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People Capability Maturity Model[®] (P-CMM[®])

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Communication and Coordination

A process area at Maturity Level 2: Managed

Purpose **The purpose of Communication and Coordination is to establish timely communication across the organization and to ensure that the workforce has the skills to share information and coordinate their activities efficiently.**

Description Communication and Coordination establishes the initial basis for developing and empowering workgroups. This process area establishes a culture for openly sharing information across organizational levels and laterally among dependent units. Increasing the flow of information provides the foundation for a participatory culture and empowered workgroups. A critical attribute of this culture is that individuals can feel confident in raising concerns to management without fear of retribution.

Prior to having the benefit of defined processes, people who work together must have the skills required to coordinate their activities and manage shared dependencies. At higher maturity levels, defining competency-based processes removes some of the burden from individuals for managing dependencies by coordinating the required interactions into defined roles and tasks. Prior to the availability of defined processes, interpersonal communication and coordination skills need to be developed to provide a foundation for the structured development of workgroups at higher levels.

Establishing effective communication begins with communicating the organization's values, policies, practices, and other significant organizational information to the workforce. In addition to this top-down information, bottom-up communication is stimulated by seeking the opinions of individuals on their working conditions. Lateral communication among units begins by focusing on communication required to accomplish committed work.

In order to reinforce the importance of open communication, the organization establishes formal procedures for raising and resolving concerns. Once raised, these concerns should be tracked to closure by management to reinforce their respect for the knowledge and experience from which these concerns emerge. Eliminating fear of reprisal or retribution establishes respect for individuals as an important component of the culture.

The interpersonal communication skills necessary to maintain effective working relationships are developed. To maintain effective workgroups, interpersonal problems are addressed quickly and meetings are managed to ensure that workgroup time is used most effectively. Individuals identify dependencies in their committed work and establish agreements for aligning their activities. Individuals monitor progress against these dependencies to ensure coordination within their workgroup.

Goals

- Goal 1** **Information is shared across the organization.**
- Goal 2** **Individuals or groups are able to raise concerns and have them addressed by management.**
- Goal 3** **Individuals and workgroups coordinate their activities to accomplish committed work.**
- Goal 4** **Communication and Coordination practices are institutionalized to ensure they are performed as managed processes.**

Commitment to Perform

Commitment 1 **Executive management establishes and communicates a set of values for the organization regarding the development and management of its workforce.**

Examples of workforce issues that can be addressed through the organization's values include the following:

- Implicit and explicit commitments between the organization and its workforce
- Commitment to growing skills and increasing performance
- Philosophy of career development
- Treatment of individuals
- Workforce rights
- Open communication without fear of reprisal
- Emphasis on collaboration and teamwork
- Intent to align individual, workgroup, unit, and organizational performance
- Desired cultural values and attributes
- Conflict or dispute resolution
- Workplace violence
- Respecting the rights and dignity of individuals during the performance of workforce activities
- Workforce diversity issues
- Sensitivity to and respect for diverse cultures within the workforce
- Emphasis on quality of work life (QWL) and work-life balance
- Commitment to continuous improvement of people-related activities
- Social accountability, addressing child and forced labor, health and safety, collective bargaining, discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours, and compensation [CEPAA 97]
- Other values, as appropriate

Executive management:

1. Documents a set of values to guide people-related behavior in the organization.
2. Publicly endorses the documented values of the organization.
3. Ensures that the values are communicated to all members of the workforce.

Examples of methods for communicating the values of the organization include the following:

- Public display of the organization's values statement
- Open discussion of values-related issues through appropriate communications channels
- Inclusion of values in orientation training, management training, and other appropriate training
- Explicitly using and applying the values when performing people-related activities
- Referring to guiding values in explaining decisions
- Other methods, as appropriate

4. Derives policies and procedures for workforce activities from these values.
5. Establishes mechanisms to ensure that all workforce activities comply with the organization's values.
6. Enforces corrective action when workforce activities do not comply with the values of the organization.
7. Ensures that executive decisions and actions demonstrate consistent support for the organization's values.

Commitment 2 The organization establishes and maintains a documented policy for conducting its Communication and Coordination activities.

Issues typically addressed in the policy include:

1. Relationship of the Communication and Coordination activities to the business objectives, plans, and documented values of the organization.
2. Importance of maintaining an open environment that supports communication flow in all directions.

