

Project Leadership

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Project Leadership

Lecture 10

Leadership and Communication Success for Teams and Stakeholders

PMG 511

Master in Project Management

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Learning Outcomes

1. Effective Communication?
2. The Importance of Project Communication.
3. Leaders and communication.
4. Basic Communication Concepts.
5. Leadership communication skills in the workplace.
6. Communications within the Team: Meeting Success.
7. Communicating with Metrics and Reports.
8. Ethics in Communication.
9. Stakeholder Expectation Management.
10. How to improve leadership communication skills?
11. Application of AI in Project Leadership
12. Summary and Conclusions.

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Effective Communication

Communication is a transfer of understanding and meaning from one person to another.

Effective Communication is defined as the ability to convey information to another effectively and efficiently.



Why Project Communication?

Important because:

- **Stakeholders** affect projects whether you communicate or not.
- Because of technology, **customers** expect more interaction.
- **Team members:**
 - Leadership and motivation factors can have a huge effect on the project.
 - Often are split between multiple projects.
- Interactive communication is considered ideal.



Good Project Communication

- Good communication is usually **effective communication**.
- ❖ Large organizations which develop inadequate communication (diseconomies of scale) may address this by:
 - Developing flatter structures of management.
 - Creating a more empowered workforce.
 - Offering better employee training for different cultural and linguistic attitudes.
 - Controlling the volume of communication.
 - Limiting communication to those who need the information rather than copying it widely.

Successful Project Communication

If communication is successful:

- Change is encouraged and transitions are easier .
- Commitment is developed among staff (and therefore enhances motivation).
- Co-ordination within the organization is more effective (therefore ensuring that the efficient implementation of plans and strategies).
- Roles and responsibilities are clarified.

If communication is not successful:

- Problems are not identified and addressed.
- Leaders becoming isolated and follow events rather than shaping them.
- Department rivalries develop.
- Motivation and morale may be affected.
- Bureaucracy becomes endemic and decision making slows.
- Profit falls.

Leaders and Communication?

Strong leadership communication skills can foster trust, instill motivation and help team members be as productive as possible.

Leadership communication skills are important because they:

- Promote collaboration among team members and between teams.
- Ensure communication channels between team members and leaders remain open and effective.
- Make sure team members clearly understand their responsibilities.
- Increase the productivity of team members.
- Help employees remain focused on goals and outcomes.

Effective Leadership and Effective Communication

- With an increase in **leader's portfolio** there is a need to improvise communication skills to match **the leader's horizon** and to become much more effective all possible situations.
- The biggest challenge of the leader is to **win the trust of his team**, efficient leaders it is easy to earn trust because they know the value and importance of building and sustaining trust.
- **Communications plays significant role in building trust** by creating an environment which empowers leaders to lead efficiently motivating employees to work and achieving the ultimate goal.

Effective Leadership and Effective Communication

A communicative leader is one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision-making, and is perceived as open and involved.



