Module 4

Human Resource and Communications Management

Introduction

This module examines two of the facilitating project management functions – human resource and communications management. Project human resource management includes the processes required to make the most effective use of the people involved with a project. Project communications management includes communications planning, information distribution, and performance reporting and administrative closure.

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

Outcomes

- *plan* the human resource requirement of the project.
- *organise* and *assign* responsibilities to the key personnel.
- *understand* and *apply* motivation and leadership theories to manage project team members.
- *compare and contrast* a manager and a leader.
- *develop* important skills to be possessed by team leader.
- *plan* the communications network within and without the project team.
- *categorise* information for selective and timely distribution.
- *develop* a reporting system to monitor project progress.
- *establish* communication channels for the formal acceptance and closure of project phases and eventually the entire project.

Terminology

Motivation theories:	Theories on the hierarchy of factors affecting human motivation.
Influence and power:	Factors that affects a project manager's influence on the project team.
Organisational planning:	The management role of identifying, assigning, and documenting project roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships

Staffing management plan:	A plan for when and how people will be added to and taken off the project team as the project progresses.
Resource loading:	The amount of resources (people/equipment) an existing schedule requires during specific periods.
Resource levelling:	A technique to minimise the variation in demand for resources by delaying tasks or bringing forward tasks.
CPM/PERT diagram:	A diagram created showing the utilisation of resources, duration required and sequence of tasks.
Project communications planning:	An overall plan to determine the information and communication needs of the stakeholders: who needs what information, when will they need it, and how the information will be transmitted to them, in hardcopy or softcopy, pre-determined template.
Information distribution:	Actual dissemination of information to project stakeholders in a timely manner.
Performance reporting:	Usually from bottom to top collection and dissemination of performance information; status reports on cost, tasks completed, milestones achieved, risks encountered and forecasting.
Administrative closure:	Generating and disseminating information to formalise phase or project completion. Terminate communication links with stakeholders who have completed their tasks and no longer participate in the project.

Project human resource management

Experienced project managers will tell you that the essence of project management is really people management. Project human resource management is a vital component of project management especially in information technology projects where technically qualified people are in high demand and often hard to keep.

Project human resource management includes the processes required to make the most effective use of the people involved with a project. It includes every person and stakeholder involved with the project from senior management to support staff.

The key processes involved in project human resource management are:

- **Organisational planning** – identifying, assigning, and documenting project roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships.
- **Staff acquisition** – getting the needed people assigned to and working on the project.
- **Team development** – building individual and group skills to enhance project performance.

People management skills

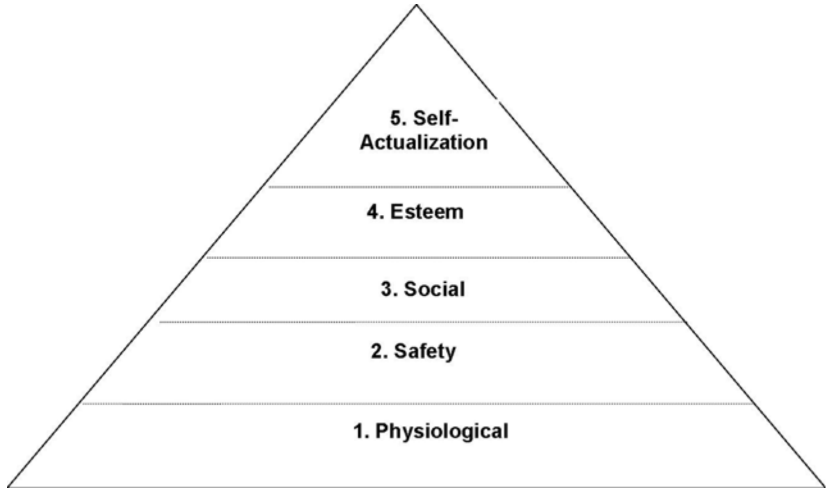
The key psychological and sociological issues that influence how people work and how well they work include motivation, power and influence, and effectiveness. We will briefly examine each of these before looking at the three key HR processes.

Motivation theories

Those of you who have taken courses in human resource management will have likely been exposed to the theory of the hierarchy of needs as developed by Abraham Maslow in the 1950s. Maslow used a pyramid structure to illustrate his theory that people's behaviours are guided or motivated by a sequence of needs – starting at the base with basic physiological or biological needs and building to the apex of what he called self-actualisation. The key things to remember about Maslow's theory are:

1. People will not focus or be motivated by a higher order need until lower order needs are met.
2. Once a lower order need is met it is no longer a motivator.

To motivate project team members, the project manager needs to have an appreciation of each person's motivation with regard to social, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. Self-actualised people are characterised as being problem-focused, have an appreciation for life, are concerned about personal growth and have the ability to have peak experiences. By knowing something about team members' professional and personal lives, project managers can tailor motivational incentives to meet their needs.



