# PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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# Overview

- Project Communications Management
  - Communication Skills
  - Communication Technology
  - Communications Management – Process, Types, Methods, Interfaces, Planning
  - Managing Team Communications: Timing, Content, Choosing Effective Channels
  - Managing Communications with the Sponsor
  - Upward Communication Filtering and ''Good News''
- Human Resources Management
  - Project Manager's Tasks
- Project Team:
  - Members
  - Balancing a Team Using Learning Styles
  - Team Deployment Strategy
  - Effective Project Teams
  - Team Member Responsibilities
  - Establishing Team Operating Rules
    - Solving a Problem
    - Decision Making Styles
    - Conflict Resolution
    - Consensus Building
    - Brainstorming Method
  - Challenges to Teams - Work Styles, Domineering Members, Quiet Members

# Project Communications Management

- A good communications management process will have provisions in the process that answer the following questions:
  - Who are the project stakeholders?
  - What do they need to know about the project?
  - How should their needs be met?

- **"You can't *not* communicate."**

# Who Are the Project Stakeholders?

- Any person or group that has a vested interest in the project is a stakeholder.
  - Those who are required to provide some input to the project affect the project
  - Those who are affected by the project

- The project manager needs to be aware of all stakeholders and communicate appropriately to them.

- How should the project manager meet stakeholders' needs depends on the purpose of the communication:

  - If it's to inform, there will be many alternatives to choose from.
  - If it's to get feedback, you have fewer alternatives from which to choose.

# What Do They Need to Know about the Project?

- There will be a range of concerns and questions coming from every stakeholder group. Some of the more commonly occurring are as follows:
  - What input will I be required to provide the project team?
  - How can I make my needs known?
  - When will the project be done?
  - How will it affect me?
  - Will I be replaced?
  - How will I learn how to use the deliverables?

# Communication Skills

- Listening actively and effectively;
- Questioning and probing ideas and situations to ensure better understanding;
- Educating to increase team's knowledge so that they can be more effective;
- Fact-finding to identify or confirm information;
- Setting and managing expectations;
- Persuading a person, a team, or an organization to perform an action;
- Motivating to provide encouragement or reassurance;
- Coaching to improve performance and achieve desired results;
- Negotiating to achieve mutually acceptable agreements between parties;
- Resolving conflict to prevent disruptive impacts; and
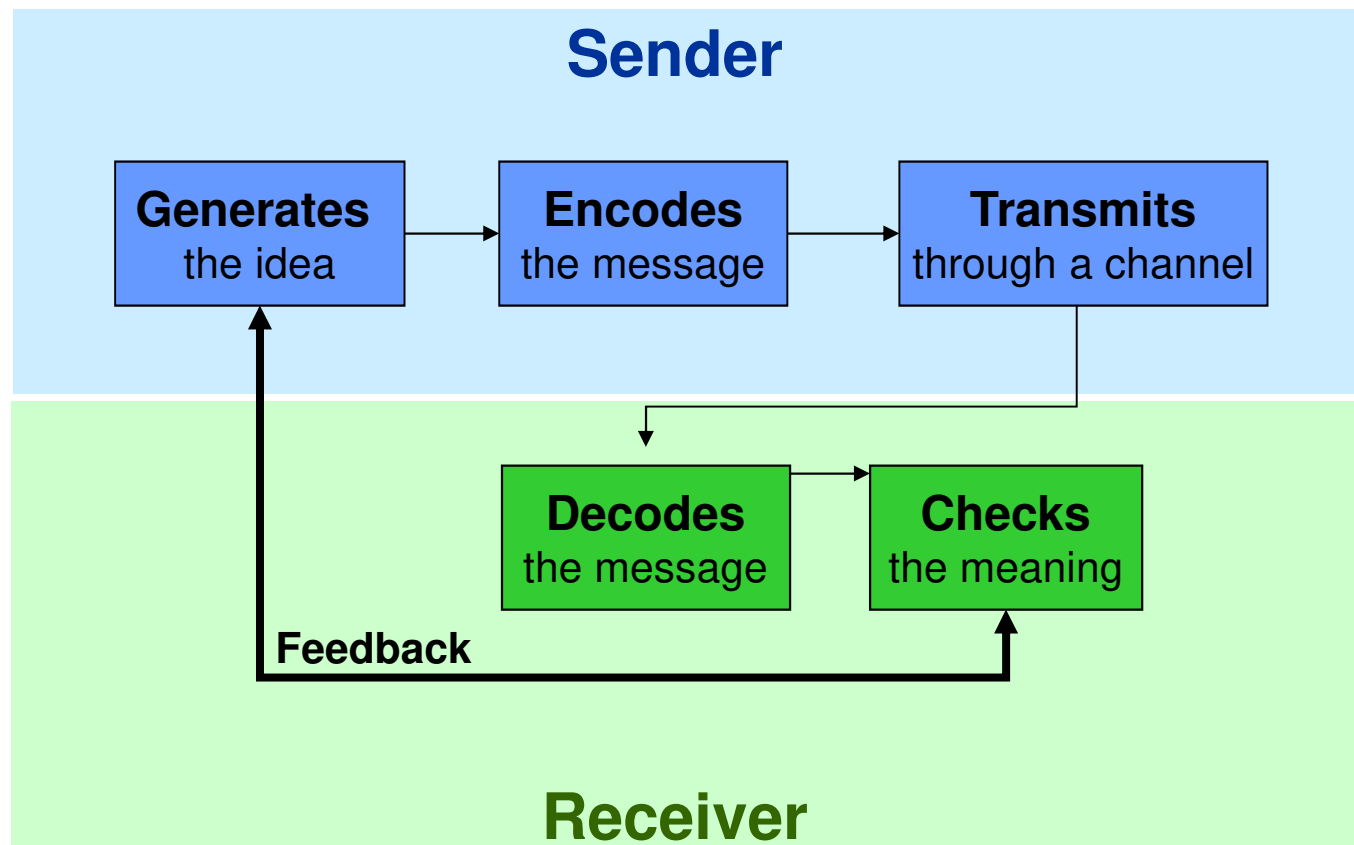- Summarizing, recapping, and identifying the next steps.

