

Communication Management Plan

Standard editable Word template for project communication planning, reporting, escalation, meetings, and stakeholder updates

Document Field	Editable Value
Project Name	[Enter project name]
Project Code	[Enter project code]
Prepared By	[Project Manager / Communications Lead]
Prepared For	[Sponsor / Client / PMO]
Version	1.0
Date	[DD-MMM-YYYY]

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USE

Replace all bracketed placeholders before approval. Keep this document linked with the stakeholder register, project schedule, risk register, issue log, decision log, and change control process.

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Template Navigation and Instructions

How to complete and use this Word template.

This template explains who communicates what information, to whom, when, how, why, and under whose approval. It is written for project managers, PMO teams, sponsors, clients, vendors, and project teams.

☐ Complete document control and approval details.	☐ Confirm stakeholders and information needs.
☐ Define communication channels and response rules.	☐ Build the communication matrix.
☐ Set meeting cadence and reporting calendar.	☐ Define escalation rules for urgent issues.
☐ Agree document storage and version control.	☐ Review and update this plan during the project.

Section	Purpose	Owner
1. Document Control	Track version, owner, review status, and approvals.	Project Manager
2. Plan Overview	Define purpose, scope, assumptions, constraints, and principles.	Project Manager
3. Objectives	Set measurable communication outcomes.	PM / Sponsor
4. Stakeholders	Capture each audience and its information needs.	PM / Stakeholder Lead
5. Communication Matrix	Control what is sent, when, by whom, and through which channel.	PM / Workstream Leads
6. Meetings	Define cadence, agenda, minutes, decisions, and actions.	PM
7. Reporting Calendar	Schedule formal reports and governance updates.	PMO / PM
8. Channels and Tools	Define approved tools, repositories, and response rules.	PM / IT
9. Escalation	Define priority levels and decision paths.	Sponsor / PM
10. Appendices	Provide reusable logs, agenda, status report, and message formats.	PM

01 Document Control

Track ownership, review status, approval, and version history.

Attribute	Details
Document Title	Communication Management Plan
Project Name	[Enter project name]
Document Owner	[Project Manager / Communications Lead]
Review Frequency	[Weekly / Biweekly / Monthly / Phase Gate / As Needed]
Status	[Draft / In Review / Approved / Archived]
Official Storage Location	[SharePoint / Google Drive / PMIS / Folder path]

Version	Date	Prepared / Updated By	Reviewed By	Change Summary
0.1	[DD-MMM-YYYY]	[Name]	[Name]	Initial draft created.
0.2	[DD-MMM-YYYY]	[Name]	[Name]	Stakeholder feedback incorporated.
1.0	[DD-MMM-YYYY]	[Name]	[Name]	Approved baseline version.

02 Communication Management Plan Overview

Define why the plan exists and how it will be used.

Purpose: This plan defines the rules, responsibilities, timing, tools, records, and approval path for project communication. It helps the team provide timely, accurate, complete, and useful information to each stakeholder group.

Scope: This plan covers status communication, meetings, reports, issue and risk updates, change notices, decision records, document control, stakeholder feedback, and escalation messages.

Communication principle: Communication should be proactive, audience-specific, decision-ready, and stored in the agreed project repository so that the project works from one trusted source of information.

Planning Element	Template Guidance	Project-Specific Decision
Communication Approach	Use proactive, structured, two-way communication instead of ad hoc messages.	[Describe approach]
Audience Coverage	Identify internal and external stakeholders and their information needs.	[Describe audiences]
Information Quality	Make information accurate, timely, complete, relevant, and decision-ready.	[Define quality rules]
Communication Timing	Match communication frequency to stakeholder need and project urgency.	[Define timing rules]
Communication Ownership	Assign a named owner for each communication item.	[Assign owners]
Records Management	Store approved communications in the agreed project repository.	[Define repository]

03 Communication Objectives and Success Criteria

Set measurable outcomes for project communication.

Objective	Why It Matters	Success Measure	Target
Keep stakeholders informed	Prevents surprise and confusion.	Status reports delivered on time	[e.g., 95%]
Support faster decisions	Reduces approval delays.	Average decision turnaround	[e.g., 3 business days]
Improve issue visibility	Enables early corrective action.	Critical issues escalated within SLA	[e.g., 100%]
Protect information quality	Avoids incorrect decisions.	Reports reviewed before release	[e.g., 100%]
Maintain alignment	Keeps team, sponsor, and client working from the same facts.	Stakeholder satisfaction score	[e.g., 4/5]

☐ Objectives are clear and measurable.	☐ Reporting frequency is realistic.
☐ Stakeholder needs are confirmed.	☐ Decision points are visible.
☐ Feedback process is included.	☐ Communication metrics are easy to track.