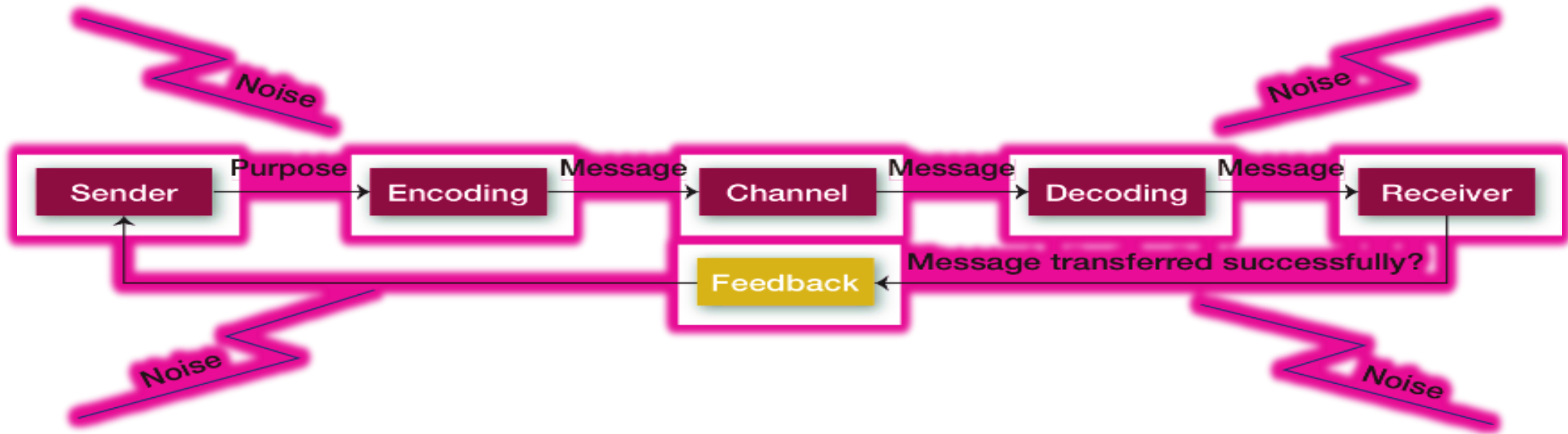
Leadership Communication

- **Leadership communication** is defined as inspiring and encouraging an individual or a group by systematic and meaningful sharing of information by using excellent communication skills.
- **Leadership communication** is a complex process which starts from developing strategy for communicating, writing precisely and then **Speaking effectively** to control difficult situations.

Leadership Communication Outcomes

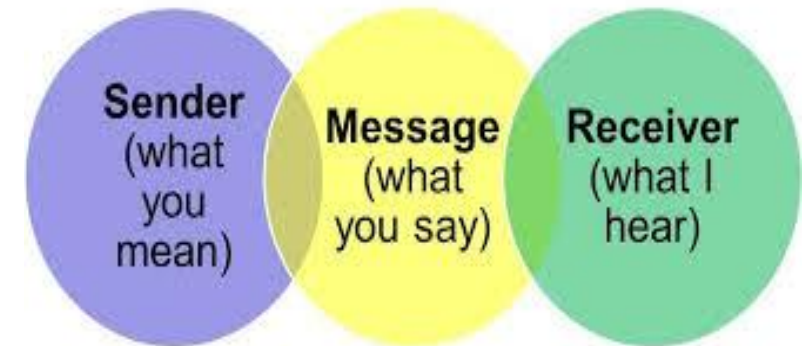
- Leadership communication has three major aspects: **Core, Managerial, and Corporate.**
- **The Core Aspects Approach** includes **writing and speaking**: these are the individualized skills and are required to be expanded, to lead and manage bigger groups or teams.
- Expressive cultural understandings, **listening** patiently, team management and team meetings, providing training facilities and mentoring are the skills which aid to manage huge groups and are **Managerial Aspect Approach** of leadership communication.
- The **Corporate Aspects Approach** are the skills required at much higher levels of leadership, and there is a need to **interact with an external sphere**, skills which are most needed: maintain employee relations, communication during change and crises.

The Communication Process



The Communication Process

- Depicts the seven-part **communication process** of transferring and understanding meaning: (1) the communication source or sender; (2) encoding; (3) the message; (4) the channel; (5) decoding; (6) the receiver; and (7) feedback.
 - The **sender** is the source of the communication.
 - **Encoding** means converting a message into symbolic form.
 - The **message** is the purpose to be conveyed in the communication.
 - The **channel** is the medium by which a message travels.
 - **Decoding** means translating a received message.
 - The **receiver** is the recipient of the communication.
 - **Feedback** is checking to see how successfully a message has been transferred.