Frederick Herzberg distinguished between what he called ‘hygiene’ factors and motivational factors. According to Herzberg, hygiene factors such as larger salaries, more supervision and more attractive work environments would cause dissatisfaction if not present, but would not motivate workers to do more if present. Rather, factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and growth produce job satisfaction and are work motivators.

Influence and power

Project managers are in somewhat of a unique position when it comes to human resource management. By definition projects are of a temporary nature, thus project managers do not have any lasting hierarchical or formal authority. Project team members are usually seconded or assigned to the project but report to other managers or supervisors. Thus project managers must use other tactics to influence team members. Hans Thamhain and Dave Wilemon[4], who have conducted extensive research on project management, identified nine influence bases available to project managers, which include:

1. **Authority** – legitimate hierarchical right to issue orders.
2. **Assignment** – project manager’s perceived ability to influence a worker’s later assignments.
3. **Budget** – project manager’s perceived ability to authorise others’ use of discretionary funds.
4. **Promotion** – the ability to improve a worker’s position.
5. **Money** – the ability to increase a worker’s pay or benefits.
6. **Penalty** – the project manager’s perceived ability to dispense or cause punishment.

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[4] H.J. Thamhain and D.L. Wilemon, Criteria for Controlling Projects According to Plan, *Project Management Journal*, June 1986, pp. 75-81.

7. **Work challenge** – the ability to assign work that capitalises on a worker's enjoyment of doing a particular task.
8. **Expertise** – the project manager's perceived special knowledge that others deem important.
9. **Friendship** – the ability to establish friendly personal relationships between the project manager and others.

Thamhain and Wilemon found that projects were more likely to succeed when project managers used work challenge and expertise to influence people rather than authority, money or penalty.

Power is defined as the potential ability to influence behaviour to get people to do things they would not otherwise do. The five main types of power include:

1. **Coercive power** – using punishment, threats, or other negative approaches to get people to do things they do not want to do. (Do it, or you're fired!)
2. **Legitimate power** – getting people to do things based on a position of authority. (Ability to make independent decisions - usually granted to project managers by senior management.)
3. **Expert power** – using one's personal knowledge and expertise to get people to change their behaviour. (I know what I'm doing – I've done this many times before.)
4. **Reward power** – using incentives to do things. (E.g., everyone gets a 5 per cent bonus if the project comes in on time and on budget!)
5. **Referent power** – getting people to do things based on an individual's personal charisma. (E.g., JFK or Martin Luther King)

A good reference on power and politics in organisations is *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organisations* by Jeffrey Pfeffer, Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Stanford Graduate School of Business. ISBN: 0875844405

Effectiveness

Effective – "producing or capable of producing a decided, decisive or desired effect".

The guru on human effectiveness was Stephen Covey. Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* was a ground breaker when it was first published in 1990, and it continues to be a business bestseller with more than 10 million copies sold. Stephen Covey was an internationally respected authority on leadership. He realised that true success encompasses a balance of personal and professional effectiveness, so this book is a manual for performing better in both arenas. The seven habits and how they can be applied to project management are as follows:

1. **Be proactive** – anticipate and plan for problems and inevitable changes on projects.
2. **Begin with the end in mind** – focus on values and what you really want to accomplish.
3. **Put first things first** – Covey suggests placing more emphasis on things that are important but not urgent. For project managers this could include developing the project plan, building relationships with stakeholders and mentoring project team members
4. **Think win/win** – parties in potential conflict work together to develop new solutions that make them all winners. Project managers may sometimes use win/lose in competitive situations.
5. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood** – the practice of empathetic listening, or listening with the intent to understand is critical for project managers in understanding stakeholder needs and expectations.
6. **Synergise** – synergy is the concept that the whole is equal to more than the sum of its parts. Covey emphasises the importance of valuing differences in others to achieve synergy. Project team synergy should result in a product greater than the sum of individual tasks.
7. **Sharpen the saw** – take time to renew yourself physically, spiritually, mentally and socially. Project managers must exercise caution in pushing team members too hard and not allowing time to retrain, re-energise and relax.

Part of the project management challenge is developing rapport with a diverse set of team members. **Rapport** is defined as a relation of harmony, conformity, accord or affinity. For some team members the best you can probably expect is begrudging acceptance of project goals (speaking from personal experience). **Mirroring** – or matching another person's body postures, voice tone and tempo or breathing is a recognised method for building rapport.

Organisational planning

Organisational planning is identifying, assigning, and documenting project roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships. The key outputs of this process are:

- A project organisational chart
- A responsibility assignment matrix (RAM) that shows roles and responsibilities
- A staffing management plan – what staff required when?

Part of organisational planning is identifying what key knowledge and skill sets will be required to ensure project success. The project organisational chart is usually developed in conjunction with senior management and project team members. On large projects, a deputy project manager is designated who can fill in for the PM in his/her absence and the project may be divided into subprojects with subproject managers assigned to manage these components.

A four-step process for defining and assigning work is as follows:

1. Finalising project requirements
2. Defining how the work will be accomplished
3. Breaking the work down into manageable elements (WBS)
4. Assigning work responsibilities (OBS).