# Communications Management – Definition

- Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.

    – transmitted properly
    – message sent is message received
    – understood by the receiver
    – accepted by the receiver
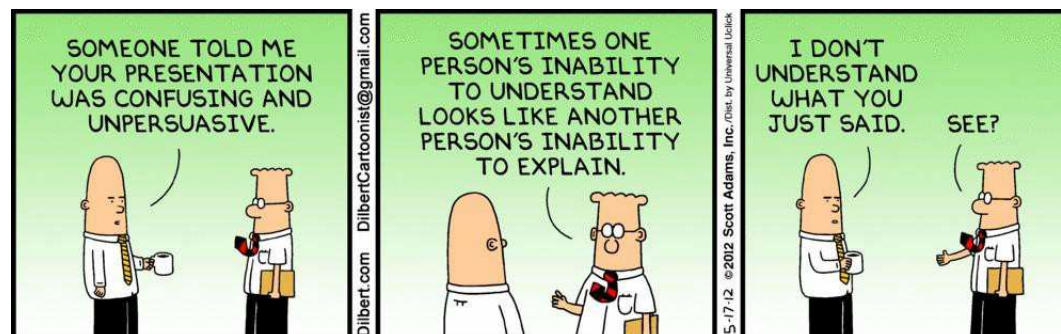
# Communications Management – The Process

# Tappers & Listeners

- Can you guess the song?

# Communication Challenges

*Between what I think,*
*What I want to say,*
*What I think I am saying,*
*What I am saying,*
*What you want to hear,*
*What you hear,*
*What you think you understand,*
*What you want to understand and what you do understand,*
*There are at least nine possibilities of misunderstanding each other!!*

*Sylviane Herpin*

# Communication Technology

- Factors that can affect the choice of communication technology:
  - Urgency of the need for information
  - Availability of technology
  - Ease of Use
  - Project environment - determine
    - if the team will meet and operate on a face-to-face basis or in a virtual environment;
    - whether they will be located in one or multiple time zones;
    - whether they will use multiple languages for communication;
    - whether there are any other project environmental factors, such as culture, which may affect communications.
  - Sensitivity and confidentiality of the information

# Communications Management – Types

- One-to-one
  - Conversations (in person and on the phone)
  - Meetings
- Electronic
  - Email messages
  - Web sites
  - Databases
- Written
  - Memos
  - Letters
  - Documents
  - Reports

**Two-way**

**One-way**

# Communications Management – Methods

- Interactive communication
  - Between two or more parties performing a multidirectional exchange of information.
  - The most efficient way to ensure a common understanding
  - E.g. meetings, phone calls, instant messaging, video conferencing, etc.

- Push communication
  - Sent to specific recipients who need to receive the information.
  - Ensures that the information is distributed but does not ensure that it actually reached or was understood by the intended audience.
  - E.g. letters, memos, reports, emails, faxes, voice mails, blogs, press releases, etc.

- Pull communication
  - Used for very large volumes of information, or for very large audiences
  - Requires the recipients to access the communication content at their own discretion.
  - E.g. intranet sites, e-learning, lessons learned databases, knowledge repositories, etc.

