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Communications Plan

[Insert Project/Program Name]

***Purpose of Communication Plan***

*The communication plan sets the standards for how and when communication takes place for the project/program. Based upon understood stakeholder expectations (interest and impact), the communications plan identifies communication objectives for the project/program, key messages for important questions, how participants will communicate, and the timing of communications. An effective communication plan introduces consistency to communications and messages, assists towards managing stakeholders during execution, facilitates team development, increases project/program performance, mitigates risks for a project/program, and is one of the most important enabling tools towards project/program success. The communication plan must give the different audiences what they want.*

*A communications plan is a living document that is created while the project/program is in planning. It will be monitored (along with the stakeholder register) and executed during project/program planning, execution, and closure.*

***Communications Plan Participants and Approvers***

*One of the most important sources of input is the stakeholder register, since it identifies stakeholder interests and impacts pertaining to the project/program. This should drive the content and timing of communication to stakeholders. Input into the communication plan may also come from other project documentation, feedback from the* [*sponsor*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/roles-and-responsibilities/projectprogram-sponsor) *and/or* [*project owner*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/roles-and-responsibilities/project-owner)*, or conversations with specific stakeholders about their communications needs and preferences.*

*The author is the* [*Project Manager*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/roles-and-responsibilities/project-manager) *or* [*Program Manager*](https://uwaterloo.ca/vpaf-project-management-office/methodologies/roles-and-responsibilities/program-manager)*. There should be agreement with the sponsor and project owner.*

***Instructions***

1. *Review project information by reading documentation (stakeholder register, charter, project management plan), and discuss with the sponsor, project owner, and stakeholders.*
2. *Create the communication plan. Examples of information that needs to be communicated on a regular basis may include risk, budget, schedule, status, key results, issues, and messages for buy in. The green italic text contains instructions for filling out the template and can be removed for the final version of the document.*
3. *Review with applicable stakeholders, project team, sponsor, and project owner for accuracy and completeness.*

***Next Steps***

*Execute the communication plan, and modify as required until project/program is closed.*

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# Communication Objectives

*Provide a description of the communication objectives for the project/program. Identification of the communication objectives will help streamline the communications plan and avoid unnecessary effort. As an example, some common key communication objectives for a project/program may include: improve team performance, facilitate team development, define crucial components and aspects of project/program communication, facilitate updates to stakeholders and decision makers, facilitate future documentation, obtain buy in/support for project/program.*

[Insert Communication Objectives]

# Audiences

*This section should document who needs to know something about the project/program. Stakeholders are obvious groups, but there may be other groups as well. Include who the audiences are and what they need to know.*

[Insert Audiences]

# Key Messages

*The key messages section provides the opportunity to document some of the key messages that should be related for the project/program by answering some of the common questions that will be asked. The key messages should answer questions pertaining to what the project/program is doing, why the project/program is doing this, what is the benefit to key stakeholders, how the project/program will make the change, and how will stakeholders be supported. The text for these key messages can then be used by the whole team to deliver consistent messages to various audiences.*

[Insert Key Messages]

# Communication Issues, Constraints, and Assumptions

*List any communication issues, constraints, and assumptions for the communication plan. These should be monitored throughout the project and the communications approach modified if necessary due to changes to issues, constraints, and assumptions.*

[Insert Communication Issues, Constraints, and Assumptions]

# Communication Approach

*Describe the recommended approach to communications for the project/program. This approach should include a strategy to support an upwards communication channel to governance and stakeholders, as well as a parallel communication channel to project team members, other projects/programs, vendors, clients, et cetera. This approach should ensure the communication objectives identified above are addressed and consider any documented communication issues or constraints. The chart below should be filled in and there is also room for a text explanation, if required.*

*An example row has been included in the chart which can be removed. For larger, more complex projects, a communications calendar may also be added after the chart or in the appendix to summarize the timing of various communications.*

[Insert Communication Approach supporting text]

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Message | Objective | Audience | Distribution Method | Frequency of Distribution | Sender |
| *Project Status* | *Inform stakeholders of status, and what is coming up* | *Governance committee, project team, sponsor, key stakeholders* | *Email before monthly governance meeting; posted on SharePoint with notification to project team; update on project website for stakeholders* | *monthly* | *Project Manager* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
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# Revision History

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Change Made By | Date Change Made | Details of Change | Change Reviewed/ Approved by | Date change reviewed/ approved |
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