An organisational breakdown structure (OBS) shows which organisational units are responsible for which work items.

A **responsibility assignment matrix (RAM)** is a matrix or grid that maps the work of the project as described in the work breakdown structure (WBS) to the people responsible for performing the work as described in the organisational breakdown structure (OBS). A RAM can also be used to define project roles and responsibilities. The figure below shows a responsibility assignment matrix for the development phase of a sample information technology project.

Sample responsibility assignment matrix

Individual or Agency	Detailed Implementation and Conversion Plan	Technical Plan	Detailed Plan	Service Requests
Application Development and Support		A	A	A
Corporate Systems Consultancy		A	A	
User Business Analyst		R	R	R
User Documentation	R	R	P	
Training	R	P	R	
Help centre	R	R	R	
Application processing	A			
Maintenance team	R			A
Quality Assurance Analyst	A			
Security Analyst	R			
Application Integration	C			
Project Team	C	C	P	P
Technical Project Leader	P	C	C	C

Diagram used with permission Enterprise Project Management Ltd.

Responsibility Codes are as follows:

A – **Approves** acceptance of a deliverable and signs off if sign-off is required.

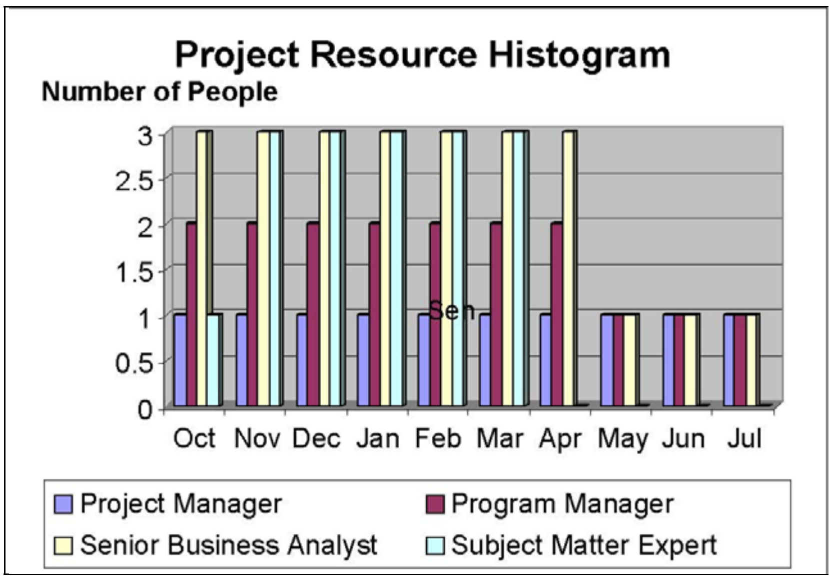
C – **Contributes** to the effort required to produce a deliverable and/or advises on some of the output.

P – Responsible for **producing** and managing the deliverable and **providing** most of the effort required.

R – **Reviews** a deliverable and recommends further action or will **receive** general information regarding the contents of the deliverable.

Staffing management plan

A staffing management plan is a document describes when and how people will be added to and taken off the project team. The plan often includes a resource histogram that shows the number of resources assigned to a project over time.



Staff acquisition

Staff acquisition is getting the appropriate staff assigned to and working on the project. This may involve assigning internal people to work on the project or hiring subcontractors or new employees specifically for the project. This usually involves working closely with the HR department of the organisation. A project manager, who is a good negotiator, knows the staff and has developed strong rapport with senior management can often get the internal resources he/she needs for the project.

Resource loading and levelling

Once a project is underway, the project manager's goal is to achieve project success without increasing the cost or time to complete the project. Two techniques commonly used to apply project staff more effectively are resource loading and resource levelling.

1. **Resource loading** – refers to the amount of individual resource an existing schedule requires during specific time periods.

   Resource loading histograms are often used by project managers to identify staffing problems – particularly over-allocation. Over-allocation means more resources are assigned to a task or group of tasks over a given time period than are available at that time.

2. **Resource levelling** is a technique for resolving resource conflicts by delaying tasks. Project managers will examine the network diagram to identify areas of slack, float or resource conflict. Resource levelling tries to minimise period-to-period variations in resource loading by shifting tasks forward or backward within their slack allowances. Levelled resources require less management, lower costs, produce fewer personnel and accounting problems and often improve project morale. Project management software can be used to do automate resource levelling but it should be manually scrutinised to ensure that the completion date hasn't been altered or resources have been allocated to times that conflict with other constraints that have not been captured by the software. Beware! With some of the software scheduling tools once you have levelled the resources you cannot go back. This is a problem because the software is not "intelligent" so cannot determine if the skill set of the resource matches the task. It will take under-allocated people and allocate them.

Resource loading and levelling example

An example is taken from Meredith and Mantel to explain the working principle of resource loading and levelling.