# Communications Management – Interfaces
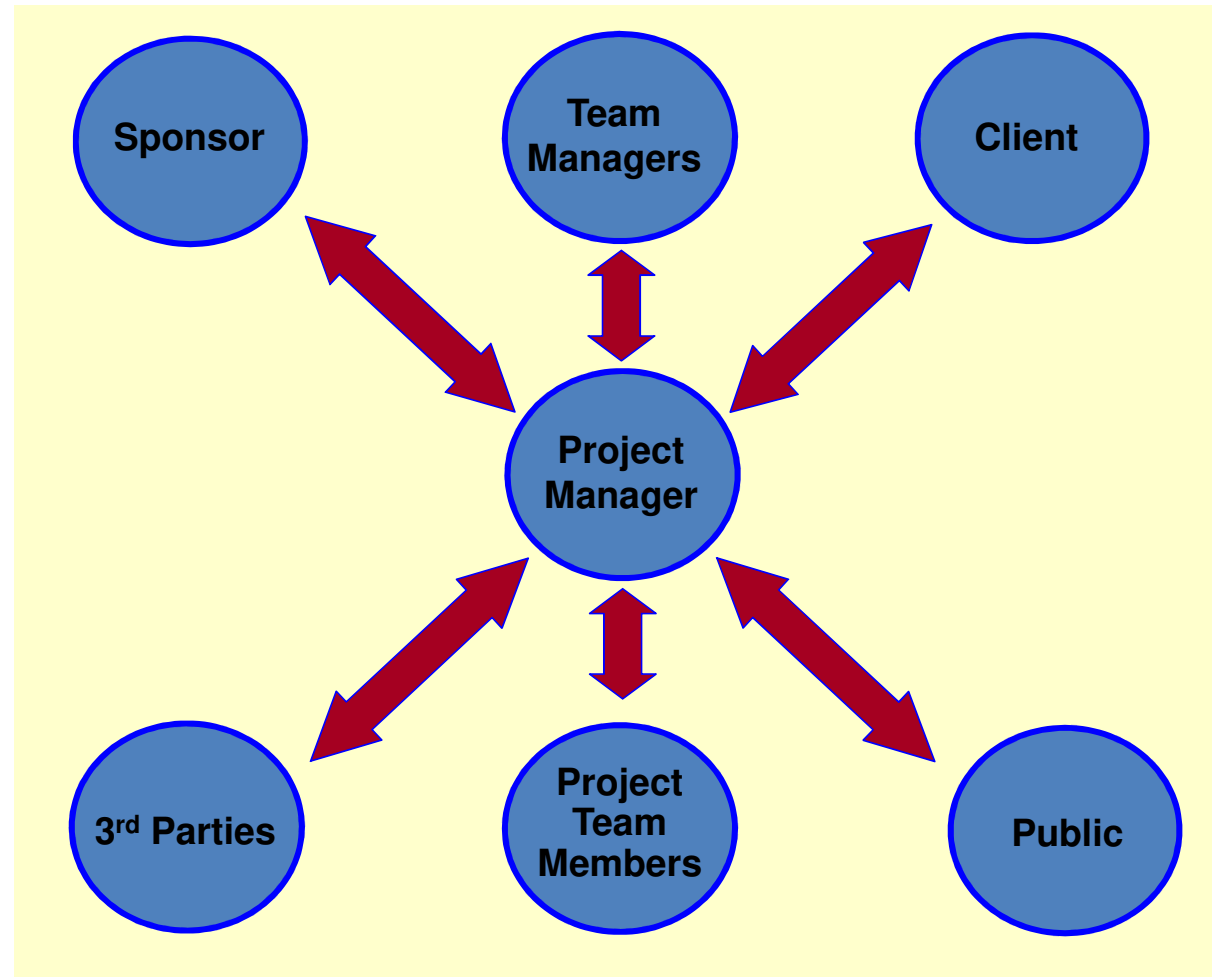
# Communications Management - Planning

- Who needs what information, and who is authorized to access that information?

- When they will need the information?

- Where the information should be stored?

- What format the information should be stored in?

- How the information can be retrieved?

- Whether time zone, language barriers, and cross-cultural considerations need to be taken into account?

# Managing Team Communications

- What the project manager has to do is examine the needs of the project team and make sure that communication occurs at the correct time and with the correct information.

  - Timing

  - Content

  - Choosing Effective Channels

# Timing

- If the information comes too far in advance of the action needed, it will be forgotten.
  - Understand what the team members need to know and when they need to know it in order to carry out their assignments.
  - Where does this information come from? → Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)
    - Each team member has to be alerted to upcoming tasks and needs to be in communication with the other team members whose tasks take precedence over their own.

- When the information needed is passed to the project team members after they need it
  - Remember that project team members may need a few days to assimilate the information you give them.

# Content

- Communicating the correct information.

- Understand what the project team members need to know to be successful.

  – If you don't know what information the team members need, ask them.

