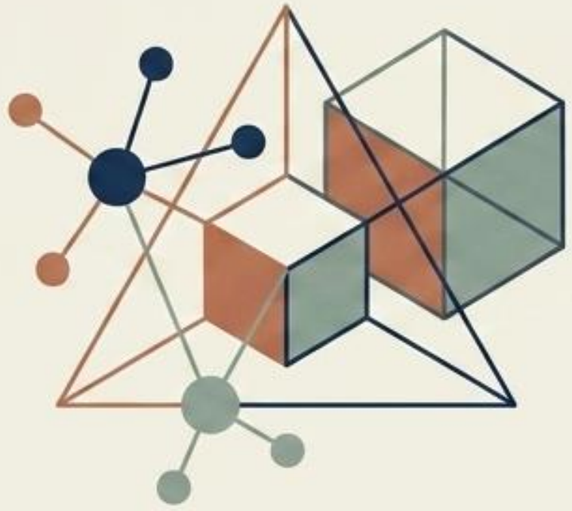

Project Communications Management

The Key to IT Project Success

7204201 Project Management in Information Technology : Paranya Palwisut

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Why do IT Projects Fail?

IT projects rarely fail because of technological limits; they fail due to breakdowns in effective communication.

Technology Constraints

Communication Failures

Lack of clear user involvement.

Insufficient information distribution and support from executives.

Highly ambiguous project requirements.

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The 4 Core Processes of Communication Management

1. Planning

Identifying needs:
Who needs what, and when?

2. Information Distribution

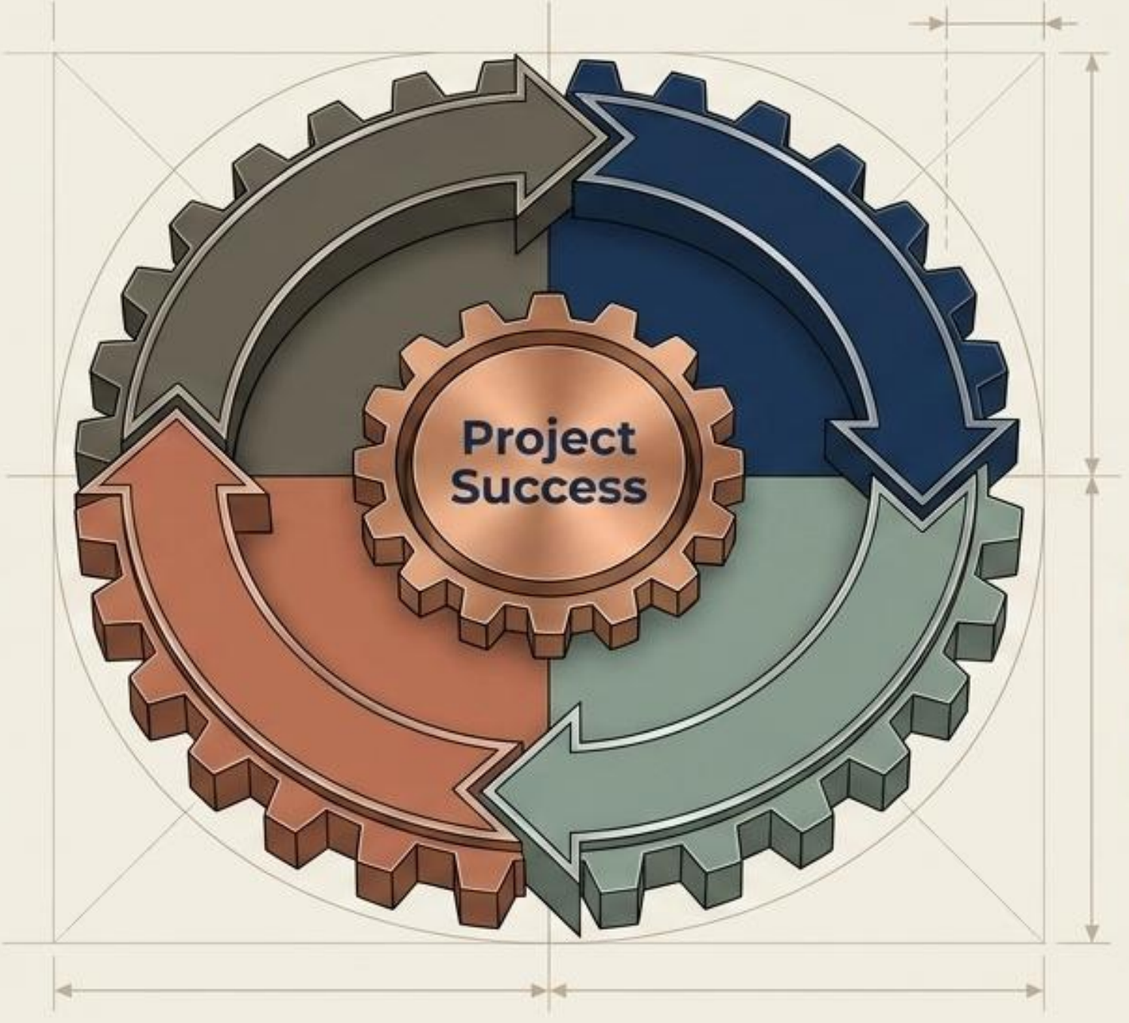
Delivering to the right point:
Right person, right time, right format.