Activity	Optimistic time (a)	Most likely (m)	Pessimistic time (b)	Immediate predecessors
A	10	22	22	-
B	20	20	20	-
C	4	10	16	-
D	2	14	32	A
E	8	8	20	B, C
F	8	14	20	B, C
G	4	4	4	B, C
H	2	12	16	C
I	6	16	38	G, H
J	2	8	14	D, E

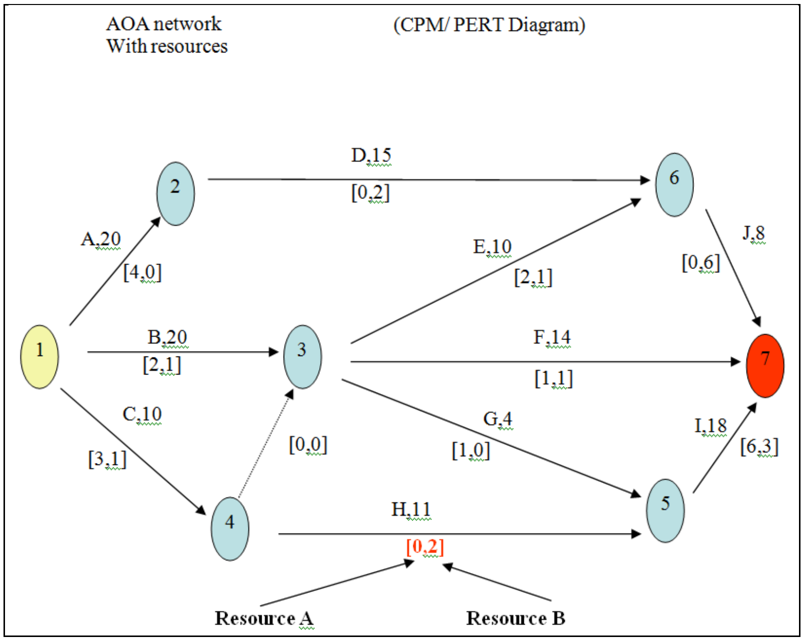
Calculate the expected time, resource allocation etc.

Calculation

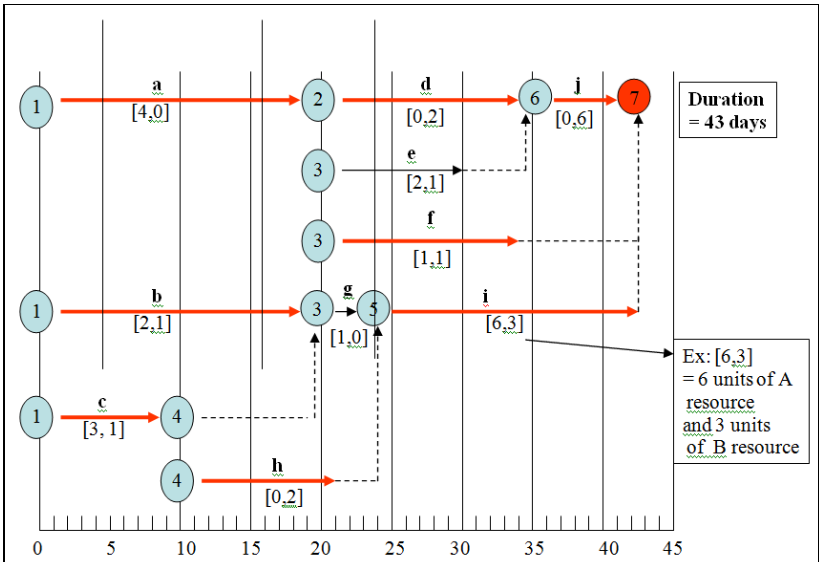
We can calculate the expected time (TE) using the formula

TE = optimistic time (a) + 4X most likely time (m) + pessimistic time (b)

A PERT network diagram is drawn using the resources for each activity indicated in square bracket. For example an activity C which is 10 days duration consumes two types of resources say A and B. Resource A represents labour-hour and B represents machine-hour. The activity C consumes three units of resource A and one unit of resource B.



From the above CPM/PERT diagram, a calendarised diagram is created using all resources. One can notice in the calendarised diagram the use of resource A (i.e. labour-hours) and resource B (i.e. machine-hours) in various activities A,B,C through to J. Resource A has high demand at the initial stage of the project whereas B has high demand towards end. The variation of resource specifically labour-hours takes a major chunk of a project manager's time in terms of hiring and firing the workforce just to keep the schedule on time. This variation of resource usage is minimised using resource levelling techniques.