  – If the team members don't know, sit down with them and find out what sort of information needs to be given.

# Choosing Effective Channels

How to get the information to the team members

- Face-to-face, in-person meeting
  - usually the best way to communicate
  - can get immediate feedback, can see the person's reaction to information

- Videoconferencing
  - less expensive than travelling
  - not the same as in-person, face-to-face communication

- E-mail
  - It is fast, you can read e-mail at your own speed. However, e-mail does have the following drawbacks:
  - Volume
    - the e-mail you sent isn't the single most visible e-mail on the recipient's list
    - Manage the frequency of your e-mail use and the distribution list for your e-mails
  - Tone
    - the tone conveyed in your e-mail message may not be the one that you would use if you had voice communication
  - Quality—It's still difficult to send clear information to others in written form.
  - Written materials — Keep your writing short and clear, which will benefit the project team.

- Phone— can get immediate feedback and exchange ideas quickly.

# Managing Communications with the Sponsor

- Ask the sponsor what they want to know and when they want to know it.

- Make sure the sponsor gets information regularly.

# Upward Communication Filtering and ''Good News''

- The good news syndrome: a strange form of distorting information
  - A good-news filter is something that puts a positive spin on everything, often at the expense of accuracy.

- There are two types of upward communication filtering:
  - Spin the information or leave out information so that the communication looks like nothing but good news
  - Withholding information

# Communicating with Other Stakeholders

- Make sure all people who have an interest in the project are informed

- The other stakeholders may be
  - Line managers of people on the team
  - Consumers who are going to be involved in user acceptance tests.

- Send them copies of the meeting notes from your status meetings so they're aware of the project's progress.

# Human Resources Management - 1

- Organize, manage, and lead the project team

- Process includes identifying and documenting
  - Project roles
  - Responsibilities
  - Required skills
  - Reporting relationships
  - Creating a staffing management plan

# Human Resources Management - 2

- Project Team
  - Developer co-manager
  - Client co-manager
  - Core Team
  - Task Leaders
  - Team Members

- Skills and Competencies
  - Leading, communicating, negotiating
  - Delegating, motivating, coaching, mentoring
  - Team building, dealing with conflict,
  - Performance appraisal, recruitment, retention, labor relations, health & safety regulations

# Human Resources Management - 3

- Projects as Motivators
  - Achievement
  - Recognition
  - Advancement and Growth
  - Responsibility
  - Work Itself

- Hygiene Factors
  - Company Policy
  - Administrative Practices
  - Working Conditions
  - Technical Supervision
  - Interpersonal Relations
  - Job Security
  - Salary

# Human Resources Management – Project Manager

- The motivators that are directly controlled or influenced by actions and behaviors of the project manager regarding the work that the team member will be asked to do

  – Challenge
  – Recognition
  – Job Design
  – Skill Variety
  – Task Identity
  – Task Significance
  – Autonomy
  – Feedback

# What is a Project Team?

- A project team is a group of professionals committed to **achieving common objectives**, who **work well together** and who relate directly and openly with one another to **get things done**.

- Project team membership
  - Co-Project manager – developer (chosen before Scoping)
  - Co-Project manager – client (chosen before Scoping)
  - Core team (chosen before Planning)
  - Developer team (chosen before Launching)
  - Client team (chosen before Launching)
  - Contracted team (chosen after Launching)

# Acquire Project Team

- Process of confirming human resource availability and obtaining the team necessary to complete project activities

- The project manager may or may not have direct control over team member selection.

- When the performing organization is unable to provide the staff needed to complete a project, the required services may be acquired from outside sources.

# Characteristics of the Core Team

- Commitment
- Shared responsibility
- Flexibility
- Task-oriented
- Ability to work within schedules and constraints
- Willingness for trust and mutual support
- Team-oriented
- Open-minded
- Ability to work across structure and authorities
- Ability to use project management tools

# Client Team Members

- Must understand their business unit processes

- Must be able to make decisions and commitments for their business unit

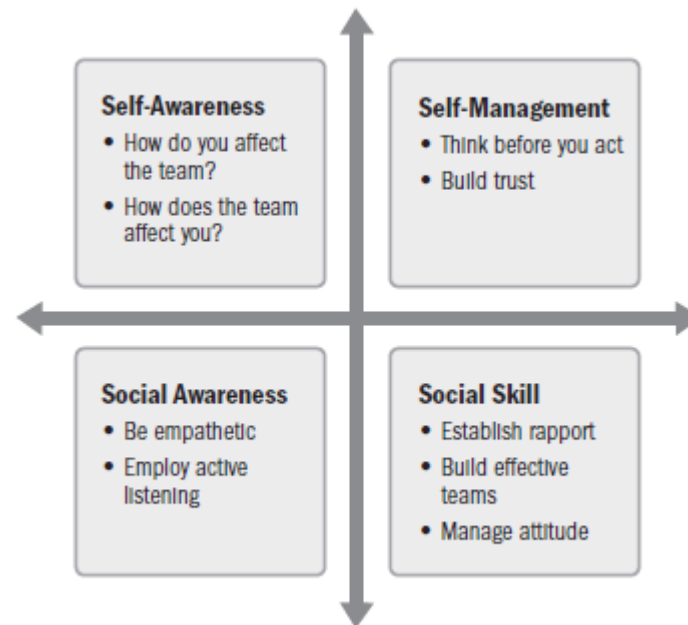- Project manager can't control who will be assigned by the client.

