

Communication Mediums

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will discuss different communication mediums. It's important that a project manager understands when each method should be used. The following communication methods will be covered in this tutorial:

1. Email

Emails are flexible communication methods used for announcements, instruction, or project direction. Emails should be brief. If you find yourself writing a long email, perhaps the information would be better communicated through another method.

It is important to be clear and concise when communicating with project stakeholders. Their time is valuable so deliver the information they need to recognize issues and make decisions.

However, email has limitations. Emails are not the best method for large discussions, so the project manager should be careful with questions when using email, especially when asking open-ended questions at the beginning of an email.

If sensitive issues with an individual must be communicated, email may not be best due to a common misinterpretation of emotional tone.

Be careful copying too many people on an email using the CC (Carbon Copy) or BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) functions. Information in the email should apply to everyone on the list. If your stakeholders and team members receive too many emails, they may begin to ignore future communication via email.



HINT

If possible, it's better to include a link to information instead of an attachment, especially if the information needs modification by the recipient.

2. Presentations

Presentations should be held when a large amount of information needs to be conveyed, and the project manager needs more control over the flow of that information.

Though question and answer sessions occur with presentations, this is primarily a method for the presenter to

pass information to the audience, not the other way around.

3. Meetings

If discussions are necessary, then meetings are a better medium for communication, especially if the issue or decision being discussed impacts more than one stakeholder or team member.

If only one stakeholder or team member is impacted, then perhaps a one-to-one discussion is the best method, either on the phone or in person. This should also be used when the information being discussed is confidential or private.

If a meeting is more appropriate than an email, it is the project manager's responsibility to manage the meeting and can follow this sequence when organizing a meeting:



STEP BY STEP

1. *Determine the meeting's purpose.* Every meeting should have specific goals, and the agenda should be designed to reach that goal.
2. *Write the agenda.* The agenda should contain the goal of the meeting, any references to information needed to achieve that goal, and who will present the information. The agenda should outline the order in which the meeting will proceed.
3. *Determine attendees.* As with any communication, only those stakeholders and team members who are essential to the agenda should be invited.
4. *Schedule the meeting.* The meeting day should be agreed upon by all attendees well in advance of the meeting in order to give everyone time to prepare, distribute, or read materials referenced by the agenda.
5. *Identify the team members to assist.* Establish the team members that will help prepare the meeting's materials or assist during the meeting.
6. *Conduct the meeting.* The project manager should either guide the meeting through the agenda or delegate this responsibility to someone familiar with the project.
7. *Document and distribute the results.* Sometimes this is done through detailed minutes. After the meeting, the results of the meeting and minutes are documented and distributed to meeting attendees.
8. *Modify project documents.* If any project documents were impacted by the meeting, such as the decision log or risk management document, then those should be updated.

4. Documentation

Documentation, either printed or online, should be used when planning and documenting project actions. It's critical to record the history of a project in case questions arise later about decisions made earlier in a project. Documentation is also used when information is accessed often throughout a project, such as with

procedures, checklists, or frequently asked questions.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, we learned how to use different communication methods to interact with stakeholders and team members. We learned how to use **email** effectively by not copying too many people.

Presentations are necessary when communicating large amounts of information, and **meetings** are useful when discussing confidential information. It's critical to record the history of a project in case questions arise later about decisions made earlier in a project, so **documentation** is key.

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED BY SOPHIA AUTHOR JEFF CARROLL.