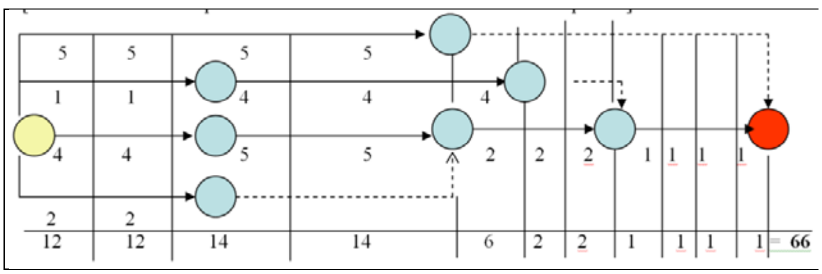


Modified PERT/CPM diagram with resource usage

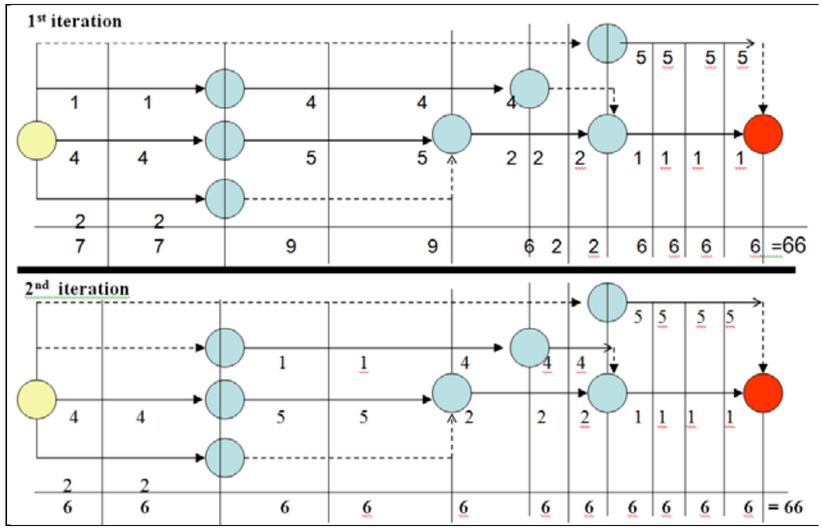
Resource levelling

Resource levelling aims to minimise the period-by-period variations in resource loading by shifting task within their slack allowances. Two types of techniques used: Trial and error method, Trigger level method. We are going to use trial and error method to level the resources.

[The numbers below represent the unit of resources for different time period.]



The aggregation of resources is indicated at the bottom row of the 'squared network'. It explains like this: first two days 12 persons, 3rd and 4th day 14 persons, 5th day six persons, two on 6th and 7th day and after that we need one person from 8th to 11th day. Overall requirement is 66 man days over a period of 11 days that is at the rate of six persons for 11 days. The calculation is done subsequently. The levelling is done by rescheduling the activities by moving forward or backward till you get more stable level of engagement. This may involve withdrawing resources from activities with 'free floats' thereby increasing the duration.



The principle of least square can be used to check whether the new schedule is optimal then the previous one. Various methods in the trial and error method can be checked for optimality now. The last schedule resulted in 396 labour-hours which was the minimum of the other two.

Sl no	**Time**											**Total**
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1. Initial Schedule	12	12	14	14	6	2	2	1	1	1	1	
Sum of Square	144 +144+ 196+196+36+4+4+1+1+1+1											= 728
2. Intermediate schedule	7	7	9	9	6	2	2	6	6	6	6	
Sum of Square	49+49+81+81+36+4+4+36+36+36+36											= 448
3. Final schedule	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	
Sum of square	36+36+36+36+36+36+36+36+36+36+36											= **396 (Least value)**

Team development

Team development is about developing individual and group skills to enhance project performance. Many private and public organisations offer training courses to improve individual and team development. This often includes specific team building activities including physical challenges and personality typing techniques such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or TRUE COLORS™. The TRUE COLORS™ model is based on the temperament theory for understanding individual differences in yourself and in others. TRUE COLORS™ is a metaphor for understanding human behaviour. The focus is self-esteem. As a programme, it provides an effective tool to help individuals build self-esteem by understanding their behaviour, skills, needs and motivations.

TRUE COLORS™ was developed by Don Lowry and is based on Dr. David Kiersey's temperament theory as outlined in his book, *Please Understand Me*. The model is also based on findings that have been written using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Utilising four colour-coded flash cards, the model allows individuals to identify their own temperament and those of others.

The four dimensions of psychological type under the MBTI model are:

1. Extrovert/Introvert (E/I)
2. Sensation/Intuition (S/N)
3. Thinking/Feeling (T/F)
4. Judgement/Perception (J/P)

A 1985 study of MBTI types of information systems developers revealed (to no one's surprise) that 75 per cent of IS developers were introverts compared to 25 per cent for the general population. Other contrasts were 80 per cent of IS developers were thinking types (T) compared to 50 per cent for the general population and 55 per cent were intuitive (N) compared to about 25 per cent for the general population.

Reward and recognition systems

By rewarding teamwork project managers can promote or reinforce people to work more effectively in teams. The rewards often include bonuses, trips, and recognition awards.

Suggestions for team development

The following are some suggestions to project managers for building effective project teams:

- Be patient and kind and assume the best about people. (They often live up to your expectations.)
- Conduct project kick off meetings, they are your first opportunity in a project to build the team and set the climate for the project.
- Fix the problem instead of blaming people.
- Establish regular effective meetings.
- Limit the size or work teams (if possible three – seven members).
- Plan social activities to allow team members and other stakeholders an opportunity to get to know each other better.
- Stress team identity and create team traditions.
- Nurture team members and encourage them to help each other.
- Acknowledge individual and group accomplishments.

