



CHAPTER 8

Communications in an Enterprise Management Framework

A Critical Change Management Tool

Communications is to the organization what oil is to a motor. A motor could not operate without oil. Given a minimum amount, it would work for perhaps a few minutes, but after a while, the entire motor would break down. Thus, this motor will only work properly with the appropriate amount of oil as per the manufacturer's recommendation.

— Pierre G. Bergeron,
Translated from the original French

Just like a motor, an organization is a fine-tuned machine that requires appropriate communication flows between its parts. Communication enables groups within the organization to work together and depend on each other.

Every organization requires an ongoing communications process. Sharing information is one of the cornerstones of change management within the organization. By announcing upcoming changes, the organization can limit their impact on the user base. Whether it is within their organization or in their personal lives, people have more opportunity to adapt to change when they are forewarned.

Communications is one of the critical processes of the EMF. Because the purpose of the Framework is to manage IT change within the organization and because change is the only constant in an IT world, communications is a process that must be constant and permanent.

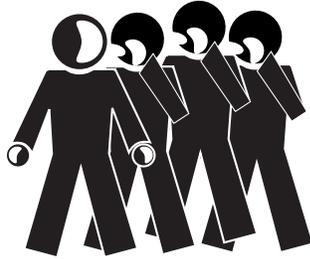
IT personnel may have many skills, but in many cases, communications is a new field for them. How many IT organizations have complete documentation on their systems? How many have complete and up-to-date inventories?

The QUOTE System's Transfer Phase

We continue the Transfer Phase with a look at the tools that can assist change management processes within the organization. The first of these tools is communications.

The Maslow Model

Remember the Maslow Model for personal satisfaction from Chapter 1? Communications is one of the elements that can bring the most satisfaction in an IT world.



One of the most interesting games children play is the telephone game. They begin with a word or phrase and repeat it along a "telephone" chain. Invariably, the end result is not what they started with.

How many have nontechnical communications programs? Very few.

For modern IT, communications is a must. Managing the complex interactions of an enterprise IT system means communicating with several groups.

- The user base
- Other departments for non-IT issues
- Other departments for IT issues
- Groups within the IT department
- Partners
- Suppliers

But communications is not a simple process. When you communicate with a group, you must learn to quickly assess and understand the group's needs in order to respond appropriately. As a result, you'll need to fully understand the communications process and its principles, have a grasp of the tools required for a permanent communications program, and learn how to identify a message and the most appropriate vehicle for delivering a message. All of this is required to support the EMF communications program—the program that aims to support acceptance and integration of the .NET EMF within your organization.

The Communications Process

Communications is the process of broadcasting and receiving information, as illustrated in Figure 8.1. The information included in a message is processed according to factors such as confidence in the origin or the originator of a message, possible criticism, or the possibility of confrontation between people and ideas.

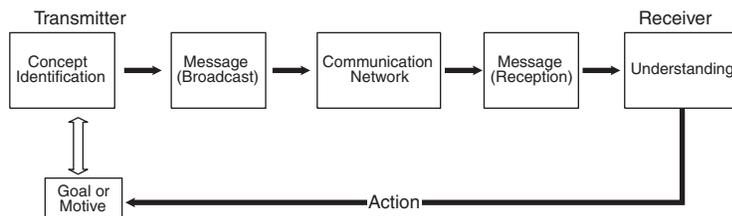


FIGURE 8.1 The Communications Process. Communications focuses on the transmission and reception of a message.



The definition of communications is “an action that enables a link with someone else.” Communicating is establishing links with other people.

The word “communicate” comes from the Latin word *communicare*, or sharing. Communication can be a source of energy, of satisfaction, and of personal and professional empowerment. Communication is a means for multiplication. Without communication, there can be no association.

The Principles of Communications

Harold Pinter, a British playwright, is renowned for the focus on communications in his plays. Most of his pieces create the appearance of dialogue, but, in fact, each actor is delivering a monologue. An individual actor’s monologue is interspersed with appropriate pauses, enabling the other actors to deliver theirs. The actors seem to be speaking with each other, but each is within his or her own little world and cannot seem to breach its walls. This is especially evident in *The Turtle Diary*, a 1984 film starring Ben Kingsley, which is perhaps Pinter’s best-known work. It includes several scenes where you see the actors stare off into space while another person speaks his or her monologue.

In Pinter’s plays, there is little communication because there is no listening. The first principle of communications is *learning to listen*—learning how to determine the mood of the audience, identify the needs of your listeners, and understand their preoccupations. Every good communicator is first and foremost a good listener.

Marshal McLuhan, a great Canadian communicator, is renowned for his concept of the Global Village. According to McLuhan, the evolution of communications technology and the reduction of distance in the modern world have a direct impact on the total amount of information people receive every day.

The Global Village concept is easily applied to the organization. The sum of information that is output by the organization in a single day is directly related to the size of the organization and the number of people participating in the communications process. What is important in communication is not the *amount* of information that is broadcast, but rather the *quality* of that information.

The second principle of communications is *learning to express yourself*—knowing how to build a bridge between yourself and your audience (see Figure 8.2).

Listening versus Hearing

There is a major difference between listening and hearing. Hearing means that you pay attention to what is said. Listening focuses on comprehension. When you listen, you pay complete attention to what is said and try to *understand* it.

Proactive Communications

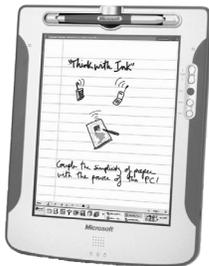
Managers often underestimate the power of rumor in an organization. Because change situations awaken users’ fears, it is always important to ensure that your communications program is proactive; that is, that you anticipate rumors and you ensure that the appropriate message is put forth.



FIGURE 8.2 Building Communications Links. A communications process builds a bridge between speaker and audience.

The Value of Paper

Paper is a traditional means of communication. Many people feel comfortable only when they have a piece of paper in hand. The age of the paperless office may still be far away—not because technologies cannot replace paper, but rather because people are not comfortable with today’s paperless technologies.



Recent advances such as Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Reader, and especially the Microsoft Tablet PC (to be released in 2002) are trying hard to displace paper in the near future.

Knowledge Management: The Internal Village

An example of communications within the enterprise is knowledge management. In order to share information among its personnel, the organization must put in place information-sharing technologies. These technologies must fulfill a specific need.

Today, few organizations have not yet tried to take advantage of intranet technologies. These technologies enable the indexing of all documents and the publication of pertinent information on Web-like pages. But the implementation of these technologies must follow a precise plan. In an EMF, technology is not a goal in and of itself.

Many organizations take the *Field of Dreams* approach to their intranets. In the film, Kevin Costner fulfills his dream when he begins to believe that “If I build it, they will come.” Taking this approach when putting together an intranet does not translate into a winning strategy. As with every other aspect of the EMF, intranet technologies must respond to specific needs. Simply putting the technology in place does not fulfill the need.

The third principle of communications is *message content*—knowing what to include in your message.

