

TOTAL SYSTEMS EDUCATION, LTD.

TSE018

COMMUNICATE OR DIE! Effective Communications in Business and Projects



COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Simply put, the success of all business activities in the twenty-first century critically depends upon quality projects and Information Technology. All too often miscommunication between the Business and the IT Team is the reason why projects are over budget, delivered with lower quality, or quite simply, fail. We all know that communications can and do go wrong. We also know that poor communications lead to unnecessary sunk costs, missed opportunities and deadlines, and frustration – through every phase of a project.

As projects increasingly span organizational boundaries, borders and cultures, the need for common understanding among participants (all with varied backgrounds and areas of expertise) is critical and frequently difficult to achieve.

“Communicate or Die for Business and Projects” was developed as a joint effort by the Swiss Consulting Group and Total Systems Education, Ltd. This “workshop-experience” addresses the practical steps needed to achieve common project understanding. It provides the foundation for successfully navigating the Project Life Cycle and employing specific Business Analysis and Project Management tools and techniques, such as Use Cases, Data Modeling, Cross-Functional Process Maps and more. Communications problems that frequently undermine outsourced initiatives are also addressed.

This two-day workshop is designed for all stakeholders whose contributions are essential for the project’s success. The program works best with participants from mixed backgrounds, experience and management levels. It is especially valuable to have technical and business people from varied departments, countries and cultures.

Participants involved with PMI[®], The Project Management Institute’s Project Management Professional – PMP program, are awarded 14 PDUs or “Contact hours”. Our R.E.P. number is 1270. For Business Analysts, we are also an EEP, Endorsed Education Provider of the IIBA[™]. Our EEP Code is 112.

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Assess their own communications strengths (*and how to capitalize on them*) and weaknesses (*and what to do about them*).
- Create a toolbox for effective communications and eliminate wasteful speaking.
- Identify and avoid misunderstandings that would have to be fixed (more expensively) later.
- Maximize results by learning to listen effectively.
- Identify and resolve the common communications breakdowns and barriers in technology projects.
- Handle changing communications needs throughout the system development life-cycle, and save effort, time and money.
- Run and participate in meetings and workshops with different project stakeholders, to build a common understanding of project requirements and manage expectations.
- Decode cultures (*both organizational and national*) and get the job done across borders and boundaries.
- Build teams that work together effectively and achieve desired results.

A mixture of lecture, discussion, hands-on exercises, team role-playing and *self-assessment tools* are employed. This is a true workshop! Participants don’t just hear about effective communications and cost-savings techniques – they practice them. Course workbook, job aides and checklists are also provided for later use. *In our most effective delivery option*, prior to the workshop facilitators interview participants and managers in order to best tune materials and exercises. In order to ensure effective on-the-job application of the concepts and techniques, once the workshop has completed follow-up mentoring is also provided.



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- I. Introduction and Course Objectives
- II. Self-Assessment Checklist
- III. Where Communications Breakdowns Occur and Why
 - A. Listening
 - B. Speaking
 - C. Setting Expectations for Communications
 - 1. Across Organizational Boundaries
(Task force – Cross Functional Teams)
 - 2. Across Cultural Boundaries *(International Teams)*
 - 3. Outsourced Projects
 - 4. Across Dispersed Teams *(Virtual Teams)*
- IV. Tools and Techniques for Avoiding Breakdowns
 - A. The Communications Pyramid
 - B. The Matterhorn of Masterful Listening
 - C. Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback
 - D. Conversation Types
 - E. From Breakdown to Breakthrough
 - F. Building Global Results
- V. Communications Throughout the Project Lifecycle
 - What can go Wrong, and How to Avoid it!*
 - A. Project Life Cycle Models
 - B. Initiation Phase
 - 1. Identifying key participants and their communications needs
 - 2. Defining the vision and objectives of the project
(and getting meaningful buy-in)
 - C. Requirements and Analysis Phases
 - 1. Data Gathering Techniques
 - i. Workshops
 - ii. Interviews
 - 2. Analysis Tools
 - i. Use Cases
 - ii. Cross-functional Process Maps
 - iii. Business Domain Model
 - D. The Plan for Testing and Quality Assurance (QA)
 - E. Project Closeout
 - F. Maintenance and Support (Help Desk Issues)



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VI. Creating your Project Communications Strategy

- A. Identifying Key Interactions
- B. Developing the Plan
- C. Using the Stakeholder Matrix
- D. Applying the Tools
- E. Communicating with the Stakeholders
 1. The Business
 2. IT Team
 3. Project Team
 4. Cross-functional Partners
 5. Virtual Team
 6. External Partners
 7. Outsourced Vendors
 8. Additional Groups and Individuals

VII. Conclusion, Critique and Comments

VIII. Next Steps

WHO WE ARE:

Swiss Consulting Group is a global team of experienced management consultants. We offer our clients human-centered high-performance methodologies to empower leadership, develop human capital, and achieve breakthrough results in action. We focus on the “3 Cs”: coaching, communication, and cross-cultural competence. www.swissconsultinggroup.com

The hands-on training provided by Total Systems Education, Ltd. enables our global participants to quickly learn the tools and techniques needed to successfully apply the best practices of Project Management and technology development available today. Certified as a Global Registered Education Provider by PMI®, the Project Management Institute, and the IIBA™, International Institute of Business Analysis, our course delivery is also customized to meet the specific job-related needs of our clients for internal methodologies, language and/or process. www.totalsystemseducation.com