# Contract Team Members - Implications

- Little variance in times they are available
  - →Their tasks must remain on schedule.

- Know how their tasks relate to the project

- Commitment can be a problem

- Quality of work may be poor

- May require more supervision than core team

# Emotional Intelligence

- Since projects are undertaken by people and for people, emotional intelligence—the ability to understand one's self and effectively sustain working relationships with others—is critical in project team environments.



**Self-Awareness**
- How do you affect the team?
- How does the team affect you?

**Self-Management**
- Think before you act
- Build trust

**Social Awareness**
- Be empathetic
- Employ active listening

**Social Skill**
- Establish rapport
- Build effective teams
- Manage attitude

# Balancing a Team

- Balance is a critical success factor.

- Learning styles of team members can be used to balance:
  - Assimilating
  - Diverging
  - Accommodating
  - Converging

- Thinking styles, conflict resolution styles, and skills and competencies are also important.

# Learning Styles - Assimilating

- Excel at collecting and representing data in crisp logical form

- Focused on ideas and concepts, rather than people

- Form models that explain the situation from a larger perspective

- More interested in logic than practical value

- Not results-oriented people
  - E.g. technical fields, such as software developers.

# Learning Styles - Diverging

- Like to look at alternatives and view the situation from a variety of perspectives

- Rather observe than take action

- Like brainstorming

- Have a broad range of interests

- Like gathering and analyzing information

- Outside-of-the-box thinkers

# Learning Styles - Accommodating

- Problem solvers
  - Results-oriented and want to put things into practice
  - Strong at implementation and hands-on tasks

- Adaptive and can easily change with the circumstance

- People persons and peacekeepers
  - Rely on people for input, rather than on any technical analysis

- Good team players

- Action-oriented and more spontaneous than logical

→ Strong sense of teamwork to facilitate the coordination of team members.

# Learning Styles - Converging

- Like to assemble information in order to solve problems
    - Take concepts, models, and ideas and turn them into practical use

- Solution finders but not the solution implementers
    - Good at picking the best option among a number of alternatives

- Not particularly people-oriented and would rather work with technical tasks and problems

- Results-oriented team members

- Drive the team into action by helping it focus on which approach to a situation is best and then mobilizing the team into action

# Team Balance Example

- Suppose you have a team that is loaded with convergers and does not have a single diverger among its members.

    - No one on the team to encourage looking for alternatives (the role of the diverger)

    - Have a rush to judgment, or ''group think,'' as the convergers press the team into action

    - A single approach to a problem is presented

    - Convergers on the team aggressively suggest that the team go forward with the single proposed solution without even considering whether there is an alternative.

        - Teams involved in high-technology projects are likely to display this behavior.

# Developing a Team Deployment Strategy

- Having balance on the team in all of the characteristics is a goal not likely to be reached.

- The project manager needs to determine which team members have a greater likelihood of success on which types of work assignments.

- After the team is assembled and each member's characteristics are assessed
  - Discover the gaps (imbalance)

  - Identify the high-risk areas that are not covered by at least one team member who can deal with those types of risks
    - Put a development plan in place for selected members of the team

# Develop Project Team

- Process of improving competencies, team member interaction, and overall team environment to enhance project performance

- Project manager's job and responsibilities:
  - identify, build, maintain, motivate, lead, and inspire project teams to achieve high team performance and to meet the project's objectives
  - create an environment that facilitates teamwork
  - **motivate the team** by providing challenges and opportunities, timely feedback and support as needed, and by recognizing and rewarding good performance
  - **capitalize on cultural differences**, focus on developing and sustaining the project team throughout the project life cycle, and promote working together interdependently in a climate of mutual trust
  - **improving knowledge and skills** of team members to increase their ability to complete project deliverables, while lowering costs, reducing schedules, and improving quality
  - improving feelings of trust and agreement to raise morale, lower conflict, and increase team work
  - **creating** a dynamic, cohesive, and collaborative **team culture** to
    1. improve individual and team productivity, team spirit, and cooperation
    2. allow cross training and mentoring between team members to share knowledge and expertise
  - **recognizing and rewarding** desirable behavior