When used properly, the intranet quickly becomes a great vehicle for communications. People quickly learn to rely on its content and use it every day because it is always



up-to-date and completely indexed. But the intranet is not the only tool that is available for communications within the organization. There are several others: bulletins, newspapers, training manuals, e-mail, telephones, videoconferencing, meetings, and so on.

The fourth principle of communications is *choosing the proper vehicle*—learning to use the appropriate method of delivery for each message.

Communications is a change management tool. Be wary of changing traditional communications vehicles at the same time as you perform radical technological changes. For example, if you use a new electronic vehicle to distribute your message at the same time you modify computer systems on all desktops, you are compounding the changes you are introducing. Because people fear change situations, you must limit change as much as possible. Thus, you may choose to use traditional communications methods during the initial introduction of new technologies, and then later, when your personnel are comfortable with this initial change, you can move on to introduce new communications vehicles.

Communications in Migration Projects

Migration projects—projects whose focus is to migrate from one technological platform to another—are often projects that introduce massive change. As such, these projects disrupt daily operations and affect all users. Even though users welcome the changes introduced by these projects, they will still undergo the emotional cycle of change.

It is important to communicate with affected personnel beforehand to limit the impact of the change on business operations. Most projects will include a communications program whose purpose is to limit the impact of the change and to inform affected users about project status and objectives. But this is often not enough.

In many cases, the people who are in charge of communications within the project are also users who will be affected by the change. They are responsible for this critical change management tool at the same time as they are affected by it. It's a vicious circle. Because they are also affected by the change, they often tend to focus only on the project status. But it is also essential for people to understand the *reason* behind the change.

Communicating the Proper Message

Communications is especially important in a migration from Windows 95 to Windows 2000. In Windows 95, users are allowed to install components and software on their workstations. In Windows 2000, the average user does not have the capability to perform any installations. If the reasons behind the change from an "open" system to a "locked" system are not fully communicated, an organization will have a mutiny on its hands.



When you communicate the impact of a change, it is essential to include the objectives of the change. This part of the communications strategy must focus on the reasons behind the change—the reasoning used to justify every critical selection made during the elaboration of the solution. It must include at every level the information required for people affected by the change to fully understand the proposed changes. Comprehension ensures participation.

The communicator must create an environment supporting the desire to change. This is the point where communications becomes a marketing tool supporting the acceptance of the change. The success of a proposed change relies heavily on the quality of the communications during the transition period between the initial introduction of the change and the full integration of the change within organizational processes.

The negative impacts of a change are always reduced by a strong and effective communications program. This program must identify both favorable and unfavorable impacts of the change and design communications that put both in their best light. Proper communications makes the difference between the way people perceive the change: as welcome or unwelcome. If you implement an inappropriate communications program, your project will suffer the consequences.

A well-structured communications program includes information for each of the audiences affected by the change and identifies for them processes and methods they can use to reduce the impact of the change in their own situation. It's simple: The greater the change you intend to introduce, the more comprehensive your communications program must be.

The message needs to be simple and clear. It must be easy for people to understand; it must be at their level of comprehension. If it is intended for users, it shouldn't be too technical. If it is intended for managers, it needs to be in terms that they understand and that interest them. If the message is appropriate, it will invariably result in greater participation and easier acceptance of the change. Everything depends on content and method.

It is important to know at which stage of a change process communications should be introduced. During the change management implementation, communications provide ongoing risk management, as shown in Figure 8.3.

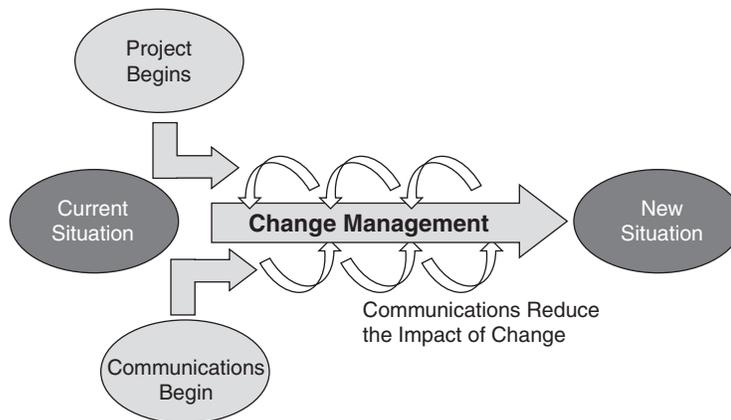


FIGURE 8.3 Communications and change management

In society, as in organizations, communications are essential. Every human interaction begins with communication. One piece of advice communicators should heed is to *listen* before they *speak*.

Case Study

Migrating to a “Locked” PC

Organization Type	Public Sector
Number of Users	2,000
Number of Computers	2,000
Project Focus	Migration to Windows NT
Project Duration	9 Months
Specific Project Focus	Migrate from a Variety of Operating Systems to a Standard
Administrative Type	Decentralized

This organization invested millions of dollars in a massive migration from a series of different operating systems to Windows NT version 4.0. The project was extremely well prepared and very well managed, but when it came to the communications program, the internal communications department refused to support or implement it because “no



IT project will communicate to the entire user base.” As a result, the communications program was delayed until the actual deployment phase of the project, and no communications about the specific content of the migration program were made available to users. Nobody was forewarned of the content of the new system.

Like all projects, this one included an acceptance-testing phase. In this phase, end-user developers were invited by a different project group to come to the testing laboratory to install and test their own applications. The crunch came with the very first developer to arrive. Because his objective was to test his application on the new system, he began by installing it. It took less than two minutes for him to receive an Access Denied error message. At first, he thought he had made a mistake. Then he discovered that as a user, he did not have installation rights.

He immediately left and went to consult his peers. They called a special meeting with the project director and told him to put an immediate stop to the project. They refused the station as it was and refused to provide further support to the project.

In the end, the project went ahead and the station remained as it was, but only after some extensive risk management operations. Had the communications department been willing to support the initial communications program, this situation would never have occurred.

Managing Change through Communications

Chapter 6 introduced the cyclical nature of IT change. IT is constantly faced with change and must therefore constantly communicate with affected personnel. But it is not necessarily IT's responsibility within the organization to perform these communications. It is their responsibility to provide message content, but in most organizations, it is the responsibility of the communications department to manage the communications process.

In fact, it is within the communications department that the organization's communications experts are to be found. While most communications departments tend to focus on external communications, it is also their role to manage and provide internal communications. Just like the IT group, these experts provide a *service* to the organization.



As such, this department must also undergo a change with the implementation of the EMF. Its staff must create and provide a specialized IT communications service. Because IT tends to introduce technological changes through projects, the new communications services should be a project-oriented communications team. It should be designed to integrate with and support IT projects on an as needed basis.

In this manner, the organization will not have to reinvent the internal communications process every time a new IT project is initiated. This team will require a structured communications approach—a communications plan, in fact—that can be adapted to any IT change situation.