- Don't work in isolation, involve the appropriate team members in project planning activities – you cannot be the subject matter expert in all things for the project.

Using MS Project for project HR management

MS Project and other scheduling tools provide a variety of human resource management tools including assigning and tracking resources, resource levelling, resource usage reports, over-allocated resource reports, and to-do lists. Take some time to explore these features, especially the resource usage view and the resource usage report.

Project communications management

Communication management – An overview

For projects to succeed, every project member needs a combination of technical and 'soft' skills, and both should be continuously upgraded through formal education and on-the-job training. A failure to communicate is often the greatest threat to any project. The four key processes in project communications management are as follows:

1. **Communications planning** – determining the information and communication needs of the stakeholders: who needs what information, when will they need it, and how the information will be given to them.
2. **Information distribution** – making needed information available to project stakeholders in a timely manner.
3. **Performance reporting** – collecting and disseminating performance information, which includes status reports, progress measurement and forecasting.
4. **Administrative closure** – generating, gathering and disseminating information to formalise phase or project completion.

Communications planning

Because communication is so critical to project success, every project should have a communications plan to guide project communications. The key components of a communications management plan are as follows:

1. **Collection and filing structure** – a description of the system to be used for gathering and storing various types of project information. These days the filing structure for electronic documents is almost more important than the one for hard copy. Larger organisations usually use shared drives with a standardised folder system for all key project documents. The appropriate security matrix is established at project initiation to ensure that team members have the appropriate Create, Read, Use and Delete authority.
2. **Distribution structure** – a description of what information goes to whom, when and how.

3. **A standardised format** for communicating key project information. A master list of acronyms and definitions is invaluable – especially to new project team members. If you don't know what an acronym means – always ask. Document templates are valuable for not only status reports but also key project documents such as business requirements, project charters, and issues logs. Larger organisations will have standardised templates for all key project documents from charters to post implementation reports.
4. **An information production schedule** – meeting schedule e.g. team meetings, steering committee meetings, status report schedule.
5. **Information access methods** – who can attend what meetings, what documents will be online, what level of access will be assigned to each team member?
6. **Method for updating and re-distribution** the communications management plan as the project unfolds.
7. **Stakeholder communications analysis** – what kinds of information will be distributed to which stakeholders and when? Who is the contact person? When is the information due? What is the preferred format? Stakeholders should review for accuracy before implementation. What involvement do you require from the stakeholders, when? Where? What is the stakeholder interest, influence and importance relating to the project?

Information distribution

Information distribution – making needed information available to project stakeholders in a timely manner.

The stakeholder analysis provides a good starting point for information distribution – making sure information gets to the right people at the right time and using the appropriate method or mechanism.

Use of technology for distribution

There are a number of ways technology can be used to assist in information distribution:

- Organising project documents and making them available in an electronic format on a local or wide-area network (LAN or WAN)
- Sharing information through an intranet, extranet or on the Internet
- Making templates and sample documents available electronically
- Using project management software and the Internet to keep team members informed of project status and performance.

Formal and informal distribution methods

Technically oriented people tend to rely on formal and technical means of communication and information distribution. Non-technical professionals (especially senior managers) often prefer informal communications and conversations to hear about project information. Thus it is important for good project managers to develop relationships and informal reporting structures to match team and stakeholders communication preferences. Less than 10 per cent of communication consists of the actual content or words communicated. Tone of voice and body language speak volumes. Short frequent meetings are often a good way to keep key team members current with project activities. Holding face to face meetings where possible is an extremely effective technique.

Determining communications complexity

As the number of people involved in a project increases, the communications complexity also increases (as does the opportunity for miscommunication). The following formula can be used for determining the number of communication channels as the number of team members increases:

Number of communication channels = $n(n-1)/2$

where n = the number of team members

Rarely does a receiver interpret a message exactly as the sender intended. As the message is relayed to others it tends to get more distorted. You've probably seen or participated in a demonstration of this where you start with one person whispering a short message into the ear of a neighbour who in turn whispers to his/her neighbour. After several such relays a comparison is made of the original message to the message the last person received. The end message is usually something quite different from the original and the degree of distortion is directly related to the number of times it was relayed.

Information sent electronically usually does not impart the tone or body language and thus misses 90 per cent of in-person communication. The emotional and mental state of the receiver has a lot to do with how such messages are interpreted. Good project managers will use a variety of communication techniques and surround themselves with people who complement their skills.

Performance reporting

Performance reporting – collecting and disseminating performance information, which includes status reports, progress measurement and forecasting.

Performance reports are designed to keep stakeholders informed as to how resources are being used to achieve project objectives.

- **Status reports** – reports that describe where the project stands at a particular time (scope, time and cost). Earned value analysis is one technique used for reporting project performance.
- **Progress reports** – reports that describe what the project team has accomplished during a certain period. (Often combined with status reports.)
- **Project forecasting** – predicts future project status based on past information and trends. Earned value analysis can also be used to estimate date and budget at completion.

