DEVELOPING GREAT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

PRESENTED BY BRETT HARNED
brett@brettharned.com | @brettharned
Hi, I’m Brett

Digital PM Consultant & Coach
brettharned.com
brett@brettharned.com
@brettharned
GOOD PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS ROOTED IN SOLID COMMUNICATION PRACTICES
COMMUNICATIONS TEND TO BE THE TOUGHEST PART OF THE ROLE.
PROJECT MANAGERS SPEAK:
MARKETING, IT, FINANCE, LEGAL,
DESIGN, USER EXPERIENCE,
STRATEGY, CONTENT, CODE,
AND MUCH MORE
PMs SPEAK WITH:

EXPERTISE.

EMPATHY.

CONSISTENCY.
A GOOD PM WILL GET TO KNOW TEAMS AND STAKEHOLDERS
TYPES OF COMMUNICATORS

Analytical

Intuitive

Functional

Personal
ANALYTICAL COMMUNICATORS

- Prefer facts and data
- Prefer specific language, not vague
- Like communication to be unemotional; logical and dispassionate
INTUITIVE COMMUNICATORS

• Thinks big picture
• Wants to get to the point; not about details
• Enjoys challenging convention
• Can be frustrated by detailed conversations
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATORS

• Likes process, detail, timelines, well-thought out plans
• Communicates in step-by-step fashion
• Plays Devil’s Advocate
• Likes being relied on for detail
PERSONAL COMMUNICATORS

- Values emotional language and connection
- Finds value in assessing what people think and feel
- Good listener and diplomat
- Builds deep relationships; is the “glue”
WHAT TYPE OF COMMUNICATOR ARE YOU?

Analytical  Functional
Intuitive    Personal
FIND WAYS TO COMMUNICATE REGULARLY AND IN A WAY THAT WILL WORK FOR EVERYONE
WORDS MATTER
CREATE A COMMON LANGUAGE & UNDERSTANDING

• Never assume that your team or clients understand you, or your work:
  • “When I say ‘X’ I am referring to…”
  • “Am I making sense?”
  • “Are we all on the same page?”
  • “Any questions?”
CREATE A PROJECT VOCABULARY

• Get to know and understand your client’s operation and ask clarifying/probing questions
• Create a project dictionary of client terms for your team
• Know + understand your company’s vocabulary
  • Educate your clients on your process and deliverables
  • Avoid using acronyms (at first)
LISTEN AND TAKE CUES FROM YOUR TEAM AND CLIENTS
ASK QUESTIONS
IT’S NOT EASY!
COMMUNICATION ROUTINES
WE CREATE Routines:
STATUS. CHECK-INS. ONE-ON-ONES.
MEETINGS. PHONE.
EMAIL.
COMMUNICATION TOOLS.
CREATE ROUTINES

- Status reports and meetings
- Client check ins and conversations
- Team stand up meetings
- Informal check-ins
- Meetings
IT'S IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT HOW YOU COMMUNICATE
STATUS REPORTS
AND MEETINGS
STATUS REPORTS AND MEETINGS

• Provide transparency about the project
• Build accountability
• Develop better team communication
• Assess and address issues proactively
A GOOD STATUS REPORT INCLUDES:

• What happened last week
• What is happening this week
• What is planned for next week
• To-dos/Action items
• Project percent complete (plan update)
• Budget update (if relevant)
• Risks, blockers, and solutions
Project Status Report Template

Download the free Project Status Report Template on us. It’s completely free, we don’t even ask for your email

Download our free status report template:
https://www.teamgantt.com/project-status-report-template
A well-done status report can be used to update your internal team and clients at the same time.
STATUS Routines:

• Write and post a report for review regularly

• Schedule regular status meeting to review the report

• Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly (use your scope as your guide)

Be flexible—do what works for the team and client
CLIENT CHECK-INS AND MEETINGS

- Set expectations for how/when you will communicate about project details
- Provide transparency on your process, team progress, timelines, budgets, risk, etc.
- Allow you to build client relationships and look for new business opportunities
Build Relationships:
Every conversation—large or small—will contribute to project success.
STANDUP MEETINGS
STANDUP MEETINGS