Case Study

Making People Listen

Organization Type	Private Sector
Number of Users	10,000
Number of Computers	9,000
Project Focus	Systems Deployment
Project Duration	6 Months
Specific Project Focus	Deploy a New Technology to Users
Administrative Type	Centralized

This large organization had done everything right. It was about to deploy a new technology to the entire user base. But this deployment called for users to perform some initial activities on their systems *beforehand*. This required an integration of a sound communications program into the project.

Project organizers began by warning users through an internal memo identifying what the project aimed to do, how users would be affected, and what benefits users would gain from the project. This memo was sent off one month before the project was to affect users. A second memo was sent two weeks later indicating the process used for the change and the dates involving users. Finally, a third memo sent out the week before the deployment indicated to users what procedures they would have to perform in order to ensure protection of their information.



The day of the deployment, IT personnel found that very few people had performed their operations themselves. Most people had read and understood the contents of the memo, but they had simply decided that it would be IT personnel who would perform these tasks and not themselves. They felt sure that IT personnel would do it anyway, even if they had asked users to perform the tasks.

What went wrong? What can this organization do to correct the problem? It is clear that users read the memos, but they simply didn't take them seriously. The cost to the organization was a longer deployment time and a frustrated IT group.

IT brought in some communications experts to see if they could correct the problem. Following are a few of the changes that were suggested and implemented:

- Demonstration rooms were set up to provide more information to users and to promote the results of the project *before* its implementation.
- Presentations were delivered to the user base to identify what would change and how users would be affected. These presentations also focused on the user's role during the change. The presentations treated the user as a partner in the process.
- Coaching personnel were introduced before, during, and after the change to assist users with their activities.
- A common vocabulary was identified to ensure that users understood everything in the messages sent by IT.
- Key users were identified in each department and included in the project team. These project user representatives were empowered to act in the name of the users they represented. They were also involved in the acceptance process of all of the deliverables of the project. These representatives were always the first to receive and review the change to assist in making messages clearer.
- A special program was initiated within the IT department to ensure that technical personnel would learn to include the user's point of view when examining new technologies.
- Another program was designed to incite administrators and managers to become more involved in the technological change management process.



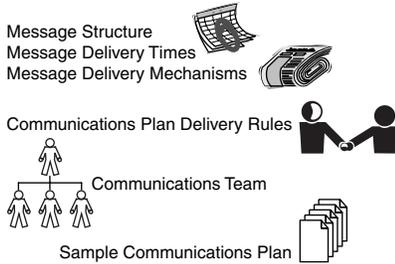
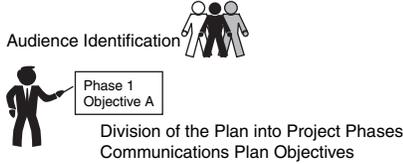
All of these programs were designed to help form a bond between IT and other representative groups within the organization. Users learned to take IT processes more seriously. IT learned to pay more attention to user requirements when designing solutions. And management learned to treat IT as a strategic asset.

The result was a better integration of all of the IT processes inside the organization and the inclusion of members of every level of the IT organization in change management processes. Today, IT projects are more unified and users are treated as partners with IT. In addition, users have learned to respect IT. They have learned that when they have specific responsibilities in a project, it is important for the organization that they perform them.

A Structured Communications Plan

A massive deployment project's communications plan must include the following elements:

- A *project name* to identify the project.
- A *project logo* to enable users to quickly and easily identify every project intervention.
- A *series of bulletins* to the user base that include information about project scope, project objectives, advantages for users, changes brought about by the project, user responsibilities, and so on. This series of bulletins should begin at the very start of the project and last until the very end of the project.
- A *user committee* that serves as a two-way communications vehicle between IT and the user base.
- A *user survey* focusing on user needs, current issues, and general user comments.
- A *series of presentations* demonstrating the upcoming changes to the user base.
- *Regular meetings* with user committees to collect comments and suggestions.
- A *demonstration room* or rooms containing the new tool set. This room should be open to users so that they may judge for themselves the impact of the change. This room should also be staffed with a project representative who can help users understand the scope of the change.



This image illustrates the structure of a project communications plan.

- A *pilot project* that tests and identifies the impact on the user base during deployment.

The structure of the communications plan is detailed in the sections that follow.

Communications Plan Structure

A project communications plan must be structured. It must include several elements that need to interact with each other, and it must provide information to all affected users. It should contain the following elements:

- Audience identification
- Division of the plan into project phases
- Communications plan objectives
- Message structure
- Message delivery times
- Message delivery mechanisms
- Communications plan delivery rules
- A communications team
- A sample communications plan

These elements are described in the sections that follow.

Audience Identification

The first objective of a project communications plan is to identify its audiences. Different audiences require different messages, and different messages require different delivery mechanisms. The project scope will also have an impact on audiences and delivery mechanisms. It is important for the communications planning team to quickly develop a sound understanding of the project's content, its objectives, and the user base it will affect.

For example, a Windows 2000/XP deployment on both servers and PCs will affect *everyone* in the enterprise, but its specific audiences would include the following:

- Project sponsor
- Project director
- Project manager
- IT project team, including



- Technicians/integrators
- Administrators for systems, security, performance, printers, inventories, data, and communications
- User/problem support
- System developers
- Planners
- Architects
- Software owners
- Human resources and communications personnel, including
 - Team leader
 - Trainers
 - Team communications coordinator
 - Message delivery personnel
- Localized teams,¹ including
 - Localized developers
 - Trainers
 - Local support personnel
 - Local technicians
- Team action owners
- End users

Audiences also include committees because committees regroup audience representatives. In fact, committees provide a multiplication factor for the communications process, enabling message delivery personnel to deliver their message once to key representatives who in turn can re-broadcast it to other members of the organization.

Committees should include

- *Management*: Key representatives of management at all levels of the organization should be included in this committee. It may be necessary to create two management committees, one for upper management and one for middle management, depending on the size of the organization.
- *Training coordinators*: Large organizations often tend to perform training internally. In these cases, they will

1. These team members will be present in a decentralized organization.



Change Management Committee

Identification of the members of the change management committee can be performed in two ways.

- First, this committee should include representatives of each one of the IT roles identified during role categorization (see Chapter 5).
- Second, the committee should include representatives from each of the key job functions identified in the organization. These should include management, administrative assistance, technical personnel, production personnel, and so on.

This committee is the one with which you sound out all of your solutions. It must be representative of the organization.

require a committee of training coordinators. More on this subject is covered in Chapter 9.

- *Technical staff:* A change such as a move to Windows 2000 or Windows XP directly affects technical personnel. They should definitely be a targeted audience.
- *Change management:* This committee is made of key representatives of the user base at all levels. This committee should include personnel that play each of the different IT roles in the organization.
- *Union representatives:* If your organization includes unions, you should ensure that all changes that will affect the way people work within the organization are communicated to official union representatives.

The communications plan should reach each and every one of the audiences in the preceding list. The same message should be broadcast to each audience with variations on audience requirements. For example, management will be interested in budgets and deadlines as well as operation disruptions, while end users will be interested in changes that affect them personally.