3. Performance Reporting

Tracking progress:
Past, Present, Future.

4. Managing Stakeholders

Building acceptance:
Translating technical jargon into business value.



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Planning: Know Your Audience

Who should receive what information, when, and how?

Internal (Team & Executives):

Require deep insights, detailed action plans, and visibility into operational problems that need solving.

External (Clients & Contractors):

Require high-level overviews, overall project progress, and bottom-line business results.

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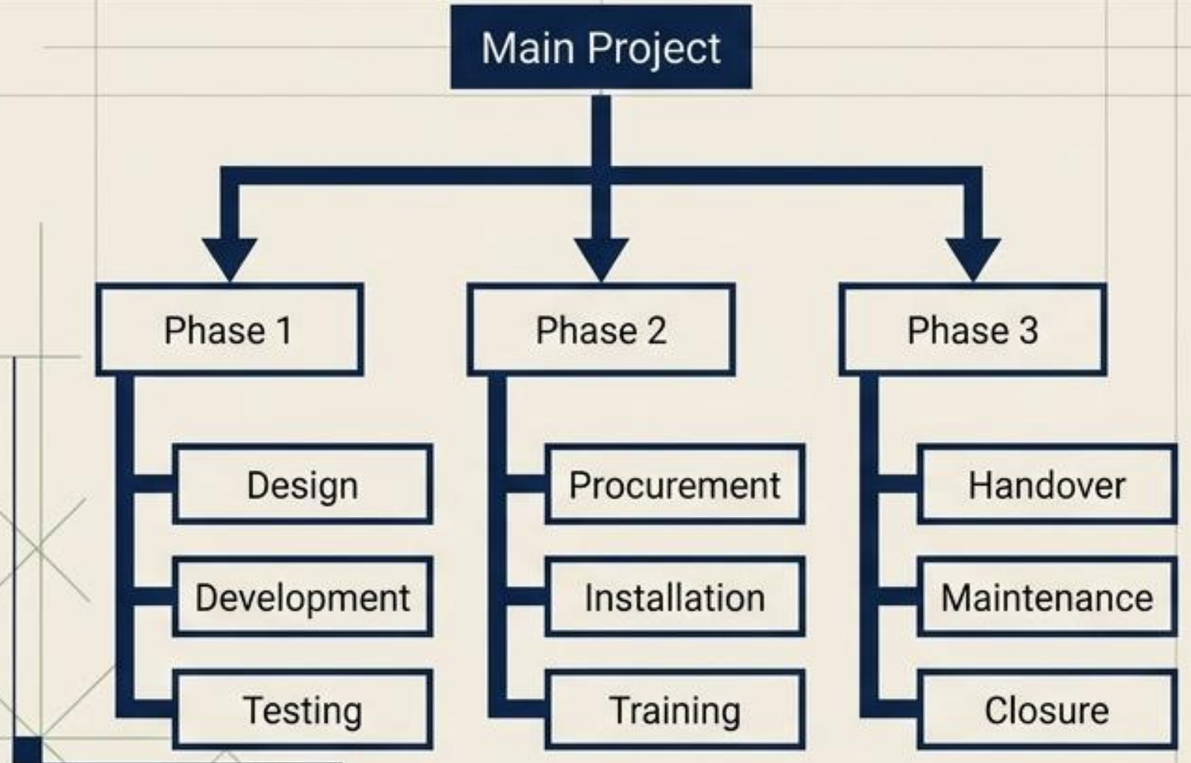
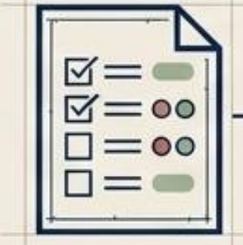
WBS: The Backbone of Project Communication



Progress Report

Mapping from active development tasks like Development, Testing, Installation



Status Report

Mapping from phase completion milestones like Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3

Summary Report

Mapping from project closure activities like Handover, Closure

Project Managers must use the WBS to determine exactly which sub-activities require reporting to eliminate redundant, wasteful communication and focus only on data reflecting true progress.

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Information Distribution: Delivering the Message

Delivering information to the right person, at the right time, in the right format.

Internet / Extranet

The primary tool for rapid, wide-reaching delivery. Ideal for general project information that does not require top-secret confidentiality.

Electronic Database

The central repository for standardized forms and project documents. Ensures everyone pulls the most up-to-date information, drastically reducing errors caused by version control issues.