04 Stakeholder Communication Requirements

Document each stakeholder group and information need.

Stakeholder / Group	Role in Project	Information Needed	Detail Level	Preferred Channel	Frequency	Notes
Project Sponsor	Approves funding and major decisions	Executive summary, risks, budget, schedule, decisions needed	High	Executive report / meeting	Weekly / Monthly	[Notes]
Client / Customer	Receives deliverables and approves acceptance	Progress, deliverables, changes, issues, acceptance items	Medium / High	Meeting / email	Weekly	[Notes]
Project Manager	Owens integrated delivery	All project communication, risks, issues, decisions	Detailed	PMIS / meetings	Daily	[Notes]
Project Team	Completes work packages	Tasks, priorities, blockers, changes, decisions	Detailed	Team meeting / collaboration tool	Daily / Weekly	[Notes]
Functional Managers	Provide resources and approvals	Resource needs, conflicts, workload, escalations	Medium	Email / meeting	Biweekly	[Notes]
Vendors / Suppliers	Deliver contracted products or services	Scope, schedule, quality expectations, approvals	Medium	Email / portal	Weekly / As needed	[Notes]
PMO / Governance	Oversight and standards	KPIs, compliance, risks, exceptions, lessons learned	Medium	Dashboard / report	Monthly	[Notes]

05 Communication Matrix

The main table: what, who, when, how, owner, and record.

Communication Item	Purpose	Audience	Owner	Method / Channel	Frequency / Timing	Output / Record
Project Kickoff Briefing	Align stakeholders on objectives, scope, roles, and ways of working	Sponsor, client, team, key stakeholders	Project Manager	Meeting + slide deck	Once at initiation	Kickoff deck, attendance, decisions
Daily Standup / Team Sync	Review progress, blockers, priorities, and near-term actions	Project team	Scrum Master / PM	Teams / Zoom / in-person	Daily or 2-3 times weekly	Action list / blockers
Weekly Status Report	Summarize progress, upcoming work, risks, issues, decisions needed	Sponsor, client, PMO, leads	Project Manager	Word / PDF / dashboard link	Weekly	Approved weekly status report
Steering Committee Update	Enable governance decisions and escalation resolution	Steering committee	Sponsor / PM	Formal meeting	Monthly or phase gate	Minutes, decisions, actions
Risk and Issue Update	Communicate new risks, issue status, impacts, response owners	PM, sponsor, workstream leads	Risk / Issue owner	Register + meeting	Weekly / as triggered	Updated risk register and issue log
Change Request Communication	Notify stakeholders of proposed scope, schedule, cost, or quality changes	CCB, sponsor, affected teams	Change Manager / PM	Change request form	As needed	Change request, decision record
Milestone Readiness Notice	Confirm milestone criteria, owners, dependencies, and acceptance path	Team, sponsor, client	PM	Email + meeting	Before each milestone	Readiness checklist
Lessons Learned Session	Capture learning and improvement actions	Team, PMO, selected stakeholders	PM / PMO	Workshop	End of phase / closeout	Lessons learned log

TIP For large projects, maintain separate internal, external, executive, vendor, and change communication matrices.

06 Meeting Management Plan

Define cadence, agenda, minutes, attendance, and action tracking.

Meeting	Purpose	Chair	Participants	Agenda Owner	Frequency	Minutes / Actions Owner
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Meeting	Purpose	Chair	Participants	Agenda Owner	Frequency	Minutes / Actions Owner
Kickoff Meeting	Launch project and agree working model	Sponsor / PM	Core stakeholders	PM	Once	PM
Team Status Meeting	Review progress, blockers, next steps	PM	Project team	PM	Weekly	Project Coordinator
Workstream Review	Review deliverables, dependencies, and technical decisions	Workstream Lead	Workstream members	Lead	Weekly / Biweekly	Lead
Risk and Issue Review	Review top risks, open issues, actions, and escalations	PM	PM, owners, SMEs	PM	Weekly	Risk Manager
Client Review	Review progress, decisions, changes, and acceptance items	PM / Client PM	Client and delivery leads	PM	Weekly / Biweekly	PM
Steering Committee	Review governance KPIs and approve major decisions	Sponsor	Executives, PM, client lead	PMO / PM	Monthly	PMO

Meeting Rule	Standard
Agenda	Send agenda at least [24/48] hours before the meeting.
Attendance	Invite only required decision makers and contributors.
Minutes	Record decisions, action items, owners, due dates, and unresolved questions.
Action Tracking	Update the action log within [1 business day] after the meeting.
No-Show Escalation	Notify the attendee manager when repeated absence affects delivery.
Cancellation Rule	Cancel or shorten meetings when there is no decision, risk, issue, or useful update.

