



White Paper 2017-01

How to Ensure that Proper Communication Happens Between Functions to Keep Control of a Project

To keep control of a Large, Complex Project, the relevant internal interfaces need to be established from the beginning between the different functions on the Project, and they need to operate effectively. This includes of course those interfaces between Project Control and other functions, as well as some key transverse interfaces between functions. This White Paper covers the issue of communication assurance, with the aim to ensure that there is proper coordination of the effort and its reporting during project execution.

Establishing Internal Interfaces between Project Control and other Functions

To ensure proper data availability, and regular challenges on its quality, interfaces must be organized between Project Control and:

- Accounting/ finance, to check consistency between cost data and accounting data,
- Engineering, in particular for contractual aspects of documentation delivery and for the control of engineering subcontractors within the project document assurance framework,
- Procurement, which is essential in particular on the following aspects:
 - Consistency of the breakdown structure with the supplier strategy and relevant invoicing constraints to capture cost as required,
 - Availability of bid tabs for a joint understanding of the procurement cost structure and proper cost control post-award,
 - Awareness on potential Change Order and Claims from suppliers and subcontractors
 - Proper interface between engineering and procurement regarding deliverables required
- Construction mobilization preparation, to ensure that control requirements are properly setup on site (cost management, schedule reporting and update, contract requirements etc.)
- Construction site management, in particular for the measure of progress and the management of the subcontractors involved in construction activities
- Commissioning management, to anticipate cost and schedule requirements flowing down from procurement and construction, as well as any issue regarding performance trials,
 - The proper setup and management of delivery punch lists and carry over lists is also essential for contractual reasons.

Those interfaces must generally be formalized by the transmittal of relevant periodic reports (at least monthly) and the organization of regular status meetings (also at least monthly) attended by the Project Control team and by the function management team on the Project.

Essential Internal Interface Meetings

To supplement and reinforce processes, certain regular meetings between functions are essential in a Project.

In spite of improvements in systems, meetings remain essential to get proper feedback and check on the data. Too many Project Control teams rely excessively on data provided by systems and do not spend sufficient time liaising with the relevant Project contributors or checking the reality on site. Discussing with Project contributors does improve significantly the quality of the information

and effort should be made to maintain a regular set of effective coordination meetings.

Most coordination meetings need to happen in the presence of a Project Control representative because of the wealth of information that is exchanged and can be used to update Cost,

Schedule or Risk. In any case, all these meetings need to be followed by actions lists that shall be copied to Project Control.

The importance of these meetings will vary according to the Project phase.

Project Weekly Coordination Meeting

An essential coordination tool is the Project weekly coordination meeting involving the Project Management Team. Achieving an effective meeting resulting in actions that will effectively be taken requires a specific involvement of the Project Manager.

In addition during those meetings the Project Control Manager needs to use the opportunity to share the latest analysis available (e.g. productivity, delays) for the team to reflect and take proper rectification action.

It is essential to run those weekly meetings with a proper structure to make them effective. A running action list that is updated according to the latest status and due dates is a recommended good practice.

Internal Management of Change and Change Order Weekly Meeting

Generally held together with the Project weekly meeting, or just after in a slightly reduced format, a specific meeting involving all Project Management Team is required to review the new changes that were raised during the week, and discuss the Change Order status (preparation of submission, work to be performed on those under discussion).

Properly organized, regular effective coordination meetings are a must in Large Complex Projects to keep control of the events and of the control data that is associated.

Weekly Schedule Meeting

A Weekly Schedule Meeting is recommended to be held between the lead planner and all functions to review the latest schedule update and include the proper amendments required, in particular in terms of activities' finish dates.

It is useful to have this meeting with all participants in the same room so as to discuss consequential effects of delays on subsequent Project activities.

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Engineering/Procurement Weekly Meeting

This meeting is particularly essential in the first half the Project. It helps coordinate engineering deliverables that are required by Procurement (such as specifications and other documents required for Requests for Quotation); the attendance to vendors' or contractors' kick-off meetings; the technical review and approval of vendors' documentation prior to manufacturing, and the management of the vendor data that is required by Engineering.

Procurement/Construction Weekly Meeting

This meeting is essential as soon as actual delivery dates become known from vendors, and in any case significantly before the start of construction. It needs to cover three types of topics:

- On site procurement: frame agreement setup with local suppliers, follow-up of commitments, etc.
- Delivery of equipment and material from vendors to the site (or to the consolidation point if the site is remote and the final logistics is managed by Construction),
- Contracts with construction contractors and other service contractors involved on site.

Construction/ Commissioning Weekly Meeting

This meeting is essential as soon as construction starts. It will manage the transition from areas to systems and the interfaces that need to be managed for safe and effective commissioning.

Calling for Other Coordination Meetings and Workshops

In most Projects, specific coordination meetings and processes are generally planned, with discrete occurrences during Project execution:

- Constructability reviews between Engineering and Construction,

- Health, Safety and Environmental risk assessments and alignment workshops, involving Engineering, Construction, and key stakeholders,
- Worksite / vendor kick-off meetings and pre-production meetings
- Etc.

While most of these meetings will happen during the course of the Project, it is part of the Project Control Manager responsibility to monitor their occurrence and raise to the attention of the Project Managers those coordination issues which fester and might lead to significant discrepancies and difficulties in Project execution.

In addition to these planned meetings, there will be instances where issues will appear that will require enhanced communication and alignment. This will be the case in particular, if some misalignment between several Project functions is detected; or, if an event happens in some area that will have significant consequential impact on a large section of the Project. In these cases, specific meetings must be held. When the issue is quite open, requires creative thinking, or a major coordination and alignment work, workshops will be a more effective solution.

Conclusion

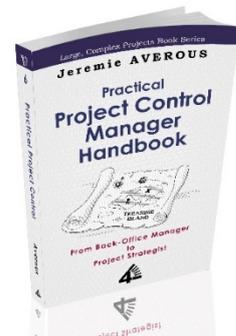
Properly organized, regular effective coordination meetings are a must in Large Complex Project to keep control of the events and of the control data that is associated.

Systems cannot replace face-to-face discussions even if they can help focus it on key items. In some instances site visits are even recommended as a reality check.

Find all these principles of Project Control Management exposed in a comprehensive manner in our new Handbook,

[Practical Project Control Manager Handbook](#)

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