ITS Virtual Project Management Office

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An AVP's Perspective

So you want to manage a project? Do you have what it takes to be a successful project manager? The role is so extensive. A project manager must wear many hats and be able to manage a team of people who all have different tasks. Projects often require the work of many people and it is the project manager who brings it all together. If I had to identify what I think makes for an excellent project manager, I would offer this:

A superior project manager is…

- a person focusing intensely on the project's main goals
- a person with strong communication skills
- a person with superior organizational skills (judgement, organization, efficiency, etc.)
- a person who recognizes all stakeholders in a project
- a person who is a risk manager
- a person who shows empathy
- a person with patience and fortitude

There are plenty of additional skills superior project managers possess. Let's not forget the value of a project manager and recognize all the great work they do. For without them, big projects would rarely complete on-time, within budget, according to plan, and with satisfying results.

Bruce Montes
AVP, Academic & Data Services

EMERGE COURSE DATES

Take a Project Management class to learn the basics or advanced tools, techniques, and resources to successfully run a project.

- ◆ May 22
- ◆ June 18

To register, visit
LUC.edu/emerge

Status Reporting and Frequency

Florence Yun, Sr. PM
Heather Tomley Chester, Sr. PM

The goal of project status reporting is to provide leadership planned periodic updates on the activities, risks, and overall health of a project. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, a high-level milestones and completion updates are included.

Status reporting typically include project identifiers (such as project name, project ID/code, name of project manager, date of report); project progress summary (accomplishments), project percent complete (variance), project health, project forecasted milestone dates, and issues and risks that have arisen over the course of the project to date.

Status reporting includes a summary of the overall project goals and the progress made (percent complete) towards accomplishing them as well as the project's health.

Project status should highlight any tasks that are facing issues, how those problems might impact the deadline and costs (risks), what is the plan to resolve these issues as well as the expected results once the problem is fixed. Project status should also provide any planned next steps.

Status reporting and project communication can take on many forms. You should consider several factors before deciding what methods you will choose to send information.

Other sample reports can be found at the following links:

https://luc.edu/media/lucedu/pmo/pdfs/execution/Status_Report_Template.docx
https://luc.edu/media/lucedu/pmo/pdfs/reportingandschedu/Executive_Status.docx

The larger and more complex projects, require more visibility, potential partnering with other teams or vendors. Therefore, status reporting may need to be reported more frequently. In addition, the level of trust between the executive sponsor and project manager, the level of risk, uncertainty, and influences may also determine the frequency of reporting.

Ultimately, the cost, duration, and visibility of the project usually determine the frequency of status reporting, to ensure money, resources, and perceptions are managed judiciously, efficiently, and proactively.

PROJECT HEALTH

Mary Bunker, Sr. PM

The purpose of a project status report is to communicate with stakeholders and manage their expectations. Typical status reports not only describe accomplishments against the assigned activities, but they also comment on work that is behind schedule, issues that are being dealt with, major scope changes, newly identified risks and other observations that will be useful to stakeholders.

Status reports need to be presented in a manner that is appropriate to the target audience. In some organizations, status reports are shared with the executive management team. Project health color-coding is an excellent way to quickly and concisely provide managers and executives with information on the status of a project. In addition, color-coding is intuitive, easy to understand and can serve as a basis of comparing projects period to period.

Below is the coding system that Loyola's ITS department uses in reporting status on projects:

Green	Lime	Yellow	Orange	Red

- Green — On Target, No Risk
- Lime — On Target, Minimal Risk, Minor Concerns, Under Control
- Yellow — Target in Jeopardy, Risks Being Managed, Unknowns Exist
- Orange — Slightly Off Target, Several Risks or Unknowns
- Red – Off Target, High Risk, Multiple Concerns

STATUS AUDIENCE

Warren Francis, PM

Status reporting is an essential method for project managers to communicate with stakeholders on a project. Status reports provide an open and transparent way for stakeholders to review the project's progress, completed milestones, objectives, key risks/issues and next steps. Depending on the project size/scope, you may have multiple audiences for management status reports, including management, executive stakeholders, and/or team members.

The first step is to build a communication plan and identify who you need to communicate with. As you build your communication plan, ask stakeholders and other groups you have identified as audiences, if there are additional groups who should be included on the communication.

Below are some typical audiences you may want to include in a project plan:

- **Team members (Individual) status reporting;** people that are doing the work. Track project details such as action items (task), issues, risk, progress, etc.
- **Management/executive management reporting**; not usually dedicated to the project, but can make decisions about it. Usually leadership, steering committee, or a board member. They are more interested in high-level status of the project.
- **External clients; vendors, suppliers, partners**, etc. They are very involved in the project but do not see internal status reports. They may have task, issues, and progress checks that are vital to the success of the project.

As your project progresses, continue to review your communication process regularly to see if you need to change the frequency/audience that you need to communicate with.

The VPMO website has Project Management Templates that can help you with managing the project status communication. Additionally, the May-2018-Newsletter provides information on project communication and suggestions with creating the communication plan.