



APPROACH

APPROACH:
Part 2 of the theme: APPROACH Workshop for
Administrators, Managers, and Leaders, titled
“Part Two – Struggling with Team
Communication Issues: How to **Prevent
Scheduling Conflicts and Delays .**”

Meeting online 1.9.2025

VAASA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



Issues in communication: issue areas

- 1. PEOPLE-RELATED ISSUES**
- 2. ORGANISATORY ISSUES**
- 3. TECHNICAL and LEGAL ISSUES**
- 4. OTHER ISSUES**

1. People-related issues: examples of issues

1. **Cultural issues.** National, regional, sectorial, occupational, language, etc.
2. **University versus SME in communication**
3. **Different levels of experience**
4. **Different hierarchies**
5. **Target group related issues,**
6. **Usability and user -orientation**
7. **Trust and other people issues** ,
8. **The lack of clarity of communication**
9. **Poor and delayed feedback from participants.** May confuse the process, or people already have other engagements.
10. **Different workers,** including neuroatypical people, physical conditions and disabilities.
11. **Participation for all**
12. **Other priorities**

1. People-related issues: examples of solutions



A LIST OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

1. The human being is the starting point
2. Clear communication: simple, clear, to the point, lists, highlight, emphasise, tables, colour code, etc. avoid long descriptive texts. Shorter emails
3. Clarify the processes, timings and other issues at the beginning and repeat regularly.
4. Clear roles and responsibilities, materials and instructions. Lists of activities with key performance indicators, deadlines, roles, responsibilities, etc.
5. Team forming: a kick-off meetings, preferable face-to-face to form the team, agree on processes and rules, etc. to form the team and establish communication. To make sure that everything is clear.
6. Create a trustworthy working atmosphere and create shares points and experiences between the team; let them get to know each other.
8. Target group understanding
9. A backup system and people
10. Plain language
11. Support for new-comers
12. Different timeslots if needed, organize meetings early
13. Meetings: lots of meetings with partners, regular team meetings, e.g. team meetings. More internal meetings per task, work package.
14. Meetings: lots of meetings with partners, regular team meetings, e.g. team meetings. More internal meetings per task, work package.
15. Virtual meetings to support face-to-face meetings.
16. Team forming and updating
17. Communication, communication, communication, e.g. including regular bulleting.
18. Working guide, e.g. management guide with deadlines
19. Clarifying any work documents and making them easily usable
20. Examples: cause effect
21. Good communication tools for all. Mobile and digital tools to support communication
22. Collaborative platforms
23. Reminders
24. Discover, respect, and discuss before judging. The reason might be e.g. that email does not work
25. Examples



1. People-related issues: cases



Case 1: University versus SME communication

Universities and research institutions tend to be more focused on details, doing everything by the book and in many cases relatively slower when it comes to developing a product/service. Contrary to that, companies focus mainly on monetizing the RnD results faster and may (in some cases) hide some issues under the carpet

As far as the product is functional and delivers what it promises

Scientists' meetings also tend to be too long and more "philosophical" - in extreme cases out of topic

In my experience, scientists in their communications tend to be more elaborate and include more details. This is not always efficient in business

Solutions include: clear rules, communication deadlines and style, clear communication channels

Case 2: Disappearing people

People in the project keep on disappearing, for example when have promised to deliver something. You have already provided clear timelines, working rule, roles and responsibilities, organise regular meetings, and send clear and regular project communications. In addition, you have agreed on the task together. What can you do?

You may first make sure that people are receiving emails and communication. Your email might be in junk mail. It is worth to check this right at the beginning of the work process. You can call them.

See if any external things impact communication.

Discuss with these parties and people what might be the issues. For example, you might be facing a neurodivergent person who easily becomes overwhelmed and needs time to recharge. Perhaps another mean of communication could help this person?

Have another person in the communication chain too. If the first person is not able to communicate, the other might receive the message.



2. Organisatory issues: examples and possible solutions



ISSUES

1. Descriptions and instruction
2. Structures
3. Usability of things
4. The use of processes: new and existing
5. Unfollowed administration

A LIST OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- In addition to those in people dimension,
- Have clear instructions and descriptions that are easily available. Use infographics, matrices, etc. where useful. Add also where to ask help.
- Explain with examples and cause - effect paths.
- Make things usable: font, language, colours , etc.
- Reduce resistance positively.
- Help people make connection points between experiences and what they already know; use also analogies.
- Use change management.
- Inform about things on time.



2. Organisatory issues: cases



Case 1: Introducing new practices

An organisation starts to use a new signature process. There change is drastic and there are plenty of things signatures are needed.

Therefore, the organisation informa about the issue early and organises an online training about it that will be recorded. There are a few different options for the event to cover as many employees as possible. In addition, employees have an opportunity to ask questions in advance.

It also invests in a transfer period and provides a new signature matrix with roles, the training video and an infographic with instructions of the process to all current and future workers.

The heads of units function as contact people and provide assistance when needed.