Factors Affecting Encoding

The source initiates a message by encoding a thought. Four conditions affect the encoded message: **skill, attitudes, knowledge, and social cultural system.**

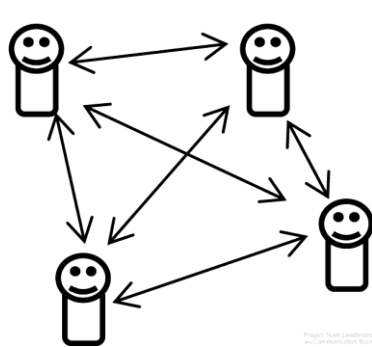
- **Skill:** determines a person's total communicative success and includes speaking, reading, listening, and reasoning skills.
- **Attitudes:** **Skill Attitudes** influence our behavior.
- **Knowledge:** **Knowledge** of the subject matters allows us to communicate more clearly or, if our knowledge is quite extensive, to confuse our receiver with overly complex information.
- **Social cultural system:** our beliefs and values—influences each of us as a communicative source.

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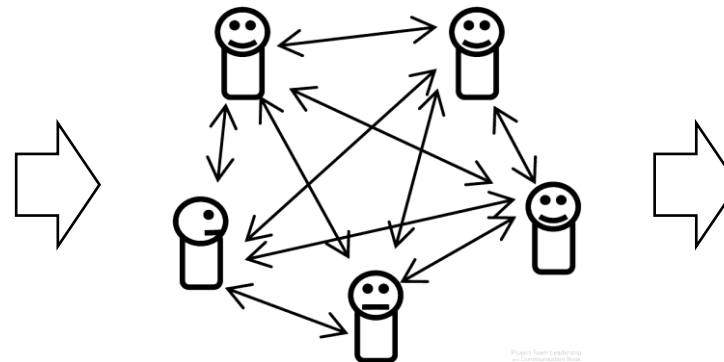
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Channels of Communication

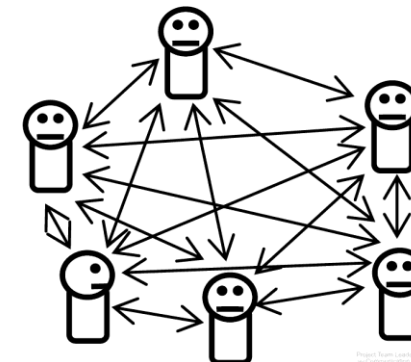
- A **communication channel** is the path through which a communication must travel.
- Leaders and team members must maintain channels of communication with each other.



6 Channels



10 Channels



15 Channels

- As the number of team members increase, the number of channels increases much quicker.

Communication Channels

- The source selects either a **formal or informal channel** through which the message travels.
- **Formal channels** are established by the organization, transmit job-related messages, and traditionally follow the authority network within the organization. Personal or social messages follow the **informal channels** in the organization.
- **Level of Complexity of communication channel** needs a smart leader to avoid any single point of failure.

Communication Concepts

- **There are dozens of communication channels available at any given time:**

- Face-to-Face
- Message Boards
- Social Media
- Multi-Channel
- Online Video Posts
- Text Messages
- Email
- Video Conference
- Postal Mail
- Television
- Print Media
- Photo Sharing
- Instant Messages
- Written Notes
- Advertisement
- Telephone
- Blogs
- *and many more*

Communication Concepts

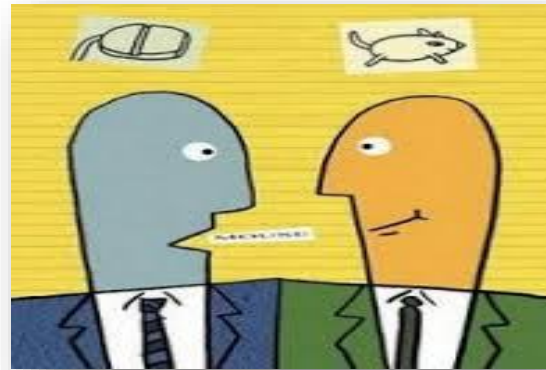
- **Additionally, there are types or categories of communication:**
 - Internal / External
 - Formal / Informal
 - Vertical / Horizontal
 - Written / Oral
 - Verbal / Nonverbal / Paralingual



Communication Concepts

- And there are potential blockers to communication efforts:

- Language and Culture
- Interruptions
- Technical Issues
- Distractions such as fatigue
- Negativity or hostility
- Context known by only one party
- Incorrect assumptions
- Receiver not *actively listening*



Decoding and Feedback

Decoding:

Translating a received message.