The Project Introduction Guide

One of the first objectives of the communications team is to create a project introduction manual. Such a manual is often the most overlooked facet of communications in any project. Yet, if the project has a scope of several months or even years, such as would be the case for the deployment of Windows 2000/XP in medium to large organizations, it is certain that team members will change during the course of the project.

It is thus essential for the project to have a special introductory process for new team members. This process should be supplemented with a project introduction guide. The guide should include

- Initial project presentations
- Project scope manual
- Project status report
- Project organization chart
- Contact list for team members
- Team member roles and responsibilities
- Specific team member activity list

Participating in Meetings

One of the first messages you must deliver to any committee member, especially if he or she has never participated in such a process before, is that the member must express his or her opinion. There is no point in including people in a committee if they do not express themselves, even if they think what they have to say may not be appropriate. Sometimes the best project ideas come from the most incongruous sources.



An introductory process for each new team member should support this manual. This process alone will save considerable time and expense for the project and will ensure that team members know precisely what their responsibilities are as soon as they become members of the project.

Dividing the Plan into Project Phases

Because the purpose of a project communications plan is to provide information to all audiences during all phases of the project, the best way to attack the project is to divide it into the same phases as the project itself.

Once again, this means using the QUOTE System for the communications plan. The plan will be divided into five phases:

- *Question*: This is the planning phase for the project. Communications must focus on planning activities and begin preparing the user base for the changes to come.
- *Understand*: This is the preparation phase. In this phase, the initial solutions are tested and prepared for the rollout. Communications must focus on preparation activities while continuing to identify benefits to users.
- *Organize*: This is the pilot phase. This may well include a pre-pilot program or a proof of concept. Then it follows with the pilot project itself. A *pilot* is defined as a complete delivery to a limited group of users who represent as many aspects of the organization's diverse user population as possible. At the end of the pilot, participants provide their comments on the overall delivery process. Communications must begin direct activities with users and communicate to users any positive comments provided by pilot participants.
- *Transfer*: This is the massive deployment phase. In this phase, the repetitive delivery of the solution begins and moves into full production. Communications must focus on the rate of delivery, project advances, and status updates. Any positive comments from users and managers must be communicated to the user base.
- *Evaluate*: The evaluation process begins during the massive deployment and continues after deployment is complete. Communications must focus on project status, relationship to project milestones and objectives, and



overall project performance. In addition, a project review must be completed and its results communicated to all interested parties.

The communications content of each phase is described in more detail in the last section of this chapter.

Defining Clear Objectives for the Plan

First and foremost, the communications team needs to define the objectives of the communications plan. Just like the project plan, the communications plan has a purpose that must be clearly defined and must meet specific goals.

Examples of the objectives of a project communications plan include the following:

- Communicate information between the teams within the project.
- Communicate information between members of the internal project teams and associated organizational teams.
- Inform the affected user base with the proper message at the right time.
- Minimize impacts on the user base.
- Ensure the harmonious deployment of the new tools associated with the project.
- Minimize impacts on business operations (communicate with partners, clients, and other external audiences if required).

Each project will have its own specific objectives. When you design the objectives of your communications plan, remember that the plan's goal first and foremost is to perform change management and minimize the impacts of change.

Message Structure

Communication is performed through *messages*. Each message must meet one of the plan's specific objectives. To facilitate the communications process, each message must be structured in a similar fashion by the communications team. This will greatly assist the team in the preparation of the specific content of the message. It will also facilitate interpretation of the message by its readers.

The Five W's of Communication

When designing communications plans, remember the five W's.

- **W**ho
- **W**hat
- **W**hen
- **HoW**
- **W**hy

If you ensure that your plan and its messages answer these five questions, you will have a sound communications program.



Messages should be structured in the following manner:

- Identification of the phase of the project
- Goal of the message
- Generic content of the message (summary)
- Identification of the specific audiences for the message
- Flowchart demonstrating the message source and the delivery times to specific audiences
- Message timing (when to start the communications process for this message, which audience is targeted first, which is second, and so on)
- Delivery mechanism for the message for each audience
- Specific content of the message for each audience
- Additional comments about the message

In fact, it is a good idea for the communications team to create a message boilerplate they can reuse each time a message must be delivered. This boilerplate provides an underlying structure to the process of managing the impact of change within the organization.

Message Delivery Timings

Communication is a flow of information from one person or group to another. In large organizations, communications teams will have to use *multiplication agents*—project team members who carry messages to other audiences within the organization. In this case, proper identification of the flow of a message becomes crucial. This is why messages must be divided into delivery timings.

Delivery timings help communicators identify when the message process begins, who its initiator is, who the audience is, and who performs the delivery of the message to this audience.

Figure 8.4 illustrates the use of timings in a flowchart demonstrating message flows.

The notion of timings (1, 2, 3, 4, and so on) helps create a generic communications plan. This enables organizations to create a specific communications project plan with specific dates as they are defined by the overall project. The organization has two tools to define specific dates for the communications plan: the project phase and the message timings. Each tool can be tied to specific phases of the project itself.

Being Heard

In large organizations, people are sometimes swamped with information. In this type of situation, how can you get them to hear your message among the myriad messages they receive each day?

Structure is important: A good logo and a well-designed message go a long way toward distinguishing your message from the masses. Also, a powerful communicator who knows how to direct readers' eyes toward your message and capture their interest is definitely a plus. It also helps if your communicator is familiar with the audience; thus there is an argument for an internal person to play the role.