Case 2: Unfollowed administration

Administration is unfollowed by the contents and deadlines. Something needs to be done. The templates and materials have been tested with the participating people and initial instructions given, This has not helped though. Therefore:

1. A separate meeting about issues is organized. For this meeting a list of any impacting issues is created.
2. The meeting starts with the basic things, description and instructions. People are asked what is easy and what is complicated. These issues are discussed together. Is the issue usability? Or communication or something else? Other priorities?
3. Examples of how and why to make something are told and shown, as well as cause effects. Moreover, attitude changing exercises are provided (in case there are mental blockages).
4. After this individual meeting and follow -up is organized to see that everything would be understood and people would get enough support.



3. Technical and legal issues: examples and possible solutions



ISSUES

1. **Access issues**
2. **Equipment issues**
3. **Usability issues**
4. **Different levels of mastering technology**
5. **Internet breaks etc.**
6. **Badly functioning email**
7. **Cybersecurity.** Wrong communication policies may cause cybersecurity issues as well.
8. **GDPR**
9. **A variety of different tools.** In some cases there is no unified channel for communication across teams. Different tools are used. The flexibility to choose between online document/spreadsheet editors (e.g. google docs), online collaborative platforms (jira , trello , MS Teams, asana etc.) or other tools may be nice but this heterogeneity may be unproductive in some cases.

A LIST OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Make sure that everyone has access to any tools, platforms, etc. and is able to use them. Provide support if needed.
- Make sure that every organization can use the selected systems and equipment.
- Take into account any human factors, e.g. disabilities, in the use of the systems and equipment.
- Use language that is common for all.
- Have a backup plan for breaks in Internet and other systems.
- Make sure that the selected technical solutions respect GDPR.



Other issues with team communication



- There might be any other issues creating scheduling conflicts and delays.
- 'Noise' often creates additional distractions scheduling conflicts and delays. It might be physical noise that, for instance, prevents from hearing important issues in a meeting, but it may also be external interruptions and other disturbance, or timing issues. In such case, use any external aids that may help overcoming them. This might be, for instance, quiet working times, notes, or showcasing to other people what is the overall work load for all.
- Use additionally examples from the previous issue areas to tackle scheduling conflicts and delays.
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A collective list of potential solutions



1. The human being is the starting point
2. Clear communication: simple, clear, to the point, lists, highlight, emphasise , tables, colour code, etc. avoid long descriptive texts. Shorter emails
3. Clarify the processes, timings and other issues at the beginning and repeat regularly.
4. Clear roles and responsibilities, materials and instructions. Lists of activities with key performance indicators, deadlines, roles, responsibilities, etc.
5. Team forming: a kick-off meetings, preferable face-to-face to form the team, agree on processes and rules, etc. to form the team and establish communication. To make sure that everything is clear.
6. Create a trustworthy working atmosphere and create shared points and experiences between the team; let them get to know each other.
8. Target group understanding
9. A backup system and people
10. Plain language
11. Support for newcomers
12. Different timeslots if needed, organize meetings early
13. Meetings: lots of meetings with partners, regular team meetings, e.g. team meetings. More internal meetings per task, work package.
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24. Discover, respect, and discuss before judging. The reason might be e.g. that email does not work
25. Examples
26. Have clear instructions and descriptions that are easily available. Use infographics, matrices, etc. where useful. Add also where to ask help.
27. Explain with examples and cause-effect paths.
28. Make things usable: font, language, colours , etc.
29. Reduce resistance positively.
30. Help people make connection points between experiences and what they already know; use also analogies.
31. Use change management.
32. Inform about things on time.
33. Make sure that everyone has access to any tools, platforms, etc. and is able to use them. Provide support if needed.
34. Make sure that every organization can use the selected systems and equipment.
35. Take into account any human factors, e.g. disabilities, in the use of the systems and equipment.
36. Use language that is common for all.
37. Have a backup plan for breaks in Internet and other systems.
38. Make sure that the selected technical solutions respect GDPR.



The next steps



- The human being is the starting point
- Structures
- Making it usable
- #ThatherisDead

- In case of new practices
 - Linked to change management
 - Not only to inform verbally
 - Inform on time = early enough
 - Always written information and instructions: easy way, easy to find
 - Define roles and new responsibilities and tell what it means
 - Easy and logical to find

- In some cases there is no unified channel for communication across teams. Different tools are used. The flexibility to choose between online document/spreadsheet editors (e.g. google docs), online collaborative platforms (jira , trello , MS Teams, asana etc.) or other tools may be nice but this heterogeneity may be unproductive in some cases.
- Wrong communication polices may cause cybersecurity issues as well.
- **Cybersecurity**
- **GDPR to follow**



Solutions - Strategies



- Communication tools
- Collaboration platforms
- Shorter emails
- Change management
- Reminders
- More internal meetings per task, work package
- Face-to-face
- Clear roles and responsibilities, materials and instructions
- Target groups understanding
- Mobile and digital tools to support communication
- .A backup system and people





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THANK YOU

This project receives funding from the European Commission's
Horizon Europe Research Programme under Grant Agreement Number 101120397