Feedback:

Checking to see how successfully a message has been transferred.

Push/Pull/Hybrid Communication

- **Interactive Communication** is ideal, but not always available or practical.
- **Push/Pull Communication** share a weakness: Sender is only sure it was sent, not if it was received or understood
 - **Push Communication** is one-way communication sent to one or more recipients
 - Email, radio broadcasts, and postal mail are common examples
 - **Pull Communication** allows the recipient(s) to receive the communication at will
 - Websites and bulletin boards are common examples
- **Hybrid Communication** combines push and pull communication, capturing the strengths of both
 - Sending an email which includes a link to a website or file storage area is a common example
 - By *pushing* the communication which includes the ability for the recipient to *pull* in the future, the sender increases the chance that the recipient(s) will receive the message

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Leadership Communication Skills in the Workplace

- Here are six steps to help you communicate effectively as a leader:
- Clearly define goals for each team member.
- Be proactive.
- Streamline your method of communication with your team.
- Stay in constant contact with your team.
- Set deadlines and follow up.



Key Principles of Communicative Leadership

1. Communicative leaders coach and enable employees to be self- managing.
2. Communicative leaders provide structures that facilitate the work.
3. Communicative leaders set clear expectations for quality, productivity, and professionalism.
4. Communicative leaders are approachable, respectful, and express concern for employees.
5. Communicative leaders actively engage in problem solving, follow up on feedback, and advocate for the unit.
6. Communicative leaders convey direction and assist others in achieving their goals.
7. Communicative leaders actively engage in framing of messages and events.
8. Communicative leaders enable and support sensemaking.

Leadership Styles Influencing Communication

- As we already know that communication has a great impact on effective leadership precisely the same is the case with leadership styles. Different leadership styles also influence communication process.

1. Style According to the Situation

- Under every situation the communication gets affected as some situations demand direct and strict communication and in other situation leader has to opt for indirect ways of communication. This can even make communication an effective process sometimes or may lead to miscommunication.

Leadership Styles Influencing Communication

2. Goal Oriented Leadership Style

Team Involvement, effective listening, clear and timely communication is the main feature of this style. This style of leadership makes communication an effective communication.

3. Employee Orientated Leadership Style

The active category includes those employees who are self-motivated and enthusiastic to work hard for accomplishing the tasks given to them. Another one is those who need regular motivation and encouragement to perform their duties. The leader has to make strategies in accordance to employees to make them attached to their work.

Communicative Leadership Styles

- **Listen First**
- **The Teacher**
- **The Motivator**
- **The Coach**
- **Assertive**
- **Directive**
- **Advisory**
- **Hands-Off**

Find Your Style?



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Examples of Leadership Communication Skills

- The following are a few leadership communication skills that can make you a more effective leader when practiced in the workplace:
- **Active listening**
- **Storytelling**
- **Adaptability**
- **Motivation**
- **Open-mindedness**
- **Empathy**
- **Delegation**
- **Positivity**
- **Awareness**
- **Nonverbal communication**



Meeting Issues

- **Meetings have many common complaints:**
 - “My time could be better spent”
 - Discussion or debate is out of control.
 - Facilitator unprepared.
 - Bad timing (time of day, week, business cycle).
 - “Most of what was discussed wasn’t relevant to me”
 - The subject isn’t appropriate for a meeting (“status meetings”)
 - The wrong attendees.
 - “It felt disorganized”
 - Attendees are unprepared.
 - Distractions / Poor timing.
 - Interpersonal issues.



