Report on progress

What is it?

Progress reports are also known as highlight reports or checkpoint reports. They are an essential project management discipline to ensure that stakeholders are kept up to date and progress is tracked.

Progress reports remove the need for the project lead to be approached by individual stakeholders at different times for personal updates and they ensure that a consistent message on status is communicated. Stakeholders may comprise the project sponsor, the group(s) the project reports to and other interested parties (see stakeholder analysis).

When to use it

The frequency of the progress report will depend on the needs of stakeholders and project sponsor, and the size of the project.

The progress report may simply be circulated to stakeholders, or discussed as part of a project team meeting – either raising elements for discussion or reviewing the full document.

It is good discipline for the project lead to update the progress report regularly and to note any actions and how these compare with the intention in the previous report. Ultimately, the progress report asks: “Is the project on track to be delivered on time and if not, what are the blockers preventing this?”

How to use it

The key components of a progress report are:

- When did the actions start and end – were they delivered as planned?
- What actions have occurred since the last report?
- What actions are planned to take place between now and the next report, when will they take place and what resources are involved?
- What are the identified risks and how are these being managed?
- What are the potential issues and how are these being mitigated?

It also gives the project lead the opportunity to seek agreement for changes to the project brief ie change in project scope.

On occasions, the action plan may accompany the progress report to demonstrate project progress in its entirety and whether the project is meeting key milestones and will be delivered on time.
**What next?**

Continue with delivering the project and take corrective action in accordance with feedback from stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning points</th>
<th>Risks and issues</th>
<th>Activities – last week</th>
<th>Activities – next week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>