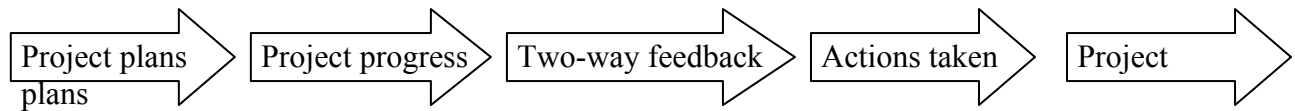


## Getting and giving feedback

Project management begins with planning and ends with practice. As you track your project's progress, you will need to get and give feedback through listening, communicating, negotiating, but above all, through effective leadership.



A two-way feedback system needs to be arranged with those staff and /or contractors responsible for each activity in your project. Feedback relationships begin during the agreement of objectives at the planning stage and continue into implementation as progress monitoring. An example of feedback planning is shown below:

Name	Frequency	Type	Key factors	Other
Karen Ali Operations manager	Every fortnight	Two-way progress	Staff morale	Liaison with Computer manager
Andy Batt Office manager	Monthly - first Monday	Two-way progress	Computer links	Liaison: office manager and contractors
Electrical contractors	Daily	Inspection of work	Safety and quality	Involve Facilities manager

### Exercise

Using the table below make a brief note of potential feedback systems that could be used in your organisation/your next project

Name	Frequency	Type	Key factors	Other

### Oh no!! The project gets stuck!

Unfortunately, some projects fail - they're delivered late, they over-run, or fail to meet their objectives. Causes of failure can be either:

- Internal. They originate entirely within the project team, perhaps from poor planning, or lack of skill
- External. When events outside the project team influence its performance
- Combined. When a combination of the two influences comes into effect

The key to success is to anticipate, whenever possible, the problems the team might encounter. So an effective Project Manager will have provided appropriate training for team

members, and will facilitate discussions. Similarly, effective contingency planning should anticipate most of the external causes of failure.

You will need to ask:

- Is the problem/deficiency critical to the successful completion of your project?
- Are cost and time delays for quality correction justified for the whole project?
- What are the implications for other activities and events later in the project?
- Can extra costs incurred or time lost be recovered in later activities or events?
- Can less important result areas be sacrificed in order to regain time or costs?

However, if despite all the planning, the project does run into trouble, there are some key steps to take.

- Don't allocate blame - focus on solving the problem
- Don't fall back on 'gut reaction' - collect more data, and use appropriate tools and techniques to search for the right solution
- Don't dwell on personality problems - concentrate on behaviours
- Show that you care for the team - provide support but leave them with the responsibility to deliver results

## **COMMON PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **Behind schedule:**

- Look for possible compression or overlap of future activities to recoup time
- Bring in additional resources to reduce the time future activities will require
- Renegotiate the project schedule with senior management and/or your client
- Substitute alternative materials if those specified for an activity are not available
- Delete desirable but less essential objectives from future events to save money
- Offer performance incentives or bonuses for rapid completion of future activities

### **Over budget:**

- Reduce the quantity or quality of resources required for some future activities
- Delete desirable but less essential objectives from future events to save money
- Renegotiate your project budget with senior management and/or your client
- Substitute cheaper materials than those specified (but ensure quality is achieved)
- Reduce the use of external contractors and use internal staff with required skills
- Accept less than ideal performance quality as long as specifications are met

### **Quality of outcome not achieved:**

- Insist on compliance with specifications, even if it means work being done again
- Offer performance incentives or bonuses for better performance on activities
- Renegotiate your project specifications with senior management and/or client
- Identify any sub-standard materials used which do not meet your specifications
- Inspect or test the quality of work provided on a regular basis to avoid problems
- Be prepared to pitch in yourself to raise the motivation of your project workers