review meetings, retrospectives where communication effectiveness is discussed).

3. **Key Artifacts (Outputs) of Monitor Communications:**

   - o **Work Performance Information:** Processed data about how communications are performing.

   - o **Change Requests:** (If monitoring reveals that the Communications Management Plan or other project components need to be changed to improve communication).

   - o **(Updates to) Project Management Plan & Project Documents.**

Part 5: Scenario & Application

Scenario: You are managing a project with a key stakeholder, Ms. Jones, who is very busy and prefers concise, high-level updates. Another stakeholder, Mr. Lee (a technical lead), needs detailed technical information.

1. **Communications Planning:** How would your **Communications Management Plan** address the different needs of Ms. Jones and Mr. Lee?

2. **Managing Communications:** If you need to inform both Ms. Jones and Mr. Lee about a critical technical issue that has been resolved, how might the *content and format* of your communication differ for each?

   o Ms. Jones: _____

   o Mr. Lee: _____

3. **Monitor Communications:** After a few weeks, you notice Ms. Jones isn't responding to your weekly high-level email summaries. What steps would you take to monitor and potentially improve communication effectiveness with her?

Key Takeaway: Proactive communications planning, diligent execution of those plans, and continuous monitoring of effectiveness are essential for keeping all stakeholders informed, engaged, and aligned with project goals. Tailor your approach to meet diverse stakeholder needs.