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Meeting Success

- **Manage time properly**
 - Proper advanced notice, proper frequency of meetings.
 - Time management in the meeting so that topics are not over or under-discussed.
- **Prepare beforehand**
 - Prepare and send agenda (many templates are available online or within organizations)
 - Names, roles, location, date/time.
 - Objective / purpose for the meeting.
 - Schedule of topics with specific timeframes.
 - Ensure technology (projector, online meeting software, document storage) is all set.
- **Document and follow up**
 - Record and publish clear meeting results, decisions, and action items.
 - Ensure that important stakeholders receive and acknowledge documentation.

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Title / Subject		Date, Time, Location, Online/Telephone Details	Facilitator/Called By Name
Attendee Names and Titles		In-Meeting Roles (Presenter, Timekeeper, Note keeper)	
<i>Start Time – End Time</i>	<i>Facilitator /Presenter Name(s)</i>	<i>Subject / Discussion Topic / Notes</i>	
<i>Start Time – End Time</i>	<i>Facilitator /Presenter Name(s)</i>	<i>Subject / Discussion Topic / Notes</i>	
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<i>Start Time – End Time</i>	<i>Facilitator /Presenter Name(s)</i>	<i>Subject / Discussion Topic / Notes</i>	
Where meeting minutes, actions, decisions, etc. are stored after the meeting			

Communicating Metrics and Reports for Leaders

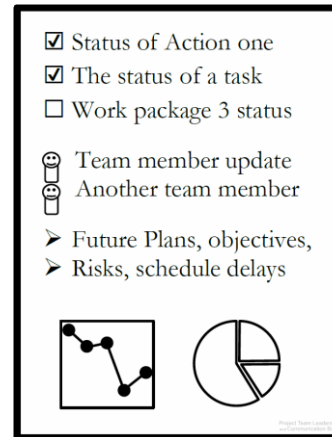
- **Metrics** are a **useful quantitative representation** of a project attribute, which help leaders or team members **make decisions about the project**
 - Private metrics are known only to the team and risk misinterpretation if shared
 - Public metrics are designed to be shared outside the team for comparison across projects
- **Reports** are more complex representations of the project designed to be **communicated to stakeholders** and typically **contain multiple metrics**.
- Making metrics and reports useful requires attention to several aspects:
 - Level of detail as well as ethical and appropriate interpretation for stakeholders.
 - Choosing an appropriate communication channel.
 - Considering the role of the recipient, as well as their preferences.
 - An appropriate understanding of what the information.

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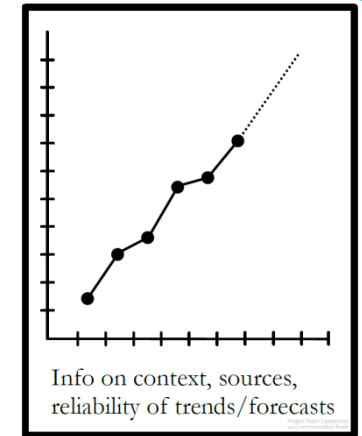
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Example Project Reports

- **Status Reports** indicate the overall condition of a project.
 - Overall health
 - Schedule/budget status
 - Issues/risks
- Almost any relevant metric can be included



- **Trend/Forecasting Reports** extrapolate important project data, giving insight into important factors of the project.



- Is performance improving or deteriorating?

Completed Since Last Report	Plans For Current Period
Risks & Issues	Needs & Discussion

- **Quad Charts** are a useful example of a status report

– *Limited to one side of one page or one presentation slide*

– Will the data and its forecast factor into important decisions?