# What makes a Project Team effective?

- Quality
- Flexibility
- Productivity
- Coordination & Cooperation
- Member satisfaction
- Member development
- Possesses needed skills and competencies

# Where Project Teams Can Improve

- Work methods and procedures
- Knows appropriate technology
- Associate attraction and retention
- Staffing flexibility
- Service and product quality use
- Rate of output
- Decision making
- Reduced staff support level
- Reduced supervision

# Team Member Responsibilities

- Open communication
- Good listening skills
- Shared goals
- Positive outlook
- Creativity
- Respect for others
- Growth and learning
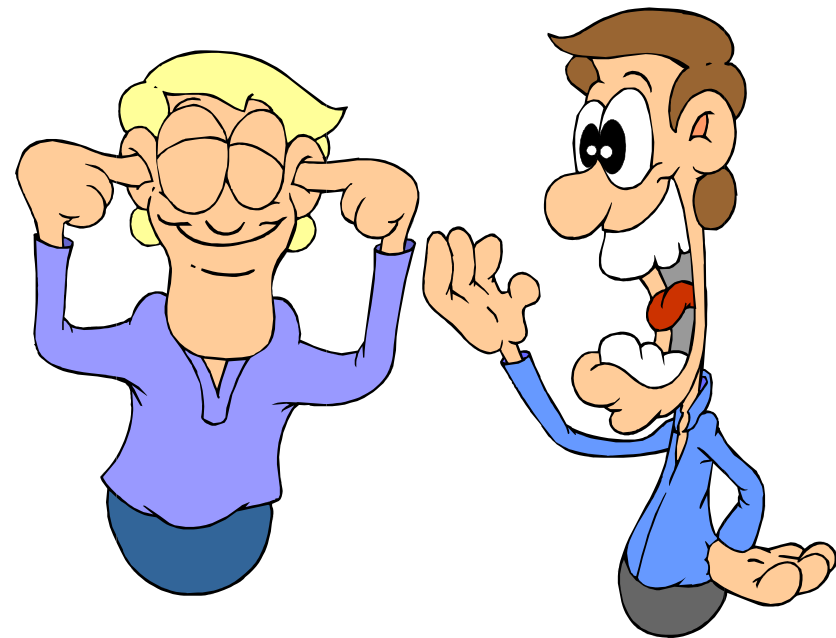
# Establishing Team Operating Rules

- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Consensus building
- Brainstorming
- Team meetings

# Five Steps to Solving a Problem

1. Define the problem & the owner
2. Gather relevant data and analyze causes
3. Generate ideas
4. Evaluate and prioritize ideas
5. Develop an action plan

Source: Creative Problem Solving and Opportunity Finding

J. Daniel Couger, 1995

# 1. Define the Problem & the Owner

- ## Scoping step in which the team members
  - Define the problem
  - Desired results that a solution will provide

- ## Assimilator learning style
  - Look at the problem independently of any focus on people and try to present the problem at the conceptual level and put it into a logical framework.
  - Collect and concisely report data

# 2. Gather Relevant Data and Analyze Causes

- Team can identify and specify the data elements
    - to further understand the problem
    - provide a foundation for possible solutions

- Assimilator learning style

# 3. Generate Ideas

- Begins with a brainstorming session
  - The team should identify as many solutions as possible.
  - Think outside the box and look for creative and innovative ways to approach a solution.

- Diverger learning style
  - Look at the problem from a number of perspectives
  - Collect data in order to generate ideas
  - Not interested in generating solutions

# 4. Evaluate and Prioritize Ideas

- Narrow the list of possible solutions down to the one or two solutions that will actually be planned
  - Develop criteria for selecting the best solution ideas
  - Develop metrics for assessing advantages and disadvantages
  - Use metrics to prioritize the solutions

- Converger learning style
  - Take a variety of ideas and turn them into solutions
  - Establish criteria for evaluating solutions
  - Make recommendations for action

# 5. Develop an Action Plan

- Build a plan to implement the solution

- A whole-team exercise

- Accommodator learning style
  - Put a plan in place for delivering the recommended solution
  - Implement the solution

# Decision Making is Pervasive

- What has to be done and where? <span style="color:red">Scope</span>

- Why should it be done? <span style="color:red">Justification</span>

- How well must it be done? <span style="color:red">Quality</span>

- When is it required? In what sequence? <span style="color:red">Schedule</span>

- How much will it cost? <span style="color:red">Budget/Cost</span>

- What are the uncertainties? <span style="color:red">Risk</span>

- Who should do the job? <span style="color:red">Human Resources</span>

- How should people be organized into teams? <span style="color:red">Communication/Interpersonal Skills</span>

- How shall we know? <span style="color:red">Information Dissemination/Communication</span>

# Decision Making Styles

- Directive
  - The person with the authority makes the decision for all team members.
  - Used when a decision is needed immediately
  - Drawbacks:
    - The only information available comes from the decision maker, which may be incorrect or incomplete.
    - Those who disagree or were left out of the decision may be resistant or unwilling to carry it out.