What are loosely called status reports in many organisations often contain elements of all three (status, progress and forecasting) – what we accomplished since the last report, where we are now, and what we hope to accomplished before the next reporting period.

Status review meetings are often used for performance reporting to report important project information and to motivate people to make progress.

Administrative closure

Administrative closure – generating, gathering and disseminating information to formalise phase or project completion.

It consists of verifying and documenting project results. Administrative closure allows time to collect project records, ensure records reflect final specifications, analyse project effectiveness, and archive information for future use. The three main outputs of administrative closure are:

- **Project archives** – a complete set of organised project records that provide an accurate history of the project.
- **Formal acceptance** – documentation signed by the project sponsor or customer to show that they have accepted the products of the project.
- **Lessons learned** – reflective statements written by project managers and their team members.

Good project documentation provides a formal audit trail and can become a valuable resource for future projects. Formal acceptance signifies the official end of the project. (How do we know when we're done?) Lessons learned can help future projects in planning and estimating.

Suggestions for improving project communications

There are five areas for improving project communications – conflict resolution, developing better communication skills, running effective meetings, using templates, and developing a communications infrastructure.

Conflict resolution skills

Conflict refers to any situation in which people have differing interests, goals, principles, or feelings. This is, of course, a broad definition and encompasses many different situations. A conflict could arise, for instance, over a long-standing set of issues, a difference of opinion about strategy or tactics in the accomplishment of some business goal, incompatible beliefs, competition for resources, and so on. Conflicts can also result when one person acts in a way that another individual sees as insensitive, thoughtless, or rude. A conflict, in short, can result from anything that places individuals in opposition to one another.

Some degree of conflict is inevitable over the life of any project. Personalities are usually the primary source of conflict, but other issues such as project priorities, staffing, cost and administrative procedures can also lead to conflict. The following five basic modes for resolving conflicts come from research by Blake and Mouton (1964)[5].

1. **Confrontation** – directly facing a conflict using a problem-solving approach that allows affected parties to work through their disagreements. (Analogous to Covey's win/win approach)
2. **Compromise** – using a give-and-take approach to resolving conflicts. It consists of bargaining and searching for solutions that bring some satisfaction to all the parties in a dispute.
3. **Smoothing** – an approach that de-emphasises or avoids areas of differences and emphasises areas of agreement.
4. **Forcing** – involves using a zero-sum or win/lose approach to conflict resolution to get one's way.
5. **Withdrawal** – is simply retreating or withdrawing from an actual or potential disagreement.

Research indicates that project manager's favour using confrontation over the other four modes. The Project Management Institute (PMI)™ highly supports the use of confrontation as a conflict management tool since it supports the concept of a win-win situation for the parties involved.

Developing better communications skills

Communications skills are a vital component of project success. The good news is that these skills can be learned through training and practice. Improving communication can be achieved with proper planning, support and leadership from senior management, and from an understanding of your own personal communications style.

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[5] Blake, Robert R., Shepard, Herbert, & Mouton, Jane Srygley (1964).*Managing Intergroup Conflict in Industry*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company.

Running effective meetings

Well-run meetings can foster team building and reinforce expectations, roles, relationships and commitment to the project. Many projects begin with a **kick-off meeting** – a meeting where all major project stakeholders discuss project objectives, plans, roles, etc. The following are some suggestions for running more effective meetings:

- Define the purpose and the intended outcome of the meeting.
- Determine who should attend (based on purpose and intended outcome).
- Provide an agenda to participants prior to the meeting.
- Prepare hand-outs, visual aids, and make logistical arrangements ahead of time. (If you're using presentation equipment, a) arrive early and make sure the equipment works and b) have a back-up plan in case of equipment failure)
- Run the meeting professionally:
  - introduce people
  - restate the purpose of the meeting
  - establish ground rules
  - facilitate the meeting to ensure all items are covered
  - stay conscious of time
  - encourage participation (prevent dominance)
  - summarise key issues
  - clarify decisions and action items
  - take minutes and circulate them shortly after the meeting.
- Build relationships (make it enjoyable).

Using templates for project communications

Providing templates for common project communication items such as project charters, status reports etc., makes the job easier and ensures some level of consistency throughout the life of the project and across projects. (People learn where to look for specific pieces of information in a report, etc.) Most large organisations will have templates for all major project documentation deliverables.

Developing a communications infrastructure

A communications infrastructure is a set of tools, techniques and principles that provide a foundation for the effective transfer of information among people. Microsoft's Bill Gates calls it a "digital nervous system".

- **Tools** – e-mail, phones, faxes, groupware, intranets, teleconferencing, document management systems, etc.

- **Techniques** – reporting guidelines, template, meeting ground rules, etc.
- **Principles** – “open-door” policy, work ethic, etc.

Many organisations have formed specialised project management offices whose primary purpose is to provide the communications infrastructure for effective project management.

