****

**Become a Project Communication Rockstar With These Seven Tips**

We hear all the time that communication is one of the most important soft skills that a project manager should possess. There are dozens of case studies where poor communication was a major contributor to a project failure. So, how do we get it right?

1. Communicate often! There is no such thing as over-communication
2. Clarify and seek clarification. Assuming that everyone is on the same page and so there is no need to communicate is the WORST mistake you can make!
3. Consider your audience. Are they young, old, relaxed or more formal? Particularly when it comes to informal types of conversation (e.g. texting or social medial), consider what level of formal language the other party uses. Would they find acronyms and abbreviations irritating or an efficient way to convey a message?
4. What medium? Each form of communication has its use and place. Formal project documentation or status report or steering committee presentation would require a more formal language and structure, whilst quick updates to project team or immediate stakeholders can be kept at a less dense tone and could be delivered in an email.
5. Use conversation to discuss complex or controversial issues and NEVER try to resolve conflict through an email, text message/SMS, tweet or other forms of non-personal medium. A conversation is the ONLY way to discuss and resolve disagreements or varying points of views. A face-to-face communication is best in those situations, use the phone or video-conferencing for remote teams and do it carefully, with a plan.
6. Beware what’s been written is there forever! Anything you write represents you to others. Think twice before sending off an ‘emotionally loaded’ email, particularly one that contains harsh or even offensive language. A good technique is to write down your thoughts (even if they are full of anger and \*\*\*\* words) and then delete the note. Quick tip! Don’t put an email address in the To: field! Just in case you press a wrong button ….
7. State your point early and stick to it! Stay focussed on the message you are trying to get across. Time is money and people’s attention span is very short nowadays. Avoid unnecessary statements, lengthy explanations and getting off the track. Don’t lose sight of the point. The essence of effective communication lies in conveying your intended message, so make sure you haven’t become so bogged down in your mode of communication that you forget why you are doing it!

*Contributed by Maja Kowalski, PMI Sydney Communications Director*