3. Requirements for periodic communication of organization-wide information to all individuals and workgroups.
4. Requirements for developing communication skills in all individuals and workgroups.
5. Opportunities for raising and resolving concerns.
6. Importance of establishing and meeting commitments involving work dependencies.
7. Importance of ensuring that individuals understand the impact of their communication or interactions and its potential to create a hostile work environment.

In particular, individuals should be familiarized with the types of communication or interactions that could create a hostile work environment for other members of the workforce, especially those related to issues such as harassment, discrimination, equal opportunity, workplace violence, or similar concerns.

8. Communication and Coordination activities comply with relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies.

Commitment 3 An organizational role(s) is assigned responsibility for assisting and advising units on Communication and Coordination activities and procedures.

Examples of individuals or groups who might assist and advise on Communication and Coordination activities include the following:

- Human resources or other appropriate professionals
- Employee communications staff
- Training staff
- Organizational development staff
- Technical writing staff
- Public relations staff
- Other communications staff

Ability to Perform

- Ability 1** **Within each unit, an individual(s) is assigned responsibility and authority for ensuring that Communication and Coordination activities are performed.**
- Ability 2** **Adequate resources are provided for performing Communication and Coordination activities.**
1. Experienced individuals with communication or coordination expertise are made available for Communication and Coordination activities.
 2. Resources for supporting Communication and Coordination activities are made available.
 3. Support for implementing improvements in communication or coordination is made available.
 4. Adequate funding to accomplish Communication and Coordination activities is made available.
- Ability 3** **Individuals responsible for facilitating or improving Communication and Coordination activities receive the preparation needed to perform their responsibilities.**

Examples of training related to facilitating or improving communication or coordination include the following:

- Relevant communication or coordination methods
- Facilitating and developing communication skills in others
- Development of interpersonal communication skills
- Dispute arbitration or resolution techniques
- Planning and coordination methods
- Meeting facilitation
- Addressing concerns, grievances or issues
- Planning and executing an organizational communication strategy
- How to use different communication media effectively

Practices Performed

Practice 1

The workforce-related policies and practices of the organization are communicated to the workforce.

1. Individuals and units are informed of policies and practices that affect them.

Examples of people-related policies and practices that should be communicated include the following:

- Hiring policies
- Training and development policies
- Compensation strategies
- Career growth policies
- Promotion and transfer procedures
- Retraining practices
- Procedures for raising a concern
- Performance management practices

2. Whenever people-related policies and practices are changed, the changes are communicated to the workforce.
3. The organization periodically determines whether the workforce is aware of its people-related policies and practices.
4. When misunderstandings of the people-related policies and practices exist, corrective action is taken.

Practice 2**Information about organizational values, events, and conditions is communicated to the workforce on a periodic and event-driven basis.**

Examples of information that is to be communicated to the workforce include the following:

- Organizational mission, vision, and strategic objectives
- Business ethics
- The organization's values
- Business plans and objectives
- Financial results and conditions
- Business performance
- Quality, productivity, cost, or time-to-market results
- Changes in organizational structure or processes
- Notable events

Examples of communication mechanisms include the following:

- Organization-wide meetings
- Staff meetings
- One-on-one meetings
- Bulletin boards
- Electronic mail announcements
- Internal publications
- Newsletters
- Memos

Practice 3

Information required for performing committed work is shared across affected units in a timely manner.

1. Responsible individuals in each unit:
 - identify the dependencies their committed work has created with other units,
 - agree with responsible individuals in affected units how they will share information,
 - ensure that information needed to perform committed work is shared among affected units in a timely manner,
 - ensure that affected members of their unit are receiving the information they need from sources outside the unit,
 - ensure that affected members of their unit are timely in providing needed information to those in other units, and
 - take corrective action when communication breakdowns occur.
2. When necessary, those to whom dependent units report assist in establishing the communication needed to perform committed work.