Using software to assist in project communications

Microsoft Project has several project communications features. Project information can be converted to HTML format for posting on the World Wide Web or be inserted as hyperlinks in related project files. Project managers can insert a hyperlink to the most recent version of their MS Project file as part of their regular status reports. Workgroup features should also be explored as an easy means of disseminating information to project teams via e-mail.

Module summary

Summary

This module focuses on the project human resource management and communication management processes. Project human resource management deals with planning, acquiring human resources and managing them effectively in project environment. In terms of planning, the processes involve identifying, assigning, and documenting project roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships. Staff acquisition is done by getting the needed people assigned to and working on the project while team development is significant for building individual and group skills to enhance project performance. In addition, project manager apply theories in motivation and leadership to influence personnel in committing themselves in the project. A project manager, who sometimes plays the role of a leader, needs to possess skills in communication, problem solving and time management in order to manage project effectively. To be able to influence and instruct project team members, project manager must be able to communicate well.

Communication needs to be managed effectively. First, the communication management processes is communications planning that determines the information and communication needs of the stakeholders: who needs what information, when will they need it, and how the information will be given to them. Secondly, information distribution ensures the required information is made available to project stakeholders in a timely manner. Thirdly, performance reporting is collecting and disseminating performance information, which includes status reports, progress measurement and forecasting. Finally, administrative closure is generating, gathering and disseminating information to formalise phase-level or project completion.

Assignment

Assignment

1. Explain the following techniques used in the allocation of resources in a project:
   a. Resource loading
   b. Resource levelling.
2. When applying the technique of resource levelling in a project, discuss the possible implications on the following:
   a. Time constraint of a project
   b. Cost constraint of a project.
3. Why is communication management more challenging in a project environment when compared to a non-project environment?

Assessment

Assessment

1. How can a project manager more effectively manage his or her time?
2. Since a project is only a temporary endeavour, discuss the challenges faced by a project manager in motivating his project team.
3. In what ways can technology assist in distributing information?
4. One of the suggestions to improve project communications is running meeting effectively. Identify the steps in running meeting effectively and indicate the reasons for running meeting effectively.
5. Describe the communication infrastructure to be built by the project manager.

Assessment answers

1. Following are some suggestions how a project manager can manage his or her time well in order to cope with many concurrent activities and unforeseeable events:

    - At the end of each week, identify the necessary (two to five) goals that you want to accomplish the following week
    - At the end of each day, make a to-do list for the next day
    - Read daily the to-do list first thing in the morning, and keep it in sight all day
    - Control interruptions to your planned schedule
    - Learn to say no to activities that do not contribute to accomplishment of the goals
    - Make effective use of waiting time
    - Try to handle most paperwork only once
    - Reward yourself at the end of the week if you accomplished all your goals.

2. While a project is a temporary endeavour, the project manager may utilise the motivation theories by Abraham Maslow and Frederick Herzberg to motivate his project staff. The project manager needs to treat his staff with appropriate professionalism in order that his staff will feel a sense of self-esteem which is the fourth level in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Promotions and other rewards can further the feeling of esteem among the staff.

3. There are a number of ways technology can be used to assist in information distribution:

    - Organising project documents and making them available in an electronic format on a local or wide-area network (LAN or WAN)
    - Sharing information through an intranet, extranet or on the Internet
    - Making templates and sample documents available electronically
    - Using project management software and the Internet to keep team members informed of project status and performance.
    - The Artemis Prestige project software tracks multiple tasks concurrently, updates team members and can be used interactively.

4. Well run meetings can foster team spirit and cooperation (*esprit de corps*) and reinforce expectations, roles, relationships and

commitment to the project. Many projects begin with a kick-off meeting – a meeting where all major project stakeholders discuss project objectives, plans, roles, etc. The following are some suggestions for running more effective meetings:

- Define the purpose and the intended outcome of the meeting
- Determine who should attend (based on purpose and intended outcome)
- Provide an agenda to participants before the meeting
- Prepare hand-outs, visual aids, and make logistical arrangements ahead of time. (If you're using presentation equipment, a) arrive early and make sure the equipment works and b) have a back-up plan in case of equipment failure.)
- Run the meeting professionally:
    - introduce people
    - restate the purpose of the meeting
    - establish ground rules
    - facilitate the meeting to ensure all items are covered
    - stay conscious of time
    - encourage participation (prevent dominance)
    - summarise key issues
    - clarify decisions and action items
    - take minutes and circulate shortly after the meeting.
- Meetings are platforms for building relationships.

5. A communications infrastructure is a set of tools, techniques and principles that provide a foundation for the effective transfer of information among people. Microsoft's Bill Gates calls it a "digital nervous system":
    - Tools – e-mail, phones, faxes, groupware, intranets, teleconferencing, document management systems, etc.
    - Techniques – reporting guidelines, template, meeting ground rules, etc.
    - Principles – 'open-door' policy, work ethic, top-up idea generation etc.
    - Many organisations have formed specialised project management offices whose primary purpose is to provide the communications infrastructure for effective project management.