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Choosing the Right Communication Channels

Formal Communication	Informal Communication
Formats: Status reports, formal presentations, official approval documents.	**Formats:** Phone calls, chat rooms, face-to-face conversations.
Appropriate Use: Critical project data, high-level policy decisions, and situations requiring clear, auditable evidentiary trails.	**Appropriate Use:** Immediate problem solving, exploring deep specific details, and rapid exchange of opinions. (Highlight: Face-to-Face is highly efficient for explaining complex topics).

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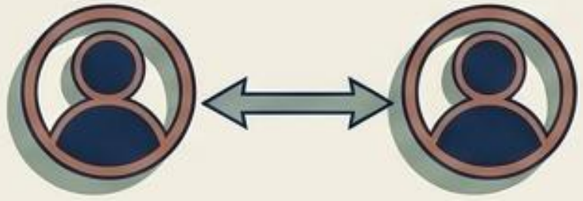
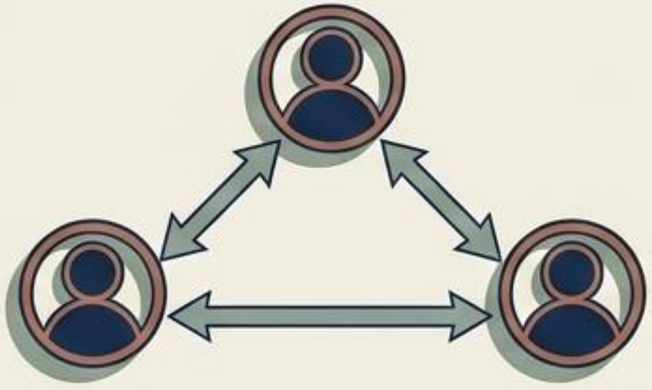
The Complexity Threat: Why Large Teams Break Down



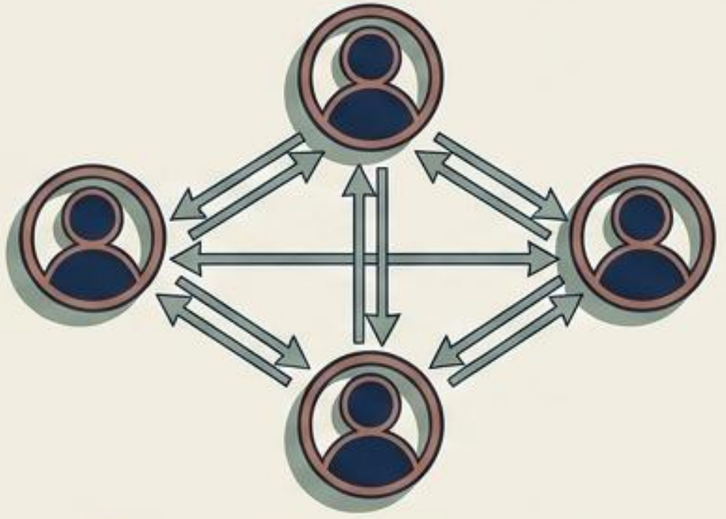
Team of 2 = 1 channel.



Team of 3 = 3 channels.

$$\frac{n(n-1)}{2}$$

(where n = number of people involved)



Team of 4 = 6 channels.

Team of 10 = 45 interlocking channels!

Projects with many collaborators require a Centralized Communication Hub to prevent information from being distorted, confused, or lost in the web.

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Types of Performance Reporting: Mapping Time

Status Report

Clarifies the overall status. Details how resources have been utilized to date and where the project currently stands compared to the baseline plan.

Progress Report

Shows the actual work the team has completed in the immediate current timeframe. Designed to stimulate stakeholder confidence.

Forecasting

Predicts future project direction and final outcomes based on remaining resources and current performance efficiency.

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The Cadence: Status Review Meetings

Quarterly: Conducted by Senior Executives to review the macroeconomic overview and verify the project still meets strategic business goals.

The Power of Face-to-Face

- Creates space for team members to demonstrate accountability.
- Allows transparent, unquestionable debate of issues.
- Resolves blocking crises exponentially faster than sending documents back and forth.

Monthly: Conducted by the Project Manager to stimulate team progress and exchange critical operational data.

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The IT Language Translator

The Challenge: External stakeholders and client-side executives often lack deep IT knowledge.

The Solution: The Project Manager must act as the ultimate IT Translator.
Convert technical jargon into clear Business Value. Create absolute transparency to reduce stakeholder anxiety/paranoia.
Ultimate Goal: Achieve true "Acceptance" from all parties so the project can achieve perfect closure.

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Conclusion: Communication as the Backbone of IT Projects

1. Plan intelligently:
Use the WBS to strictly define who needs what.

2. Distribute powerfully:
Blend technology and the art of channel selection to tame the n(n-1)/2 complexity curve.

4. Manage relationships:
Translate technical reality into strategic business language to build universal acceptance.

3. Report dimensionally:
Track the past, present, and forecast the future through structured meetings.

Systematically designed communication is not a soft skill—it is the ultimate guarantee of sustainable IT project success.

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