- Participative
  - Everyone on the team contributes
  - Commitment and support will be much stronger
  - Benefit to team building— empowerment of the team

- Consultative
  - Combines the best of the other two approaches.
  - The person in authority makes the final decision after consulting with all members to get their input and ideas.
  - This approach is participative at the input stage but directive at the point of decision making.
  - Rather than having to involve the entire team, the project manager can decide whose input should be sought and then make the decision based on that input.
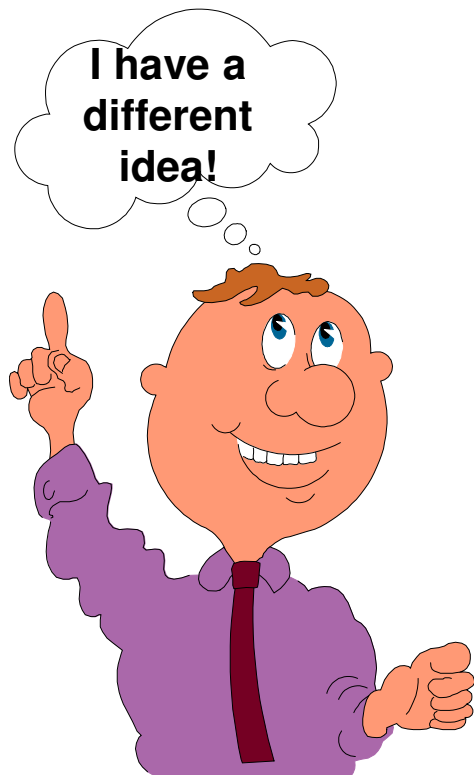
# The Six Phases of the Decision-Making Process

| PHASE | DESCRIPTION | LEARNING STYLE |
|---|---|---|
| Phase I: Situation | Discovery phase. The team investigates, discusses, clarifies, and defines the situation. It is important for definition the team to understand the root causes and evidence that led to the need for a decision. | Assimilator |
| Phase II: Situation | Continuation of Phase I. Characterized by brain-storming and searching for new ideas and alternatives decision for resolving the situation, which should lead to generation better options for the decision. Above all, the team needs to avoid a rush to judgment. | Diverger |
| Phase III: Ideas to action | Define the criteria for evaluating the alternative decisions. This involves identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. Whatever approach is used, the result should be a ranking of alternatives from most desirable to least desirable. | Converger |
| Phase IV: Decision | Begins once the alternative is chosen. This is the planning phase for the project team. The team action plan determines tasks, resources, and timelines that are required to implement the decision. This phase requires a concerted effort to obtain buy-in from all affected parties. | Converger |
| Phase V: Decision | Learning opportunity for the project team. The team identifies what did and did not work, as well as areas evaluation in which it can improve and how to do so. The value planning of this discussion lies in the team's willingness to be honest and straightforward with one another. | Accommodator |
| Phase VI: Evaluation | Focuses on the quality of results. The team evaluates the situation: Was the situation improved satisfactorily, of outcome or will another round be required? Was the situation and process defined correctly, or is revision required? Did the process work as expected, or will it need adjustment for the next attempt? | Assimilator |

# Conflict Resolution



Conflict is good.

Conflict is bad.

# Conflict Resolution



Assertive
| Competing (Domination) | Collaborating (Integration) |

Compromising (Sharing)

| Avoiding (Neglect) | Accommodating (Appeasement) |
Nonassertive

Uncooperative — Cooperative

- Three conflict resolution styles:

  - Avoidant—do or agree to anything to avoid a direct confrontation even when opposed to it.

  - Combative—seek confrontation.
    - Pros — test the team's thinking before making the decision.
    - Cons — raise the level of stress and tension

  - Collaborative—team looks for win-win opportunities and seeks a common ground as the basis for moving ahead to a solution.
    - Constructive, not destructive.
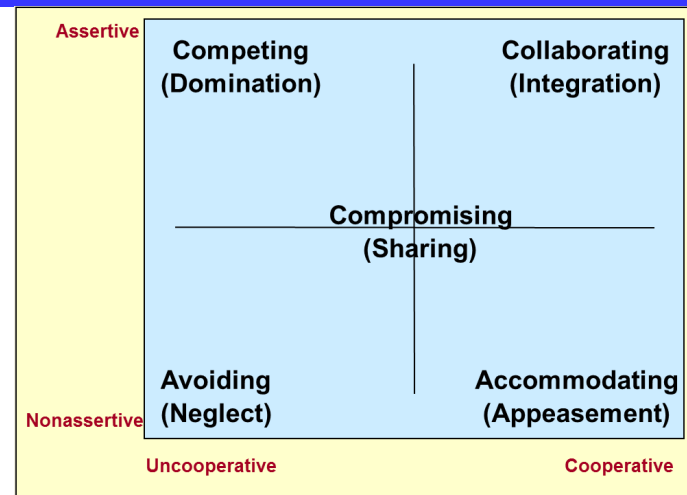
# Consensus Building

- The agreement is reached through discussion, whereby each participant reaches a point when he or she has no serious disagreement with the decision that is about to be made.