• Should take 15 minutes or less
• Help to build and solidify teams and trust
• Keeps everyone updated and focused on project work
• Focused solely on what’s happening
• Generate useful conversations
Go around the group allow each person to provide an update in this format:

• What I accomplished yesterday/since our last standup
• What I will accomplish today
• What obstacles might impede progress
STANDUP MEETING ROUTINES

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
Accountability: Standups help to keep teams accountable to communicate about progress (or lack thereof).
INFORMAL CHECKINS:

• Empathy is key
• Try passive communications
• Be helpful
• Be willing to help solve problems

INFORMAL TEAM CHECK-INS
SIGNALS:
What are the ways you can tell that someone should not be interrupted?
APPROACHING INFORMAL TEAM CHECKINS:

- Empathy is key
- Be helpful, not intrusive
- Be willing to help solve problems
- Try passive communications
Be routine in your approach, not in your timing.
MEETINGS
“Actions speak louder than meetings.”

- Lee Clow, chairman and global director of TBWA/Worldwide.
BEFORE SCHEDULING:

- Determine the value of the meeting
- Estimate the time needed
- Identify goals for your meeting
- Determine the best attendees
- Determine when it needs to happen
- Create an agenda
- Share information needed for the meeting
ESTABLISH ROLES

- Leader
- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Timekeeper
SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

**Goal:** This is an internal review of our research report. Please review the document attached and be prepared to provide and discuss feedback and next steps.

**Agenda:**
- 9:00-9:30 - Presentation of document (Abby)
- 9:30-10:00 - Feedback review and discussion (All)
- 10:00-10:15 - Next steps, wrap up (All)
ENSURE MEETING PRODUCTIVITY
ESTABLISH GROUND RULES

- Be on time, be prepared
- No devices (stay present)
- Not contributing? Dismissed.
- Think before speaking
- Stay on task and on time

- Listen (with an open mind)
- Attack the problem not the person
- Close decisions and identify action items
- Record meeting notes, and post them publicly
- Follow-up on outcomes
MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME.
A FINAL NOTE ON COMMUNICATION ROUTINES

• They build expectations, which leads to stronger communications and accountability

• They keep you honest about what needs to be communicated (and when)

• They’re easy to schedule

• They build trust and camaraderie
CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
WILL WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR TEAM WORK FOR CLIENTS?
DISCUSS PREFERENCES

• Modes for day-to-day communications
• Who should be involved or copied?
• How often should status be reported and discussed?
• Is there any additional information that should be shared/exchanged regularly?
• Will the tools we use work?
• Are there any meetings we should discuss or schedule now?
• Are there any practices you use that should be considered?
IT COMES DOWN TO:

- Message type
- Timing/schedule
- Delivery method
- Originator
- Audience
Stakeholders:
Don’t forget to talk about who should be involved at all levels.
EVERYTHING IN WRITING
# Communication Management Plan Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Type</th>
<th>Objective of Communication</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kickoff Meeting</td>
<td>Introduce the project team and the project. Review project objectives and management approach.</td>
<td>*Face to Face</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>*Project Sponsor</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>*Agenda *Meeting Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Team Meetings</td>
<td>Review status of the project with the team.</td>
<td>*Face to Face *Conference Call</td>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>*Project Team</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>*Agenda *Meeting Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Project Status Meetings</td>
<td>Report on the status of the project to management.</td>
<td>*Face to Face presentation *Conference Call</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>*PMO</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Status Reports</td>
<td>Report the status of the project including activities, progress, costs and issues.</td>
<td>*Face to Face presentation *Email</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>*Customer *Project Sponsor *Project Team</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>*Project Status Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIND WAYS TO COMMUNICATE REGULARLY AND IN A WAY THAT WILL WORK FOR EVERYONE
RECAP
AS GOOD COMMUNICATORS, WE...

- Practice empathy
- Get to know our teams and stakeholders
- Work diligently to create common language and understanding
- Listen and ask questions
- Talk about our communication preferences
- Create routines that help to facilitate communications
- Create communication plans to solidify what was discussed, and put our words into action
Q&A
THANK YOU!

brettharned.com
@brettharned

teammgantt.com
@teammgantt