07 Reporting Calendar

Schedule formal communication deliverables and governance reviews.

Report / Event	Reporting Period	Due Date / Timing	Prepared By	Reviewed By	Distribution List	Format
Weekly Status Report	Current week	Every [Friday 3 PM]	PM	Sponsor / PMO	Sponsor, client, leads	Word / PDF
Dashboard Refresh	Current reporting cycle	Every [Monday 10 AM]	PMO Analyst	PM	PMO, sponsor	Dashboard
Monthly Executive Summary	Calendar month	First [business day] of next month	PM	Sponsor	Executives	One-page summary
Financial Update	Month-to-date	Monthly	Cost Controller	PM	Sponsor, finance	Excel / report
Phase Gate Pack	Current phase	[X] days before gate	PM	PMO	Gate board	Pack + checklist
Closure Communication	Final project period	Before formal closeout	PM	Sponsor	All key stakeholders	Email + final report

☐ Report audience is correct.	☐ Report owner is named.
☐ Due dates match governance calendar.	☐ Distribution list is approved.
☐ Sensitive information is classified.	☐ Archived reports are easy to find.

08 Communication Channels and Tools

Define approved tools, usage rules, permissions, and records.

Channel / Tool	Use For	Do Not Use For	Owner / Admin	Record Keeping Rule
Email	Formal notices, approvals, client communication	Long unresolved discussions or urgent emergencies	PM / Team Leads	Save final decisions and approvals to repository
Microsoft Teams / Slack	Quick coordination, blockers, team questions	Formal approvals unless captured separately	PM / IT Admin	Summarize decisions in action or decision log
Project Management System	Tasks, dates, owners, progress, dependencies	Confidential messages outside access permissions	PMO / PM	System remains source of truth for task status
Shared Repository	Approved documents, reports, meeting minutes	Unapproved drafts visible to wrong audience	Document Controller	Use folder and naming convention
Dashboard	KPIs, trends, milestones, risks, financials	Detailed narrative without source data	PMO Analyst	Link dashboard snapshot to reporting period
Phone / In-Person	Urgent issues, sensitive conversation, conflict resolution	Unrecorded decisions	Relevant owner	Record outcome in minutes, decision log, or issue log

Communication Type	Recommended Channel	Response Time Target	Backup Channel
Emergency / Critical issue	Phone + urgent chat	[0-2 hours]	Escalation email
Decision request	Email + decision log	[3 business days]	Steering committee
Routine task clarification	PMIS comment / chat	[1 business day]	Team meeting
Formal approval	Email / approval workflow	[As governance requires]	Change board
Confidential update	Restricted meeting / secure document	[As agreed]	Sponsor call

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Escalation Process

Define urgency levels, triggers, owners, and decision paths.

Priority	Trigger	Initial Owner	Response Target	Escalate To	Required Communication
P1 Critical	Safety, legal, security, major outage, severe budget/schedule impact	PM / Incident Owner	[0-2 hours]	Sponsor / Steering Committee	Phone + urgent written summary
P2 High	High impact risk, blocked milestone, unresolved decision, client dissatisfaction	PM / Workstream Lead	[1 business day]	Sponsor / Functional Manager	Email + issue log update
P3 Medium	Potential delay, dependency risk, repeated minor issue	Workstream Lead	[2-3 business days]	PM	Status report + action log
P4 Low	Routine clarification, minor update, normal follow-up	Task Owner	[5 business days]	Workstream Lead	PMIS / chat update

Escalation Step	Action	Output
1. Identify	Confirm issue, impact, urgency, and affected stakeholders.	Issue / risk / decision record
2. Notify	Inform required owner and audience using approved channel.	Notification sent
3. Analyze	Assess options, impact, recommendation, and deadline.	Recommendation summary
4. Decide	Obtain decision from authorized role or governance group.	Decision log update
5. Communicate	Communicate decision, action owners, deadlines, and impacts.	Approved update
6. Close	Confirm completion and archive communication record.	Closed issue / decision

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Information Classification and Confidentiality

Protect sensitive project information.