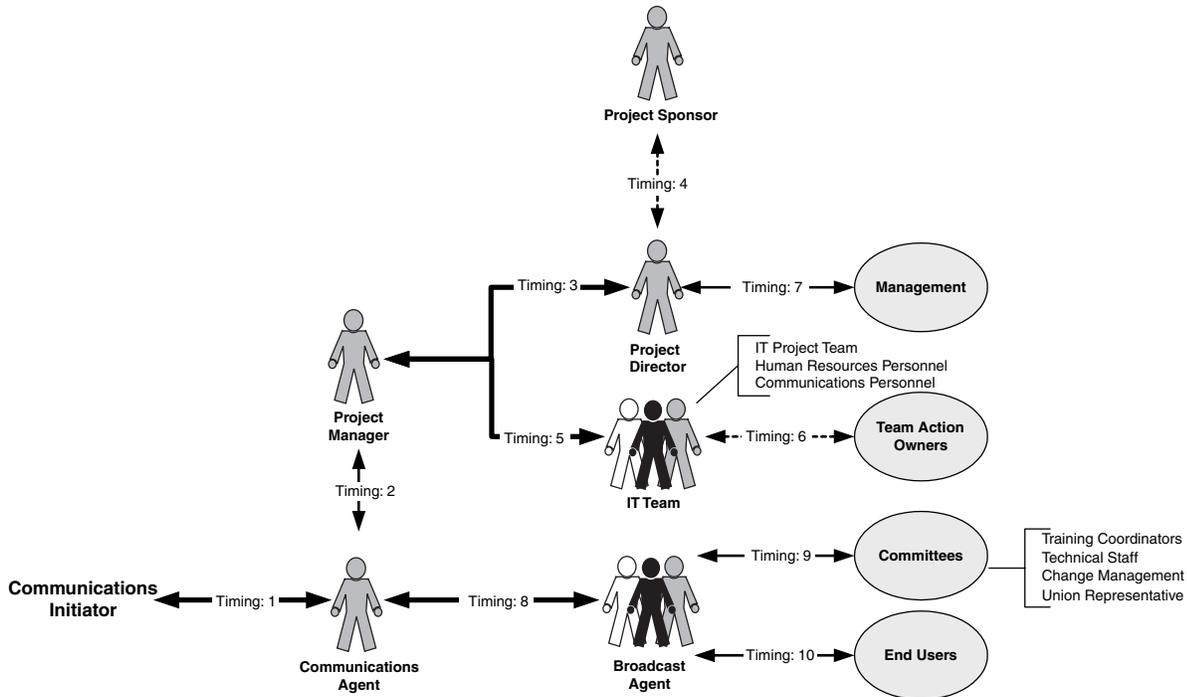


FIGURE 8.4 Message Timings. This diagram illustrates the communications process for an IT project. Every communications event must follow this process. Every project communication within this diagram is bidirectional. Dotted arrows indicate that the audiences (project sponsor and team action owners) are not always involved in the process.

Communications Plan Delivery Rules

The communications plan operates according to a given set of rules and guidelines that affect both the general and the specific operation of the communications plan. Communication timings and message flows are illustrated in Figure 8.4.

General Rules

- A *communications initiator* is defined as a person or a group that has information to broadcast. For example, architects are initiators of the information on the operating system and application configurations, technicians initiate information regarding staging approaches, trainers cover the training strategy, and so on.



- *Information* that is to be broadcast must cover project activities, plans, approaches, and any other items that will impact either the project or a specific group. This includes information that may be of a technical, budgetary, operational, or temporal nature, especially if it can impact the project as a whole.
- The *broadcast agent* is responsible for delivering the message. There may be several broadcast agents. For example, for technical committees, the broadcast agent should be someone from IT; for management groups, the agent must be a manager; for users, the agent should be a trainer or someone from human resources; and so on.
- The *communications agent* is the person who receives messages from the communications initiators. This agent is the center of the communications system. He or she is in a direct relationship with the project manager. The agent can call upon assistance from the IT, human resources, or communications department to broadcast messages. He or she is in direct relationship with all broadcast agents.
- The *communications plan* should identify the scope of the audience for each message. The general message delivery flows are illustrated in Figure 8.4, but this does not mean that every message covers all audiences. For example, during the preparation phase, it is not necessary to communicate the specific status of the project to users because they still have months to go before they are directly impacted.
- *Message content* is modified for each audience. Generic message content must be the same for everyone, but specific message content will vary according to audience. For example, managers will want information that is pertinent to their operations and budgets, while users will want information that is pertinent to their own personal situations.
- *Unexpected messages* must still follow the generic communications process. It will be the communications agent's responsibility to identify specific audiences for these messages.
- Each *committee* is composed of information relaters. Committee members are responsible for relaying information to their own specific groups. They assist the communications agent by providing a multiplication factor.



Operational Rules

- The communications agent is always the first point of interaction—the point of entry for all messages.
- The project manager is always the second point of interaction. The communications agent must always discuss upcoming messages with the project manager.
- The project director is always the third point of interaction. The project manager must always keep the project director abreast of the messages to be broadcast and the status of the project. It is at this stage that the project director will identify if the project sponsor is to be involved in the message.
- The project sponsor is always the fourth point of interaction. The project director must communicate with the project sponsor on an as-needed basis during the course of the project. If this communication is necessary, it should be at the fourth point of interaction.
- The project team is always the fifth point of interaction. The project manager must communicate the message to them, especially if they are required to take action on the message.
- Team action owners are always the sixth point of interaction if direct action is required by the nature of the message. Team leaders manage these communications.
- Message delivery agents are always the seventh point of interaction. The communications agent is responsible for coordinating message delivery with these agents.
- Management committees are always the eighth point of interaction. The project director is often responsible for this message delivery with the assistance of the communications agent and/or the project manager.
- Other committees are always the ninth point of interaction. The communications team is responsible for this delivery.
- Users are always the final point of interaction. Once again, the communications team is responsible for message delivery.

The Communications Team

The communications team is composed of two types of personnel: the communications agent and message delivery personnel.



The Communications Agent

The communications agent is responsible for all communications activities within the project. This person is a journalist, a reporter who must search for and identify the nature of each message. Ideally, this agent is a member of the communications department specifically assigned to project-support activities.

This agent uses a communications plan to identify message delivery timings, specific message content, and information sources, as well as targeted audiences to simplify and assist the change management process.

This agent must work in close relationship with the project manager.

Message Delivery Personnel

Message delivery personnel are responsible for the specific delivery of a message and the means of delivery. They work in close relationship with the communications agent to prepare each message before delivery. Depending on the size of the project, a delivery agent may sometimes actually be the communications agent, but in larger projects, delivery personnel or agents are communications relaters that have a particular affinity to their audience.

For example, the project manager is the relater to the project team, the project director is the relater to the management committee, team leaders are the relaters to their team members, and so on.

Each message will have a specific delivery mechanism that is often related to message type and content.

Message Delivery Mechanisms

Organizations have several delivery mechanisms available to them. Each of these falls into one of three categories.

- *Paper-based mechanisms:* Bulletins, newsletters, posters, and so on.
- *Electronic mechanisms:* E-mail, presentations, the intranet, bulletin boards, and so on.
- *Word of mouth:* The importance of this factor in communications cannot be overlooked.

What is important to keep in mind is that each mechanism has its own purpose. For example, e-mail is often used to deliver short messages to large audiences. Bulletins

Poster Example

Posters are a very powerful way to create anticipation, especially if your project aims to repair long-term problems that users may have had to face.

For example, in a situation where users had little or no stability, you might create a poster with the following message: "Zero percent downtime! That's our goal. Believe it!"

There is no doubt that this message will get people talking about your project. Though their reactions may not always be positive, people will be anxious to see if you live up to your message.



are used to deliver messages that may take some time for the audience to absorb—a paper format requires the audience to take the time to stop what they are doing, pick up the paper bulletin, and give it more attention than they would a simple e-mail. Posters are used to foster anticipation, especially if their message is designed to “shock” the audience.

Think about message content before you decide which delivery mechanism to use (see Figure 8.5).

Microsoft Project Central

In addition to being a very strong project management tool, Microsoft Project 2000 enables you to link everything and everyone through your company intranet. Remember to save a special place on the intranet site for your very own Project Central.

The Intranet

The intranet has a special place within the delivery mechanisms. As we are all learning through the use of the Internet, a well-designed Web site can provide a world of information to users. So can an advanced e-mail system. Both are used to support the intranet project site.