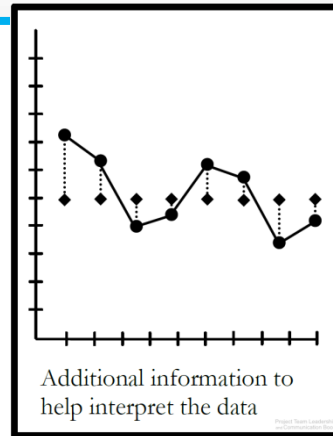
- Sources, justifications, and expected ranges help make the report more relevant/readable
- Automatically generated reports can be extremely useful here
- Data/Metrics: Cycletime, Schedule, Cost, etc.

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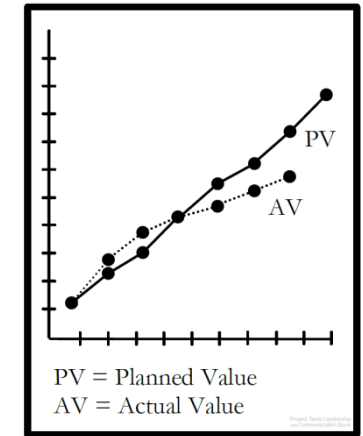
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Example Project Reports (2 of 3)

- **Variance Reports** measure how actual results compare to the expected value, or “baseline.”
- Both overspending and “underspending” time or resources can represent a problem
- The expected values may not always be constant/linear. Projects often plan to work and spend resources at varying rates
- Often, more data is included to provide clarity
- Data/Metrics: Schedule Variance, Cost Variance, analysis/clarification where needed



- **Earned Value Reports** are similar to Trend/Fore-casting and Variance Reports, but follow a specific method.
 - Actual, or “Earned Value” are plotted against expected value.



- In an “ideal” project, both graphed lines would match perfectly. A gap indicates variance
- Some project management software automatically generates this report
- Data/Metrics: Earned Value, Planned Value

Example Project Reports (3 of 3)

- **Lessons Learned Reports** present an opportunity for the project team to review, document, learn from, and communicate what went well and what went poorly throughout the project.
 - Often three questions are asked:
 - What should the team **start doing**?
 - What should the team **stop doing**?
 - What should the team **continue doing**?
 - Also known as a “**Postmortem**,” which implies lessons learned activities are only completed at the end of a project. In reality, they should happen throughout, and team can benefit immediately
 - Previous Lessons Learned reports can also benefit teams completing projects in the future

Future projects & teams:

Start doing these things:

- ☑ Meeting agendas
- ☑ Analyze stakeholders

Stop doing these things:

- ☹ Uncontrolled conflict
- ☹ Violating team trust

Continue doing these things:

- ☺ Culture of respect
- ☺ Tracking progress

What went well: ...

What went poorly: ...

Ethical Communication

Presented material that contains all the relevant information, is true in every sense, and is not deceptive in any way.



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Ethical Communication

- **Communication presents the majority of ethical decisions for most individuals**
- Ethics focus on truthfulness
 - Honesty before the project begins
 - Ensuring that the project team and stakeholders are presented with an honest view of circumstances
 - Trying to understand the truth
 - Remember that perceptions can be inaccurate. Seek the whole truth
 - Being truthful in all communications
 - Stressful or less-than-ideal circumstances make this difficulty. Trust is built in the bad times, not the good
 - Creating an environment where others tell the truth
 - As a leader or peer, consistently telling the truth communicates to others that truthfulness is the only acceptable option

Stakeholder Expectation Management

- Stakeholders fall into 2 groups
 - Those who **affect the project**: often the most apparent to the team and the most demanding
 - Those who are **affected by the project**: often easier to ignore
- Expectations have a direct connection to perception, and perception is influenced by communication. Several factors can affect this:
 - Stakeholders' previous projects and experiences.
 - Patterns of communication and normal rhythms of the organizational environment.
 - Expectations of individual stakeholders: simply asking is often most effective here
 - Previous commitments made by the project team. These should be carefully recorded and considered
 - Hard data: numbers (metrics, reports, etc.) and appropriate context are extremely valuable

How To Improve Leadership Communication Skills?

