

# A COMMUNICATION GAP IN THE PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

*The most common cause of project failure is miscommunication. Coworkers and departments become confused when changes and updates are not communicated correctly and on time. This ambiguity leads to errors, missed steps in the process, conflicts, and other problems. All of these scenarios will result in delays or budget overruns in the end. In this case, multiple stakeholder communication and changes in client requirements cause the project to fail in success. As a result, internal conflicts will arise, with teams blaming each other for inefficiencies and poor deliverables.*

**Keywords:** Communication Management, Project Management, Failure in Success, Interior project.

## INTRODUCTION

Sujata Kalpade, a project manager at Adhan Bharat LLP, was disenchanted on June 3rd, 2022, after hearing from the site supervisor about a delivered light of a Fit-out Project. Adhan Bharat LLP (ABL) was awarded a Civil and Interior package of a Fit-out project for a total value of INR 24 million by Chuliars India (CI), a Singapore-based company chosen as GC (General Contractor) by Udhar Swiss (US), a Foreign based bank (NBFC), to develop the new office fit-out project as part of their expansion plan.

Sujata required a robust solution to the problem; however, the lights being delivered are not ABL's responsibility; however, they provide SK with a sense of pride in timely completion and enhance ABL's reputation. Meanwhile, Deepak Arora, Representative S, is equally concerned about the timely completion of the US office, given the upcoming visit from foreign delights. The New Regional Office, which must be developed and handed over to the Business Operations Unit on July 7, 2022, is a critical component of the project (EOT approved).

### Fit-Out of the New Regional Office

This new office is a part of an expansion plan for the US in India as this would boost their operational occupancy and also will provide an easy commute to the top officials as the location is nearer to International Airport Delhi (Nikumbh & Pimplikar, 2014).

US (Client) had awarded the project to CI, being the lowest bidder for the General Contract works which include the MEP services, LV services, Data and networking, and Civil and Interior works for a total value of INR 58 million. The US also appointed Jalandhar Laung Elaichi (JLE) India, an America-based company as a PMC for the project. The Architect and the Consultant have been chosen by the US in a separate contract as their partner for executing all the projects in India expansion. The Client has also appointed its AV vendor.

As per tender terms and conditions, the project is to be developed and handed over to the client in 3 months from the date of award of the construction phase Contract (appointing GC). The PMC is a responsible entity to coordinate between the architect, Consultants, GC and Client

and is authorized as the client's representative to provide the Quality and timely completion of the project.

The Similar nature project has completed earlier in Pune, India for the US where the JLE, consultants and architect were the same. The Client is targeting the project to be certified under LEED certification with a platinum rating.

### **Contracts Diversity**

The appointed GC has further sublet the packages to Illuminate Electricals as the electrical vendor partner, Saaf Air as the HVAC partner, Liram as the LV partner, ABL as the C&I and PFF (plumbing and Firefighting Partner), Armer as the Carpet partner, Kimra as the Loose Furniture Partner, layvord as Modular furniture partner.

The appointed Consultants are Plumbing consultants, Electrical consultants, Mechanical Consultants, and Cost Consultants who are based in Mumbai.

**Abbreviations and Acronyms:** LV: Low Voltage Works, C&I: Civil and Interior Works, HVAC: Hydraulic Ventilation and Air Conditioning, PFF: Plumbing and Fire Fighting Works, NBFC: Non-Banking Financial Company, GC: General Contractor, PMC: Project Management Consultancy, MEP: Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Services, LVT: Luxury Vinyl Tile.

### **Communication Plan**

1. The meeting for project progress between GC, PMC, and Client for monitoring the progress of the project at a frequency once a week.
2. The meeting for Design augmentation between GC, PMC, Client, architect, and Consultants of the project at a frequency once a week.
3. The Site update meeting between GC and its affiliate partners and PMC at a site at a frequency once a week.
4. Issues related to meeting between Architect, consultants, GC and its affiliate partner and PMC as per the requirements prior informed.
5. ABL and similar affiliates of CI are not allowed to communicate directly with JLE, Consultants and the architect.
6. They can Communicate all their queries to CI, which can further raise them with other stakeholders and provide the answer similarly.

**Project Planning and its Features:** The project is planned for a three-month duration. The total area of the project is 5000 sqft which comprises three critical rooms, two 6pax meeting rooms, 18 pax Board room, two Senior manager Cabin, one Finance Room, two other rooms, one store, one cafeteria, one washroom and one hall to accommodate 20 workstations is to be delivered.

The project consists of Italian marble flooring, LVT, Carpet, Acoustic Paint on the ceiling, Rafter Ceiling, Baffle Ceiling, and Gypsum Ceiling. Grid Ceiling, Modular Partitions, Gypsum Partitions, Block works, texture paint, Wallpapers, Graphics, and Signages.