An intranet project site can include several different types of information such as

- The purpose of the project
- A layperson’s description of the project objectives

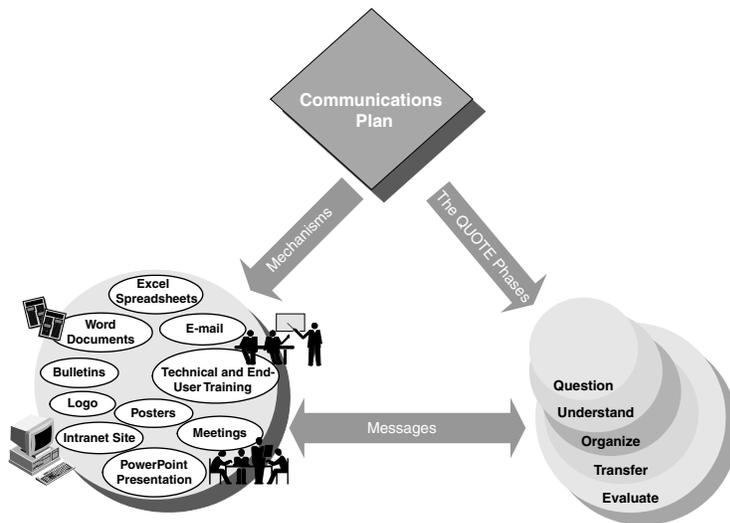


FIGURE 8.5 Message Delivery Interactions. Communications mechanisms support the communications process. Different messages need to be delivered during different phases of the QUOTE System.



- What the project proposes to change
 - At the user level
 - At the functional level
 - Tools to be changed
 - Other affected areas such as IT management and administration
- Training and deployment information, including
 - Deployment phases
 - Content of the training program
 - Deployment and training calendars
- Preparatory information
 - What users need to do beforehand
 - Time frames describing when the project team will contact them
- A project “goodwill” section
 - Chronicles describing a typical user experience
 - Comments and acclaims by users, managers, and IT personnel
 - Project performance and achievements
- Project frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Tips and tricks for the use of the new products
- Project contact area
 - Identification of all user representatives including descriptions of their roles within the project
 - Identification of key project personnel
 - Help line for the project
 - Additional information sources
- Finally, as the project advances, use the intranet site to cater to specific audiences. To do this, you will need to apply specific security settings to each area because the messages they contain are for a certain audience’s eyes only. These areas could include
 - Project management and administration information (Microsoft Project Central)
 - Committee communications, such as PowerPoint presentations²

Project Goodwill Messages

It is important for a project to generate goodwill toward the changes it brings. A special element of the communications program must focus on this goodwill. Milestones such as “1,000 users served!”, personal commentaries by users and others that have already been through the program, and a clear description of what people can expect will go a long way toward fostering positive change management.

2. It is key that these areas be secured because a presentation delivered to management will not be disclosed to the general public, presentations to technicians should not be disclosed to users, and so on.



- Special groups and/or committee exchange areas
- A project glossary to enable everyone to establish a common vocabulary

The intranet is a new communications tool that can provide valuable assistance during the change management process. Make sure you use it as thoroughly as you can.

Information Sources

All of the messages that you need to deliver during the project communications program must originate somewhere. Following is a list of sources that most any project will require.

- Project deliverables, including
 - Current situation review
 - Needs analysis and problem identification
 - Project scoping document
 - Project organization manual
 - Project plan
 - Architectural objectives and guidelines
 - Global Architecture
 - Technical configuration documents
 - Security architecture
 - Transition and change management strategies
 - Laboratory and testing strategies
 - Deployment plan
 - Deployment calendar
 - Training and support plan
 - User needs analysis results³
 - User activity guides
 - Application testing and compatibility lists including conversion programs for application replacements
 - Risk management approaches
- External information sources, such as
 - Manufacturer's information sources

3. The user needs analysis is described in more detail in a later section of this chapter.



- Industry best practices
- Industry evaluations of the products
- Consulting firm analyses (from Gartner Group, Giga Information Group, META Group, and so on)
- Commercial training guides
- Related books and other technical papers

These information sources will assist communicators in putting together the messages required during the different phases of the project. They will also greatly assist in the evaluation of the impact of the change on the organization and the identification of the approaches required to manage it.

A Sample EMF Communications Plan

The following is a sample EMF communications plan. It provides an example of the focus of communications for each of the five project phases. Once again, it is based on the QUOTE System.

Question Phase (Planning)

This is the planning phase for the project. Here, the communications plan must focus on project planning activities and begin preparing the user base for the changes to come.

Activities during this phase should include the following:

- *Name the project.* The project name should be short and catchy, and it should form an acronym if possible. For example, the acronym “BIOS” could stand for “Better Information, Organization, and Structure,” outlining the objectives for the project in its very name. It is easy to recognize because BIOS is also a well-known computer term.⁴
- *Design the project logo.* The project logo’s design should enable audiences to quickly and easily identify every project intervention. This logo should reflect the nature of the project and its impacts on the user base. Because

4. BIOS refers to the instruction set that is responsible for the early stages of the PC start-up sequence.

The Question Phase

Communications activities

- Name the project
- Design the project logo
- Identify the project philosophy
- Prepare initial communications
- Create template documents
- Form committees
- Conduct a user survey
- Create a project introduction manual

Messages

- Project objectives
- Project structure
- Project status
- Project activities

Mechanisms

- PowerPoint presentations
- Meetings
- Technical training
- E-mail messages
- Word documents
- Excel spreadsheets



The Project Logo

The project logo is a key component of the communications strategy. It should be simple and easy to identify. The following image presents an example of such a logo.



This logo includes the following features:

- The project name, making it easily recognizable
- An image of a person, which indicates the user
- A globe to indicate the global nature of the organization
- A subtitle, PC Standardization, which is a secondary focus of the project
- The corporate logo (in this case, a portion of Resolution's logo) to identify the corporation-wide nature of the project

technology projects are often migration projects, the use of migratory birds in the logo is often very representative.

- *Identify the project philosophy.* The project philosophy must include information such as new capabilities based on new technologies, problems to be solved by the project, and the driving factors of the EMF.
- *Prepare initial communications.* The initial communication to the user base should be in the form of bulletins including information about project scope, project objectives, advantages for users, changes brought about by the project, user responsibilities, and so on. This series of bulletins must begin at the very start of the project and last until the very end of the project.
- *Create project templates.* The project will require templates for architectural and configuration documents, presentations to committees, bulletins, spreadsheets, and project plans. Each should include the project name and logo.
- *Form project committees.* The implementation of project committees that can serve as two-way communications vehicles between the project and specific audiences.
- *Conduct a user survey.* A user survey focusing on user needs, current issues, and general user comments (more on this later).
- *Conduct a series of presentations demonstrating the coming changes to the user base.* These presentations should be delivered to every committee at first. This should form the basis of regular meetings with the committees in order to collect comments and suggestions.
- *Create a project introduction manual.* The project introduction manual should be designed at this stage. This manual will be modified throughout the project phases to reflect the changing objectives for each phase.
- *Identify project activities.* These activities should be identified and communicated to all team members.
- *Design and implement the structure of project status meetings.* Internal project communications are crucial at this stage, so a mechanism should be designed for regular project status updates as well as an escalation method for specific project issues.