- The following are steps you can take to improve your leadership communication skills:
- **Have a purpose for your communication.** Before you speak or send correspondence, make sure you have a clear goal, so your message stays focused.
- **Make sure your team members fully understand your agenda.** Explain the objective of the conversation so your team members understand their responsibilities and what you expect of them.
- **Choose your words carefully.** Each word you use should have a specific purpose for a more straightforward message. Think before you speak, and reread and written communication before you send it.
- **Eliminate fillers from your vocabulary.** Reducing fillers, such as "um," can make you seem more confident and composed when you speak. If you need to, you can take a short pause before completing a thought instead of filling the space.

Application of AI in Project Leadership

- **What is this concept?**
- It is the evolution of the project leader's role from a manager of tasks and schedules to a leader who leverages intelligent tools to enhance decision-making, empower their team, and ensure technology serves the project's strategic goals. AI is no longer a luxury but a strategic partner in project management.

Application of AI in Project Leadership

How does a project leader apply this concept practically?

- **The application can be divided into three core areas:**
 - 1. Treating AI as a Team Member (AI as a Team Member)**
 - 2. Leading the Human Team Through Change (Leading the Human Team)**
 - 3. Governance and Ethics (Governance and Ethics)**

Application of AI in Project Leadership

1. Treating AI as a Team Member (AI as a Team Member)

Automating Routine Tasks such as:

- Meeting summarization
- Automated stakeholder analysis
- Dynamic resource optimization

Decision Support:

- Predictive Analytics
- Risk Management

Application of AI in Project Leadership

2. Leading the Human Team Through Change (Leading the Human Team)

Reskilling & Upskilling:

- **The Problem:** Some team members will fear that AI will make their roles obsolete.
- **The Solution:** The wise leader invests in their team's development. Instead of an engineer doing manual calculations, the need shifts to an engineer who knows how to validate AI outputs and use them to create better designs.

Application of AI in Project Leadership

Focusing on "Human" Skills

- The leader encourages the team to develop skills that AI cannot easily replicate, such as:
 - Creativity in problem-solving.
 - Negotiation with stakeholders.
 - Emotional Intelligence for managing team dynamics.

Application of AI in Project Leadership

3. Governance and Ethics (Governance and Ethics)

- **Algorithmic Bias:** The leader must ensure that the data used to train the AI is not biased. For instance, a system might recommend employees of a specific gender for key projects if its historical training data is biased. regulatory compliance (EU AI Act, etc.) transparency in AI decision-making
- **Data Privacy:** The leader ensures the protection of sensitive project and client data fed into AI tools.
- **Accountability:** When AI makes a mistake, the human leader is ultimately responsible, not the machine.

Application of AI in Project Leadership

A Practical Example: A Construction Project Leader with AI:

- **The Situation:** A complex construction project is facing potential delays due to weather.
- **The Application:**
 - **Prediction:** The leader asks the Enhanced with Modern AI Capabilities, Real-Time Data Integration AND weather on-site IoT sensors to analyze the impact of weather on the schedule. The tool suggests resequencing 3 weather-sensitive tasks.
 - **Empowerment:** The leader holds a meeting with their human team. They present the AI's recommendation.
 - **Human Decision:** The team (engineers, construction managers) discusses the recommendation. They add human context: "One of these tasks requires an external contractor; we need to coordinate with them first."
 - **Execution:** The leader makes the final decision based on the AI's analysis and human input, then communicates with the contractor to coordinate.

Summary and Conclusions

- Teams may not give communication enough consideration because in general communication is a large part of everyday life
- Communication requires careful planning, and should consider factors such as the appropriate channel and potential blockers.
- Carefully consider whether interactive, push, pull, and hybrid communication types are appropriate
- External communication affects the expectations of stakeholders
- Communication represents the majority of ethical considerations for project teams
- When communicating with metrics and reports, special consideration must be given to how they are perceived. Provide appropriate interpretation and context.
- How to improve leadership communication skills?



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Thank You