Practice 4**Individuals' opinions on their working conditions are sought on a periodic and event-driven basis.**

1. Input is collected on a periodic basis.

Examples of mechanisms for gathering opinions from individuals include the following:

- Opinion surveys or organizational climate questionnaires
- Assessments
- Interviews with a sample of the workforce
- Discussions with management, including meetings that allow individuals to skip levels of management or to meet with management representatives, such as an ombudsman
- Group meetings on concerns
- Focus groups or advisory boards, comprised of individuals
- Postmortem project reviews
- Suggestion boxes or other private means
- Email or other electronic means
- Other solicitations for input

2. The receipt of opinions from members of the workforce is acknowledged.
3. Inputs are analyzed and results are prepared according to the topics being studied.
4. Where appropriate, the results of these analyses, decisions based on them, and actions taken are communicated to the workforce.
5. To ensure confidentiality, results are presented so that individuals or groups cannot be identified as the source of information unless they have given their permission to be identified.

Practice 5 **Individuals or groups can raise concerns according to a documented procedure.**

A *concern* is an issue, state of affairs, condition, or grievance that an individual or workgroup wants the organization to address and resolve.

1. The procedure typically specifies:
 - how a concern may be raised;
 - requirements for tracking and resolving concerns that have been raised;
 - how responses should be provided regarding a concern;
 - how to conduct and record a meeting, if needed, to discuss possible resolutions of a concern;
 - follow-on activities after problem-solving meetings; and
 - how to raise a concern directly with higher management if it cannot be resolved at a lower level.
2. Individuals or groups may raise a concern to any level of management without fear of reprisal.

Examples of mechanisms for raising a concern may include the following:

- Submission of written concerns to an appropriate individual
- Meetings with an appropriate individual or manager
- Meetings with an identified neutral party or ombudsman
- Formal grievance procedures

3. The resolution of a concern can be appealed to higher management levels.

Practice 6 **Activities related to the resolution of a concern are tracked to closure.**

1. Responsibilities are assigned for tracking the status of concerns.
2. The status of all open concerns is periodically reviewed by management.
3. When appropriate progress has not been made in resolving a concern, corrective action is taken.

Practice 7

The interpersonal communication skills necessary to establish and maintain effective working relationships within and across workgroups are developed.

Examples of interpersonal skills that support working relationships include the following:

- Interpersonal communication and dynamics
- Active listening skills
- Group communication and dynamics
- Interaction protocols for specific situations
- Problem resolution skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Negotiation skills
- Multicultural sensitivity and other diversity-related skills.

1. Needs for developing interpersonal skills are identified

Examples of mechanisms through which the need for developing interpersonal skills can be identified include the following:

- Self- or workgroup evaluation
- Observation by manager, workgroup leader, or other responsible individual
- Discussions of performance
- Analysis indicating that an interpersonal skill, such as negotiation, is a critical component for accomplishing an individual's or workgroup's committed work

2. Methods for developing or improving interpersonal skills are identified and performed.

Examples of methods for developing or improving interpersonal skills include the following:

- Training or orientation
- Mentoring or coaching
- Facilitated group discussion or workshop

3. When appropriate, individuals are sensitized to cultural issues that would influence interpersonal or workgroup communication styles.

Practice 8

Interpersonal problems or conflicts that degrade the quality or effectiveness of working relationships are handled appropriately.

Examples of appropriate ways to handle interpersonal problems include the following:

- Improving interpersonal communication skills
- Advising or counseling one or more individuals
- Improving the dynamics of a group
- Using an ombudsman, arbitrator, or facilitator
- Reassigning one or more individuals
- Conducting performance management actions
- Taking disciplinary action

Practice 9

Individuals and workgroups coordinate their activities to accomplish committed work.

Refer to Practice 3 of the Staffing process area for information regarding making commitments for work that individuals or workgroups will be accountable for performing.

1. Individuals and workgroups participate in making decisions about how to organize and perform their work.

2. Individuals and workgroups organize and perform their work to satisfy their commitments and dependencies.

Refer to the Performance Management process area for information regarding establishing objectives related to committed work against which unit and individual performance can be measured, discussions of performance against these objectives, and enhancements to achieved performance.

Practice 10**Individuals and workgroups monitor and coordinate the dependencies involved in their committed work.**

Some work in a unit can be performed independently by individuals because it does not involve dependencies on the work of others in order to satisfy commitments. However, where the work is interdependent, individuals and workgroups should ensure they mutually agree to their commitments in order to coordinate their activities.