## **PROJECT EXECUTION AND THE CHALLENGES**

Sujata and Changez Gupta, a project manager from Chuliars India, visited the site on March 16th for due diligence and discovered that the existing floors were not levelled, which could cause a quality issue later with the carpet installation. In any case, the floor where the

marble flooring will be installed must be dismantled. Sujata requested that Changez provide her with the necessary approval for the complete floor dismantling after noticing the quality issue. Later, on March 20, 2022, Changez received approval and gave Sujata permission to perform the dismantling work. However, while the dismantling work appears to be of high quality, it later proves to be a nightmare for all stakeholders.

The work can only be done at night to avoid disrupting the work of other tenants during official working hours. Since the developer rented the adjacent similar space to a company whose operations are 24x7, the work had been halted by the previous nights. This issue was further discussed, and an agreement was reached to work at night from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM, Monday to Friday, and 24x7 work weekends till Monday 6:00 AM. This knowledge modified Sujata's plan, which she must revise following approved timelines.

On March 26th, 2022, the project site was dismantled and cleared. Site marking was carried out according to the drawings received, and it was discovered that there was a difference in the drawing and actual site dimensions, which Sujata highlighted to the GC, who brought up this to the PMC, who reared it to the architect, who informed the client of the discrepancies. Another three days passed in vain, with no word from Sujata on how to begin the work. Fortunately, another ABL site is on the upper floor to accommodate the labour's idle time.

On March 30, 2022, following interventions by JLE senior management, the architect's proposed changes were approved. Sujata recognized the time being wasted in this process and suggested direct communication with the architect, which violated the project's contractual obligation because ABL is not directly obligated to the project's major stakeholders.

The GC purposefully opposed her request because, according to the contracts, ABL has no right to communicate directly with the project stakeholders appointed by the client. She issued an RFQ, requesting that the queries be forwarded to the GC in the hopes that they would be resolved for the project to run smoothly.

Sujata was informed of a change in drawings on April 17, 2022, and some drawings were kept as originals. Sujata requested that the GC at the site provide the Consolidated drawing set for the latest drawings because her team was unsure which drawing to follow and she was unsure because she had never attended the regular weekly design meeting with the GC, PMC, Architects, Consultants, and Clients (Guide, 2008).

On April 20th, 2022, a new challenge appeared as the building was very old structured and the Floor above the slab bottom height is 2900 mm as per the drawings the work is carried out to host the ceiling at 2400mm turned out the communication problem again as HVAC drawings suggested the ceiling at 2300 mm duly approved by the consultant but no change is being made to the interior drawings and no information is being shared with Sujata This halted the work for nearly ten days, and on May 3, 2022, the revised ceiling heights of 2350 mm and 2200 mm were received.

Sujata was just happy enough to realize that the Eid festival had become a bigger issue for her, causing further delays in bringing the labour. On May 8th, she received her planned labour, and a revised completion date of June 30th was requested, highlighting the issues being recorded and approved by the clients.

Sujata received the revised consolidated drawing on May 17, 2022, following a long battle. On May 20, 2022, a client visit and a follow-up visit from the architect revised the drawings again, and the changes were communicated informally.

The battle for consolidated drawing has resumed, and a meeting has been scheduled for June 3rd, 2022, to resolve the issues that highlight two 6-pax meeting rooms that should be identical, resulting in rework. Sujata also demanded that AV vendors visit the site before she began the final stages of the project. The AV vendor recently visited and suggested some additional changes (Debelo & Weldegebriel, 2022; Stal-Le Cardinal & Marle 2006).

All necessary approvals were obtained, and the client of a foreign delight visiting the office announced a date; the final deadline was July 7, 2022.

When the major light arrives incorrectly for the visit in three days on July 3, 2022, the lights were delivered hanging lights with clutch wire arrangement, and the challenge was how to install the lights. The ceiling was designed specifically to receive the concealed linear lights in the cabins.

Sujata had previously highlighted the same for cross-checking with the light supplier, but the supplier never visited. To accommodate the lights, the entire ceiling had to be dismantled and rebuilt.

The electrical consultant had previously approved the light drawings, and the general contractor was aware but had not communicated with the architect or the C&I vendor (Li et al., 2021).

## OBSERVATION AND CONCLUSION

Sujata deployed more staff and teams to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the next three days, and the Site Visit became a success. The above scenario is apparent since the client failed to properly communicate his requirements to the architect. As a coordinator, the PMC failed miserably. The GC erred in communicating the Change to the affiliate member. If Sujata's request to directly contact the stakeholders had been granted, the story might have turned out differently. It also raises the question of how these types of diversity can harm the project; what do you recommend?

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