The User Analysis Survey

One of the major objectives of the EMF is to increase user productivity, not only through user knowledge but also through the implementation of systems that truly meet user requirements. The starting point of this intervention is a user analysis survey.

Organizations using the EMF must understand user needs and requirements at all times. Thus, the communications plan for this implementation must perform an analysis of user habits and activities.

This survey should cover a significant sample of the user base—between 5 and 10 percent of the user population.

Surveys often have very little success⁵ because people are not necessarily interested in the survey. Your project should use a different approach. The best way to have valid and correct response to a survey is to identify survey officers within your organization. These are often members of the user or change management committees. You should select enough committee members to ensure that each member will not be responsible for more than 20 questionnaires.

The survey officer role then becomes one of direct intervention with users. Survey officers will be involved in

- The preparation and validation of the user survey questionnaire
- The selection of a number of users (up to 20) according to the user population sample parameters set by the project
- The distribution of the survey questionnaire
- The collection of the survey questionnaire
- The validation of the survey with the user before its return to the project
- The validation of survey results once the questionnaire is returned
- The validation of the solutions outlined in response to survey results

5. An industry survey is often deemed successful when it has a response rate of 3 percent!

User Population Sampling

When you define the user population sample, it is important to identify user categories within the organization. This is best done with the job categories that already exist within the organization. The human resources department is the best source for this information.

Proceed as follows to identify user categories:

1. Identify the five major employee categories. These should include management, administration personnel, operations personnel, technical personnel, and planning personnel.
2. Identify the percentage of population covered by each category.
3. Select the appropriate number of people in each category to represent the user population. For example, if 5 percent of the staff is in management, 5 percent of your sample should be managers.



The user survey questionnaire itself must focus on the following elements:

- Current software usage patterns
- Current issues and problems in the use of IT
- Workflow patterns
- User communication patterns
- Documentation and output patterns
- Support methods and patterns
- Personal knowledge levels for specific applications
- General user comments

User Survey Questionnaire

For an example of a user survey questionnaire, see Appendix E.

The information gathered from the user survey will provide the foundation for the customized solutions you will design when implementing your EMF.

In addition, the results of this survey will form the basis for new communication patterns between IT and the user base. Specifically, this aspect of the project should result in

- Improved user satisfaction because users will feel they have some say in the design of the new system
- Improved relationships because it fosters a spirit of partnership between IT and users
- Better solutions because the needs of users are specifically identified
- Additional functionalities because their requirements are clearly identified
- Better automation because documentation patterns are identified
- Direct implication of the client in the solutions process

The user survey is worth its weight in gold during an EMF implementation. Users especially appreciate it because it enables them to vent their frustrations with current systems and hope that these frustrations will not be carried over into new systems.

The results of this survey should influence architectural and configuration decisions. For example, application usage patterns help determine the layout of the most common toolset icons in the Presentation layer of the SPA object. The survey results should also influence communication patterns because they may identify immediate problems.



Understand Phase (Preparation)

During the preparation phase there is little on project status that must be communicated to users. Because the bulk of the work at this phase is preparation and acceptance of the solutions, most of the communications process deals with internal project communications. Communications must focus on preparation activities while continuing to identify the upcoming benefits to users.

Communications at this phase should include

- *Project status:* It is crucial at this stage that the entire project team is kept abreast of all project activities. The project manager must hold regular update meetings with all key project personnel. These people must, in turn, keep their own teams up-to-date. This communication must flow in both directions.
- *Project escalation method:* Any issues must be escalated and dealt with rapidly. The communicator must ensure that there is a proper issue escalation method. The resolution methods are the responsibility of the project manager.
- *Project intranet site:* The intranet site can be created at this stage. It should include such elements as project objectives, project status, results of the user survey, and other general project information. The Web site address should be communicated to users through a global e-mail message. It should then be included in all communications.
- *Project philosophy:* This is the ideal time to begin the communication of all major changes to users. These communications must focus on user and organizational benefits, especially if a “locked” system is on its way. The focus should be on showing users what is personal on the computer and what is corporate property. Several mechanisms can be used at this stage:
 - Bulletins with a series of articles on the changing nature of computing needs within the organization, a day in the life of a user using the new system, management and administration examples featuring user configuration management, and so on.
 - A demonstration room or rooms including the new tool set. This room should be open to users so that they may judge for themselves the impact of the change.

The Understand Phase

Communications activities

- Design project escalation method
- Design project intranet site
- Prepare demonstration room
- Create user guides
- Prepare training solution
- Prepare support solution

Messages

- Project philosophy
- User survey results
- Project status
- Project activities

Mechanisms

- PowerPoint presentations
- Meetings
- Bulletins
- Technical training
- E-mail messages
- Word documents
- Intranet site



This room should also be staffed with a project representative that can help users understand the scope of the change. This room should be available until the deployment of the solution.

- In addition, the communications program should focus on the following project activities:
 - System preparation and testing
 - Preparation of the training solution
 - Preparation of the support solution
 - Preparation of the deployment methods
 - Preparation of the user guides required during deployment
 - Preparation of the various teams affected by the deployment

All of the activities listed previously will be in their initial stages. They will be finalized during the next phase of the project.

Organize Phase (Pilot)

This phase deals with the finalization of all preparatory activities and the initial testing of all of the solutions through a pilot deployment. It may be necessary to perform a pre-pilot program or a proof of concept (POC) to validate that the project is moving in the right direction. If this is the case, the activities should include

- Finalization of all approaches
- POC (pre-pilot)
- Pilot program
- Pilot program evaluation
- Modification of the approaches (if required)

Both the POC and the pilot are deployments to controlled user populations. The major difference between the two is the scope of the population (about 1 percent for the POC and about 10 percent for the pilot). Both are defined as a complete delivery to a limited group of users who represent as many aspects of the organization's diverse user populations as possible. At the end of both tests, participants provide their comments on the overall delivery process.

The Proof of Concept

Proof of concepts (POCs) can serve several purposes during a project. Some organizations may also require a POC at the Understand Phase. For them, the POC serves to validate that a specific technical idea works. Others may want a POC at the Organize Phase. At that stage, it can serve as a test with a smaller scope of all of the pilot project's activities.

It is at this stage that the communications team begins direct activities with targeted users. It is also important for this team to communicate to the entire user base any positive comments provided by test participants.

