COMMUNICATIONS BEING THE BACKBONE OF PROJECTS

In fast-paced project environments where time, resources, and expectations are tightly managed, communication often determines success or failure. It's not just a project function—it's the glue that connects people, plans, and results.

Without it, even top teams lose direction. Plans blur, tasks misalign, and stakeholders grow frustrated. Done right, communication brings clarity, unity, and momentum. This article explains why it's vital across every project phase, what poor communication costs, and which proven techniques ensure steady information flow from start to finish.

Introduction: Why Communication Matters More Than Ever
Modern projects are rarely confined to one team—they span departments, vendors, clients, and remote contributors. This complexity heightens the risk of miscommunication, leading to delays or failure. PMI's Pulse of the Profession reports that communication issues cause one-third of project failures. In contrast, companies with strong communication are 4.5x more likely to finish on time and keep top talent.
Strong communication builds trust and clarity. Weak communication breeds errors, frustration, and delays—regardless of project type or approach.

The Role of Communication Throughout the Project Lifecycle

✅ **1. Initiation Phase**
Early alignment is essential. Communication helps:
• Define objectives and shared vision
• Assign clear roles
• Discuss constraints and risks
• Set communication channels

✅ **2. Planning Phase**
Communication ensures collaborative planning and clear expectations:
• Host planning sessions
• Align stakeholders on scope and timeline
• Share WBS and communication plans

✅ **3. Execution Phase**

Execution turns plans into action. Communication focuses on:

• Daily/weekly syncs

• Timely status updates

• Feedback loops and resource updates

✅ **4. Monitoring & Controlling**

Ongoing oversight requires constant communication:

• Share KPIs and performance updates

• Communicate changes or risks

• Alert teams to issues early

✅ **5. Closing Phase**

End-of-project communication shapes future success:

• Final handovers

• Lessons learned sessions

• Documentation and performance reviews

The True Cost of Poor Communication

Poor communication leads to delays, rework, and low morale.

PMI reports that:

• $135M is at risk per $1B spent

• 56% of that loss is due to poor communication

• $62.4M is lost annually per company

Key risks include:

☑ Missed deadlines

☑ Rework from unclear requirements

☑ Low stakeholder satisfaction

☑ Blame culture

☑ High staff turnover

Example: A healthcare firm failed to inform staff about a new IT system. Employees used old systems, leading to data loss, rework, and doubled costs.

Common Communication Breakdowns and How to Avoid Them

☑ *Unclear Goals* – Set and reinforce SMART goals.

☑ *Infrequent Updates* – Maintain regular updates, even minimal ones.

☑ *One-Way Messaging* – Encourage two-way dialogue and feedback.

☑ *Too Many Tools* – Simplify tools and clarify their use.

Types of Communication Tools and Channels That Enhance Project Success

💬 Real-Time Messaging
Slack, Teams – For quick updates, brainstorming, issue resolution

📝 Project Platforms
Asana, Trello – Centralize tasks and boost team visibility

📧 Email/Newsletters
Great for formal updates, summaries, decisions

📊 Dashboards
Power BI, Tableau – Visualize KPIs and progress

📞 Calls and Video
Zoom, Meet – Best for complex or emotional topics

Communication Styles That Build High-Performance Teams
Adapting to your audience fosters connection and clarity:

🧠 **Analytical** – Use data, reports, and logic
💡 **Conceptual** – Use visuals, big-picture messaging
🤝 **Personal** – Show empathy, encourage dialogue
📋 **Practical** – Be clear, brief, and task-focused

Versatility builds stronger relationships and reduces missteps.

The Link Between Communication and Leadership
Great communication defines great leadership. Project managers must influence, not command.
➡️ Explain the "why," not just the "what"
➡️ Involve the team in decisions
➡️ Promote safety and openness
➡️ Recognize wins and reflect on setbacks

Your words shape team culture and credibility.

Building a Project Communication Plan: Key Elements

Every project needs a clear communication plan:

☑ Stakeholders – Who to inform, consult, or involve

☑ Objectives – Purpose of each communication

☑ Channels – What tools for what message

☑ Frequency – How often to update

☑ Responsibility – Who communicates

☑ Format – Written, visual, verbal

☑ Feedback Loop – How responses are gathered

Communication in Remote and Hybrid Teams

Remote work raises communication stakes. Tips to stay aligned:

☑ Use video to maintain connection

☑ Record meetings for global teams

☑ Store info in one place

☑ Over-communicate when unsure

☑ Respect cultural/language differences

Remote work needs intentional, thoughtful communication—not more of it, but better.

Summary: Communicate Like the Project Depends on It—Because It Does

Projects succeed when communication flows. It's the rhythm that unites tasks and people.

To improve your impact as a project manager:

→ Speak clearly

→ Listen deeply

→ Document reliably

→ Adjust flexibly

→ Lead with empathy

No matter the tools or scale—great communication is what drives real results. Trexx Consultancy truly believes in the importance of communications being a hidden gem in successful projects. We advocate that communications is the top skill required by all project managers!