- Be careful--a consensus decision that equally satisfies all parties may be a bad decision after all.

# Brainstorming Method

- Assemble individuals with knowledge of problem area
- Throw any/all ideas on the table
- Continue until no new ideas are uncovered
- Discuss items on the list
- Solutions begin to emerge
- Test each idea with an open mind

- Look for solutions that no individual could identify but the group may identify.

# Challenges to Teams - Work Styles

- Task responsibility
  - personal or shared responsibility

- Work method
  - work alone or collaboratively

- Design and development practices
  - rigid compliance to process
  - adaptive to situation

- Testing preferences
  - test as you go or at the end

- Work atmosphere
  - background music or silence

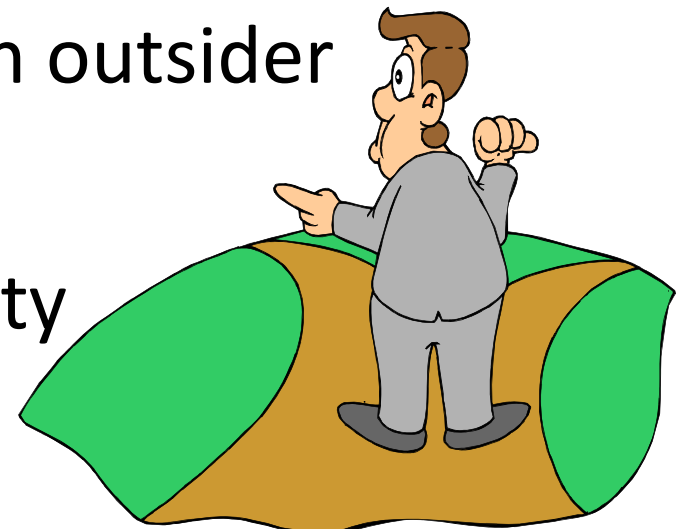- Work schedule
  - early or late

# Challenges to Teams - Domineering Members

- Forces the team to follow the domineering member's direction

- Stifles creative ideas and solutions

- Wastes time

# Challenges to Teams - Quiet Members

- Good ideas are lost to the team

- Obstacle to good team formation

- Viewed as disinterested and an outsider

- Compromising your productivity

# Celebrating Success

- Recognition for project team

- Don't pass up an opportunity to show the team your appreciation.

# Summary

- ''You can't not communicate.''
  - Communication should be transmitted properly, message sent vs. message received, understood and accepted by the receiver

- Project Manager needs to have communication skills
  - Communications Management – Process, Types, Methods, Interfaces, Planning
  - Managing Team Communications: Timing, Content, Choosing Effective Channels
  - Beware of ''Good News' Syndrome'

- Human Resources Management: Organize, manage, and lead the project team
  - Project Manager's Tasks: Motivators and hygiene factors

- A project team is a group of professionals committed to achieving common objectives, who work well together and who relate directly and openly with one another to get things done.
  - Balance is a critical success factor for teams. Learning styles, thinking styles, conflict resolution styles, and skills and competencies of team members can be used to balance.
  - The project manager needs to determine which team members can succeed on which types of work assignments.
  - Improve competencies, team member interaction, and overall team environment to enhance project performance

- Establishing Team Operating Rules
  - Solving a Problem
  - Decision Making Styles
  - Conflict Resolution and Consensus Building
  - Brainstorming Method

- **Celebrating Success:** Don't pass up an opportunity to show the team your appreciation.

# Further Reading

- The curse of knowledge: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/curse-knowledge-how-affects-managers-marketers-maciej-budkowski/

- Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die [İşte Bu Fikir Tutar], Chip & Dan Heath
    - Introduction section: curse of knowledge
    - Chapter 1: «commander's intent» to lead by providing directions and leaving the rest to the team

- Team Geek: A Software Developer's Guide to Working Well with Others, Brian W. Fitzpatrick, Ben Collins-Sussman

- To improve your communication, public speaking, leadership skills: https://www.toastmasters.org/

- Making innovation, brainstorming methods: Yaratıcı Düşünmenin 27,5 Yöntemi, Yekta Özcan Özözer