Classification	Examples	Allowed Audience	Approval Before Sharing	Storage Rule
Public	Approved press release, public project announcement	External public audience	Sponsor / Communications	Public channel after approval
Internal	Team updates, internal process notes	Project team and internal stakeholders	PM / Workstream Lead	Internal repository
Restricted	Budget details, contract terms, risk exposure, personnel matters	Named roles only	Sponsor / Legal / PMO	Restricted folder
Confidential	Legal, security, sensitive client data	Authorized individuals only	Sponsor / Legal / Security	Secure repository with access log

☐ Sensitive content marked before sending.	☐ Distribution list checked before release.
☐ Client data shared only through approved tools.	☐ Approvals stored with date and approver.
☐ Outdated versions archived or removed.	☐ Confidential decisions recorded in restricted logs.

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Communication Workflow and Information Flow

Show how information moves from trigger to official record.

Step	Description	Responsible Role	Control Point
1. Need Identified	A stakeholder need, project event, risk, issue, change, or decision triggers communication.	Requester / PM	Confirm business reason
2. Message Prepared	Owner drafts the message using approved facts, status, and source data.	Communication Owner	Check accuracy
3. Review and Approval	Reviewer approves content, audience, timing, and classification.	PM / Sponsor / SME	Approval captured

Step	Description	Responsible Role	Control Point
4. Distribution	Message is shared using approved channel and distribution list.	Communication Owner	Sent record retained
5. Feedback Captured	Questions, concerns, decisions, and actions are logged.	PM / Owner	Update action / issue / decision log
6. Record Stored	Final communication and evidence are saved to the official repository.	Document Controller	Version and folder check
7. Effectiveness Reviewed	PM reviews response time, clarity, stakeholder satisfaction, and open actions.	PM / PMO	Improve plan as needed

CONTROL For urgent situations, escalation may begin before full documentation, but the owner must document the decision and outcome afterwards.

12 Roles and Responsibilities

Assign accountability for communication planning and delivery.

Role	Communication Responsibilities	Key Outputs
Project Sponsor	Approves communication strategy, executive messaging, escalations, and major decisions.	Approvals, executive updates, escalation decisions
Project Manager	Owns the plan, matrix, stakeholder alignment, reporting, issue escalation, and updates.	Plan, status reports, minutes, logs
Communications Lead	Creates message plans, supports stakeholder engagement, drafts formal announcements.	Communication drafts, audience messages
PMO	Provides standards, governance reporting, quality review, and audit support.	Templates, dashboards, governance packs
Workstream Lead	Communicates workstream progress, blockers, risks, and decisions.	Workstream updates, action items
Risk / Issue Owner	Communicates risk or issue status, response actions, impacts, and escalation needs.	Risk updates, issue updates
Document Controller	Manages version control, storage, naming, access, and archiving.	Document register, repository records

Activity	Sponsor	PM	Comms Lead	PMO	Workstream Lead	Doc Controller
Approve communication plan	A	R	C	C	I	I
Prepare weekly status report	I	A/R	C	C	C	I
Maintain communication matrix	I	A/R	R	C	C	I
Escalate critical issues	A	R	C	C	R	I
Publish meeting minutes	I	A	C	I	R	R
Archive formal records	I	A	I	C	I	R

13 Monitoring, Feedback, and Plan Updates

Control communication effectiveness during delivery.

Review this plan at planned intervals and whenever stakeholders, project phase, risk exposure, governance expectations, tools, or reporting requirements change.

Metric	Definition	Data Source	Review Frequency	Target	Corrective Action
Report Timeliness	Reports issued by agreed due date	Reporting calendar	Weekly	[Target]	Adjust owners or schedule
Action Closure Rate	Actions closed by due date	Action log	Weekly	[Target]	Escalate overdue actions
Decision Turnaround	Average time from request to decision	Decision log	Monthly	[Target]	Clarify decision owner
Stakeholder Satisfaction	Feedback score or qualitative sentiment	Survey / interviews	Monthly / Phase	[Target]	Revise message format
Communication Defects	Corrections, missed audiences, incorrect data	Issue log / QA notes	Monthly	[Target]	Improve review process

Plan Update Trigger	Required Action	Approval Needed?
New stakeholder added	Update stakeholder requirements and communication matrix.	PM approval

Plan Update Trigger	Required Action	Approval Needed?
Project phase changes	Adjust frequency, audience, reports, and meeting cadence.	PM / Sponsor as needed
Major project change	Update affected communication items and escalation path.	Sponsor / governance approval
Communication issue identified	Record root cause and corrective action.	PM approval
Tool or repository changes	Update channel rules and record keeping instructions.	PMO / IT approval

14 Communication Log

Record important communication events, decisions, and follow-ups.