- *Project status:* Project status communications within the project team must continue at all times.
- *Project intranet site:* The effective use of the Web site during deployment is tested here. This means that the intranet site should begin to include information specific to users targeted by the deployment. Users will want to know when their systems will be deployed, when they should take training, what they need to do beforehand, what they need to do afterward, and so on. They will also want to find their own names on the lists.
- *Project philosophy:* The project philosophy information should continue to be disseminated. It is at this stage that the project can begin to use posters to create a positive change atmosphere within the organization.
- *Preparatory activities:* In addition, the communications program should focus on the finalization of all project preparatory activities:
 - System preparation and testing
 - Training solution
 - Support solution
 - Deployment methods
 - User guides required during deployment (activities before, activities after, and training guides)
 - Preparation of the user representatives for direct interaction with their user base
 - Testing and finalization of the coaching team

All of these processes will be thoroughly tested during both the POC and the pilot. The communications team will have to prepare POC and pilot evaluation forms and ensure that they are collected at the end of each test.

- *POC and pilot evaluations:* Finally, the communications team will be responsible for summarizing all of the results of the POC and pilot evaluations and communicating results to all audiences.

The Organize Phase

Communications activities

- Finalize intranet site
- Design project approaches
- Prepare POC and pilot evaluation forms
- Finalize user guides
- Finalize training solution
- Finalize support solution

Messages

- Project philosophy
- Project status
- Project activities
- Activities for users
- Project training
- POC results
- Pilot results

Mechanisms

- PowerPoint presentations
- Meetings
- Bulletins
- Technical and end-user training
- E-mail messages
- Word documents
- Intranet site
- Infoline
- Coaches



Using Onsite Coaches

One of the resources you should consider during a massive migration project is the onsite coach. These people are project personnel whose purpose is to assist users during their activities before and after the migration.

During migration projects, especially projects that migrate from one operating system to another, users are required to perform certain project activities. Validating their inventory is one such activity. Cleaning up their PC files is another. They may even have to move all of their documents to a special directory if the project has determined that only information in this special directory will be conserved.

After the migration, users finalize the personalization of their system, validate that their old files were transferred to the new system, and start using the new technologies.

For many users, these tasks are a challenge. Onsite coaches can greatly facilitate the process by moving through the deployment along with the project and providing before and after assistance.

The communications team has to ensure that all of its processes are completely tested and ready for moving on to the next phase: the massive deployment.

Using an Infoline

One of the most successful communications tools for migration projects is the *infoline*, a help line that is specific to the project. The infoline serves to directly provide information to users about the migration process. It can help them find their training and/or migration dates. It can assist them by directing them to other sources of help and assistance.

The infoline relieves the pressure of project coordination communications with users from normal help desk staff. It provides comfort to the user base because it shows that the project team cares to hear them.

Transfer Phase (Deployment)

During the massive deployment phase, communications move to full production mode. Communications at this phase should focus on:

- Repetitive communication with targeted user populations
- Success story publication (any positive comments on the solution or the deployment methods should be regularly conveyed to the user base)
- Project progress information (communicated to all audiences)

The communications process should be simpler to manage at this stage because it becomes very repetitive. Communications help support users during this process, as illustrated in Figure 8.6.

Evaluate Phase (Project Review)

The final project phase is the project review. The communications team must review and identify project successes, such as project milestones at the proper dates, objectives set and met by the project, budget results, and overall project performance.

The results of this review must be identified and communicated to all interested parties.

The Transfer Phase

Communications activities

- Begin repetitive communications
- Write success stories
- Follow project progress

Messages

- Project status
- Project activities
- Activities for users
- Project training
- Success stories

Mechanisms

- PowerPoint presentations
- Posters
- Meetings
- Bulletins
- Technical and end-user training
- E-mail messages
- Word documents
- Intranet site
- Infoline
- Coaches

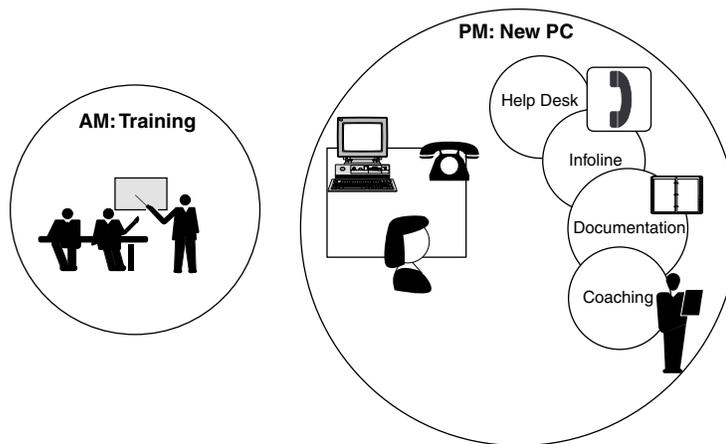


FIGURE 8.6 Message Delivery Mechanisms. User activities during the migration include, for example, attending training in the morning, and then using the new system in the afternoon. Various communication mechanisms should be used to support this process.



The Evaluate Phase

Communications activities

- Perform project review
- Identify project strengths and weaknesses

Messages

- Project review
- Success stories

Mechanisms

- PowerPoint presentations
- Meetings
- Bulletins
- Word documents
- Intranet site

Recurring Communications

Because the implementation of a project-based communications program is a significant undertaking, the organization should ensure that this new mechanism between users and IT be maintained on a recurring basis. Thus, communicators should endeavor to identify information that can be broadcast to the user base on a regular basis. This can include information such as upcoming software and hardware evolution, new function introductions, and so on. It is important to ensure that this kind of information is translated in a manner that is understandable and significant to users.

Using the QUOTE System

During the Transfer Phase, the organization changes the very infrastructure of the IT environment. Communications is one of the best agents of change. It is a significant process, but it cannot stand alone. Training and proper solution design are required to support the communications process.

Communications is one of the most important aspects of a project, yet it is often forgotten or simply not deemed important during the initial phases of a project. In an EMF, a solid relationship between IT and users is crucial. The best way to build this relationship is through a strong communications program. During your deployment, you'll have to ensure that the communications program does not fall through the cracks.

Case Study

Implementing a Project Communications Program

Organization Type	Public Sector
Number of Users	5,000
Number of Computers	5,500
Project Focus	Windows 2000 Deployment
Project Duration	1 Year
Specific Project Focus	Deploy a New System Management Structure with Windows 2000
Administrative Type	Decentralized



This organization chose to manage the entire deployment program internally with the support of key consultants. As such, the majority of the project was managed and delivered by internal personnel.

A consulting firm was hired to design the communications program for the project. Because the project seemed to be lacking structure, the communications team designed the communications plan as a deployment plan, listing all the activities required at each phase.

The project team also identified that they did not have the appropriate communications agents within the team, so they requested help from the human resources and communications departments. Both departments created special project support teams to respond to the technical project's requirements.

Using the communications plan, the new project personnel (from the communications department) supported the project throughout its delivery. This enabled them to identify additional impacts on the user base and proactively manage them through targeted communications to specific audiences.

In addition, they were able to transform the plan into a generic project implementation communications plan.

They were thus able not only to manage change during the initial deployment project, but also to be ready and prepared for any future technological innovation or change within their organization.



CHAPTER ROADMAP

Use this flowchart as a guide to understand the concepts covered in this chapter.