1. Committed work at the unit, workgroup, and individual levels is analyzed to identify dependencies.
2. Individuals and workgroups agree on the dependencies created by their committed work.
3. Mutually agreeable mechanisms for coordinating dependent work are established.
4. Agreements for coordinating dependent work are documented.

Work dependencies may take many different forms. Dependencies in work may range from highly repetitive, routine activities to dependencies involving occasional results from large, non-routine undertakings. The means for documenting dependencies can vary widely and should be matched to the characteristics of the dependency.

Examples of appropriate forms of documenting agreements concerning dependencies include the following:

- Plans and schedules
- Defined processes or procedures
- Defined roles
- Job or position descriptions
- Memoranda of understanding
- Contracts
- Defined performance objectives based on committed work

5. Individuals or workgroups communicate in advance when dependencies cannot be met.
6. When necessary, dependencies are revised through mutual agreement among affected parties.

Practice 11

Meetings are conducted to make the most effective use of participants' time.

1. Guidelines are developed for maximizing meeting efficiency based on the organization's culture and values, business processes, and the purpose of the meeting.

Examples of topics addressed by meeting guidelines include the following:

- Meeting purpose
- Meeting planning
- Meeting agenda and time management
- Responsibilities and roles of participants
- Attendance size and requirements
- Meeting procedures
- Location and room set-up
- Participation mechanisms
- Practices for tracking action items or issues

2. Meetings are called only if they offer an adequate benefit for the time consumed; otherwise, a more efficient way to accomplish the goal is pursued.
3. To the extent possible, a meeting's purpose, objectives, and procedures are planned, and an agenda is distributed in advance.
4. Meetings are conducted to maintain focus on accomplishing their original purpose.
5. Meetings are conducted to encourage the participation of all who are able to make a contribution.
6. Actions to be performed following the meeting are assigned and tracked to completion.

Measurement and Analysis

Measurement 1

Measurements are made and used to determine the status and performance of Communication and Coordination activities.

Examples of measurements include the following:

- Use of communication media
- Number of people trained in communication skills
- Number of people trained in meeting management and facilitation skills
- Results from opinion surveys
- Number of interpersonal conflicts handled through formal mechanisms
- Number of concerns raised
- Number of meetings requested for expressing concerns
- Time and effort expended to resolve concerns, grievances, or issues
- Number of dependencies documented
- Percent of commitments completed on time
- Time spent in meetings
- Meeting measures, such as percent of meetings starting and ending on time, and percent of meetings with agendas and with agendas distributed in advance
- Rate at which meeting action items are closed

Measurement 2 Unit measures of Communication and Coordination activities are collected and maintained.

1. Units collect data as Communication and Coordination activities occur.
2. Measurements made to determine the status and performance of Communication and Coordination activities are maintained.

Examples of reasons for maintaining measurements of Communication and Coordination activities include the following:

- Periodic analysis to determine unit-level trends
- Aggregating data at the organizational level to develop organizational measures
- Analysis to determine organizational trends
- Evaluation of organizational trends

Verifying Implementation

Verification 1 **A responsible individual(s) verifies that the Communication and Coordination activities are conducted according to the organization’s documented policies, practices, procedures, and, where appropriate, plans; and addresses noncompliance.**

These reviews verify that:

1. Communication and Coordination activities comply with the organization’s policies and stated values.
2. Communication and Coordination activities comply with all relevant laws and regulations.
3. Communication and Coordination activities are performed according to the organization’s documented practices and procedures.
4. Noncompliance issues are handled appropriately.

Verification 2 **Executive management periodically reviews the Communication and Coordination activities, status, and results; and resolves issues.**

These reviews verify:

1. Progress in the performance of any planned communication activities.
2. Results from reviews of Communication and Coordination practices and activities.

Refer to Verification 1 for information regarding reviews of Communication and Coordination activities to ensure adherence to the following:

- Relevant laws and regulations
- Organizational policies, practices, and procedures

3. Status of resolution of noncompliance issues.
4. Trends related to communication and coordination, including:

- trends related to communication issues,
 - rate at which serious communication problems occur and are being reduced, and
 - trends related to concerns raised, including the number of concerns raised and the rate of resolving them.
5. Resolutions of concerns comply with the organization's documented policies and procedures.
 6. Effectiveness of Communication and Coordination activities in achieving effective communication and coordination.