ID	Date	Type	Sender	Audience	Summary	Action / Decision	Owner	Due Date	Status
COM-001	[Date]	Status Report	[Name]	[Audience]	[Summary]	[Action]	[Owner]	[Date]	Open
COM-002	[Date]	Meeting	[Name]	[Audience]	[Summary]	[Decision]	[Owner]	[Date]	Open
COM-003	[Date]	Escalation	[Name]	[Audience]	[Summary]	[Action]	[Owner]	[Date]	Closed
COM-004	[Date]	Change Notice	[Name]	[Audience]	[Summary]	[Decision]	[Owner]	[Date]	Open
COM-005	[Date]	Client Update	[Name]	[Audience]	[Summary]	[Action]	[Owner]	[Date]	Open

15 Appendix A - Weekly Project Status Report Format

Reusable report structure for weekly communication.

Status Field	Update
Overall Status	[Green / Amber / Red]
Executive Summary	[Brief summary of progress, achievements, concerns, and decisions needed]
Completed This Period	[Completed deliverables or milestones]
Planned Next Period	[Upcoming activities and target dates]
Schedule Status	[On track / delayed / recovery plan]
Budget Status	[On budget / variance / forecast]
Top Risks	[Risk ID, description, impact, owner, response]
Top Issues	[Issue ID, description, impact, owner, due date]
Decisions Needed	[Decision, owner, required date, impact if delayed]
Support Needed	[Sponsor / client / management support required]

16 Appendix B - Meeting Agenda and Minutes Format

Reusable structure for project meetings.

Meeting Field	Details
Meeting Name	[Enter meeting name]
Date / Time / Location	[Enter details]
Chair	[Name]
Attendees	[Names / roles]
Agenda Items	1. [Item] 2. [Item] 3. [Item]
Key Discussion Points	[Summary]
Decisions Made	[Decision, approver, date]
Action Items	[Action, owner, due date, status]
Risks / Issues Raised	[Risk or issue details]
Next Meeting	[Date / time / purpose]

17 Appendix C - Message Templates

Copy-ready placeholders for formal communication.

Scenario	Recommended Message Structure
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Scenario	Recommended Message Structure
Decision Request	Context: [brief context] Decision needed: [decision] Options: [option 1 / option 2] Recommendation: [recommended option] Required by: [date] Impact if delayed: [impact]
Issue Escalation	Issue: [description] Impact: [scope / schedule / cost / quality] Action taken: [summary] Support needed: [decision or resource] Owner: [name] Deadline: [date]
Change Notice	Change requested: [summary] Reason: [reason] Impact: [impact] Approval path: [approver] Next step: [next action] Effective date: [date]
Milestone Notice	Milestone: [name] Target date: [date] Readiness status: [status] Open items: [items] Acceptance owner: [name] Required action: [action]

18 Appendix D - Quality Review Checklist

Use before issuing or approving the plan.

☐ All stakeholder groups are listed.	☐ Each communication item has an owner.
☐ Frequency and timing are realistic.	☐ Urgent escalation path is clear.
☐ Confidentiality rules are defined.	☐ Reporting calendar is aligned with governance dates.
☐ Meeting minutes and action tracking process is defined.	☐ Communication records storage location is defined.
☐ Plan update triggers are documented.	☐ Approval signatures are completed.

19 Approval Signatures

Confirm review and acceptance.

Role	Name	Signature	Date	Approval Comments
Project Sponsor	[Name]			
Project Manager	[Name]			
Client Representative	[Name]			
PMO / Governance Lead	[Name]			

20 References and Guidance Basis

Sources reviewed while preparing this editable template.

The template structure is based on recognized project communication planning practices: stakeholder needs, information distribution, timing and frequency, communication ownership, feedback loops, records management, and monitoring.

Source	Relevant Guidance Used	URL
Project Management Institute	Project communication management includes planning, creating, distributing, storing, monitoring, and controlling project information.	https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/one-solution-for-project-success-11130
Project Management Institute	Stakeholder analysis supports accurate, timely, complete, right-format project information.	https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/proactive-communication-project-managers-8228
Project Management Institute	Team communication plans should define stakeholders, needs, channels, response times, priorities, timing, and review.	https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/managing-communications-effectively-efficiently-5916
ProjectManagement.com	Communication plans help make project communication deliberate, relevant, effective, assigned, and scheduled.	https://www.projectmanagement.com/deliverables/1945/communications-plan
Smartsheet	Common communication templates include management approach, constraints, roles, meeting guidelines, stakeholder management, communication matrix, logs, and flow charts.	https://www.smartsheet.com/content/project-communication-templates

