**🧱 Chapter 7: Communication & Stakeholder Management**

**📢 Why Communication is Everything in Project Management**

You can have the best tools, budget, and schedule—but if you can’t communicate effectively, your project will likely fail.

According to PMI, **project managers spend 90% of their time communicating**. That includes emails, meetings, presentations, updates, and conflict resolution. Strong communication builds trust, alignment, and momentum.

**👥 Understanding Stakeholders**

**Stakeholders** are individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the project’s outcome. They can help or hinder your success.

**Types of Stakeholders:**

* **Internal**: Executives, team members, departments, PMO
* **External**: Clients, vendors, regulators, partners, community members

**Stakeholder Interests May Vary:**

| **Stakeholder** | **Interests** |
| --- | --- |
| Project Sponsor | ROI, strategic alignment |
| End User | Usability, performance |
| IT Department | Integration, security |
| Finance | Budget control, cost reporting |

📌 *Pro Tip:* Not all stakeholders have equal influence. Prioritize accordingly.

**📊 Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement**

Start by identifying all stakeholders early in the project and document:

* Their role and expectations
* Level of influence and interest
* Communication preferences

Use a **Power/Interest Grid** to prioritize engagement:

|  | **High Power** | **Low Power** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **High Interest** | Engage closely | Keep informed |
| **Low Interest** | Keep satisfied | Monitor only |

Create a **Stakeholder Register** to track updates and changes in influence over time.

**📋 Developing a Communication Plan**

A solid communication plan outlines:

* **What** information is needed
* **Who** needs it
* **When** it should be delivered
* **How** it will be delivered
* **By whom**

**Example: Communication Plan**

| **Stakeholder** | **Info Needed** | **Frequency** | **Format** | **Owner** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sponsor | Status report, KPI dashboard | Weekly | Email + Slide deck | PM |
| Project Team | Task updates, blockers | Daily | Stand-up meeting | Scrum Master |
| Clients | Milestone progress, issues | Bi-weekly | Zoom call | Account Manager |

**🧠 Effective Communication Techniques**

Here are five key skills that every project manager should master:

**1. Active Listening**

Don’t just wait to talk—listen to understand. Clarify, paraphrase, and ask follow-up questions.

**2. Tailor Your Message**

Speak differently to a technical team vs. an executive. Know your audience.

**3. Be Transparent**

Hiding problems delays solutions. Communicate clearly about issues or delays.

**4. Use the Right Channels**

Don’t send a long email when a 10-minute call would solve it. Match the medium to the message.

**5. Follow Up**

Confirm understanding. Send recap emails after meetings or calls to document decisions.

**💣 Common Communication Pitfalls**

1. **Over-communicating trivial updates**
2. **Under-communicating critical changes**
3. **Assuming people are aligned without confirmation**
4. **Failing to tailor messages by stakeholder type**
5. **Not documenting verbal agreements**

**🔧 Tools for Communication & Stakeholder Management**

| **Tool** | **Use Case** |
| --- | --- |
| **RACI Matrix** | Clarify who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed |
| **Slack / Teams** | Real-time team updates |
| **Zoom / Google Meet** | Virtual stakeholder meetings |
| **Loom / Video Messages** | Async updates with visual context |
| **Notion / SharePoint** | Centralized document and status sharing |
| **Dashboards (e.g. Asana, Trello)** | Visual status updates for teams and sponsors |

📥 Templates and examples are available at StarGlobal.Online/Resources

**✅ Quick Recap**

* Communication drives stakeholder satisfaction, team performance, and project success.
* Every project needs a **communication plan** tailored to its unique audience.
* Stakeholder engagement should be **continuous**, not one-and-done.
* Tools and templates like the RACI Matrix and Power/Interest Grid can simplify your work.

**📘 Reflection Questions**

1. Have you ever experienced poor communication in a project? What was the impact?
2. Who are the most powerful stakeholders in your current or future project?
3. What’s one thing you could do to improve your stakeholder engagement this week?