

TECHNOLOGY

Phase III: Preparing for Change



Activity 20: Developing an End-of-Life Communications Plan

Goals

1. Develop plan to communicate end-of-life decisions with community

Prerequisites

None, although this guide presumes that your team has already decided that a project, program, or platform will be ending.

Who Should Participate?

Program leadership (strategic thinkers), Program management (tactical thinkers)

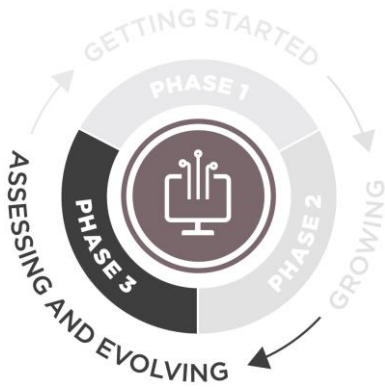
Length

120 minutes

Activity Instructions

As a group, discuss and answer the following questions. The included matrix can help organize your decisions.

1. Who is responsible for implementing the communications plan and ensuring its success?
2. What is being retired? The entire program? An application? Part of an application? The repository, mailing lists, website, or other online forums? Communications should include a wind-down plan and timeline for each element.
 - a. Be very clear about what is sunseting - have answers ready for what you anticipate to be common misperceptions
 - b. Be prepared to respond to controversies / negative feedback
3. What do you want to happen as a result of each communication? Let your stakeholders know the purpose of the communication upfront - is it just for information, or do they need to take action?
4. Who is responsible for preparing and delivering communications? Who is on hand to proofread and ensure the message, and any necessary actions on the part of stakeholders, is clear?
5. Who are the stakeholders who need to receive the information? Is the information the same for each stakeholder group?
6. What is your communications timeline? Different communications might be timed to different elements of the wind-down, such as the initial announcement about end of life and then follow-ups about significant events such as the last major release, last maintenance release, end of support, etc.
7. How will you share the information to ensure that all stakeholders receive it? Messages may need to be repeated in multiple formats across multiple channels.
8. Who will be responsible for following up to ensure that messages were received?



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Sample Communications Planning Matrix

Description - what type of comm?	Frequency – how often?	Method / Channel	Audience / Recipient	Owner / Responsible Party
<i>Project team meeting</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Tech team / Project team</i>	<i>PM, Chair</i>
<i>Stakeholder update</i>	<i>Biweekly</i>	<i>Email / Website</i>	<i>Stakeholders (internal and external)</i>	<i>PM</i>
<i>Leadership group update</i>	<i>Biweekly</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Executive leadership</i>	<i>PM</i>
<i>Regular newsletter / blog</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Portion in newsletter / blog / etc.</i>	<i>Users / Community at large</i>	<i>Comms team lead</i>

Examples in *blue italics*.