

# Project Failure: A Bad Communication (Case Study)

Sahil Kumar Arora



**Abstract:** *The most common cause of project failure is miscommunication. It is most underrated and purposefully not deeply planned by most of the contractors, like Sujata, who 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 these scenarios impacted the project, resulting in delays or budget overruns in the end. In this case, multiple stakeholder communications and changes in client requirements caused the project to fail and updates are not communicated correctly and on time. This ambiguity leads to errors, missed steps in the process, conflicts, and other issues. All these scenarios will result in delays or budget overruns in the end. In this case, multiple stakeholder communications and changes in client requirements caused the project to fail. As a result, internal conflicts will arise, with teams blaming each other for inefficiencies and poor deliverables. This case also entails the importance of stakeholder engagement at different levels of the project and the strategy to be implemented for stakeholder management. The goal of this case study is to draw attention to the difficulties that arise when small and medium-sized businesses fail to recognize the value of communication management in stakeholder engagement, which provided them success but were unable to account for the losses they suffered. This will enable them to account for the costs associated with change management involving stakeholder engagement.*

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

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sujata Kalpade, a project manager at Adhan Bharat LLP, was disenchanted on June 3, 2022, after hearing from the site supervisor about the delivered light of a fit-out project. Chuliars India (CI), a Singapore-based company, was chosen as the 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. Further, GC has awarded Adhan Bharat LLP (ABL) a civil and interior package for a fit-out project with a total value of INR 24 million.

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, the US representative, is equally concerned about the timely completion of the US office, given the

upcoming visit from foreign delights. A critical component of the project is the new regional office, which must be developed and handed over to the business operations unit by July 7, 2022. (EOT approved)

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

The US (the client) had awarded the project to CI as the lowest bidder for the general contract work. MEP services, LV services, data and networking, and civil and interior works are all included in the INR 58 million total. The US also appointed Jalandhar Laung Elaichi (JLE), India, an America-based company, as a PMC for the project. The architect and consultant were chosen as partners by the US in a separate contract to execute all projects in India. The client has also appointed its AV vendor.

According to the tender terms and conditions, the project must be developed and handed over to the client within three months of the construction phase contract being awarded. The PMC is the entity in charge of coordinating between the architect, consultants, and client and is authorized to represent the client in providing quality and timely project completion.

The Similar Nature project was completed earlier in Pune, India, for the US, where the JLE, consultants, and architects were the same. The client wants the project to be LEED certified with a platinum rating.

## II. CONTRACT DIVERSITY

The packages have also been sublet by the general contractor

- Iluminate Electricals as the electrical vendor partner.
- Saaf Air is the HVAC partner.
- Liram as the LV partner.
- ABL is the C&I and PFF (plumbing and firefighting partner).
- Armer is the carpet partner.
- Kimra was named loose furniture partner, and Layvord was named modular furniture partner.

The Plumbing consultants, electrical consultants, mechanical consultants, and cost consultants based in Mumbai have been appointed.

### A. 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 stands for Non-Banking Financial Company. General Contractor; PMC: Project Management Consultancy; MEP: Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Services; LVT: Luxury Vinyl Tile; EOT: Extension of Time.

Manuscript received on 02 December 2022 | Revised Manuscript received on 17 December 2022 | Manuscript Accepted on 15 January 2023 | Manuscript published on 30 January 2023.

\* Correspondence Author(s)

Sahil Kumar Arora\*, Project Manager, Special Construction Division, MTCC, Maldives. Email: [sahilkarora065@gmail.com](mailto:sahilkarora065@gmail.com), ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5293-9798>

© The Authors. Published by Blue Eyes Intelligence Engineering and Sciences Publication (BEIESP). This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC-ND license <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

## Project Failure: A Bad Communication (Case Study)

### B. Communication Plan

- The meeting for project progress between the GC, PMC, and client is held once a week to monitor the progress of the project.
- The meeting for design augmentation between the GC, PMC, client, architect, and consultants of the project occurs at a frequency of once a week.
- The site update meeting between GC and its affiliate partners, as well as PMC, takes place once a week.
- Issues related to meetings between the architect, consultants, GC and its affiliate partner, and PMC as per the requirements previously informed
- ABL and similar affiliates are not allowed to communicate directly with JLE, consultants, or the architect.
- They can communicate all their queries to CI, which can further discuss them with other stakeholders and provide the answer similarly.

### C. Project Planning and its Features

The project is planned for a three-month duration. The total area of the project is 5000 sq ft (464.52 m<sup>2</sup>). The area comprises three critical rooms: two 6-person meeting rooms, an 18-person boardroom, two senior manager cabins, one finance room, two other rooms, one store, one cafeteria, one washroom, and one hall to accommodate 20 workstations.

The project consists of Italian marble flooring, LVT, carpet, acoustic paint on the ceiling, rafter ceilings, baffle ceilings, and gypsum ceilings. Grid ceilings, modular partitions, gypsum partitions, block works, texture paint, wallpaper, graphics, and signage.

## III. PROJECT EXECUTION AND CHALLENGES

Sujata and Changez Gupta, a project manager from Chuliars India, visited the site for due diligence on March 16th and discovered that the existing floors were not levelled, which could cause a quality issue later with the carpet installation. The floor where the marble flooring will be installed must be removed in any case. 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. While the dismantling work appears to be done to achieve 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. The previous night's work had been halted because the developer had rented the adjacent, similar space to a company that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This issue was discussed further, and an agreement was reached to work at night from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM, Monday through Friday, with 24x7 weekend coverage until 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 between the drawing and the actual site

dimensions. Sujata highlighted this to the GC, who brought it up with the PMC, who relayed 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.

The proposed alterations by the architect were authorized on March 30, 2022, following input from JLE's top management. Because ABL is not directly bound to the project's primary stakeholders, Sujata advised a direct connection with the architect after seeing how much time was being lost in this process. However, this suggestion broke the contract for the project.

The client 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 in time for the project to proceed 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 provide the consolidated drawing set for the latest drawings. The 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.

On April 20th, 2022, a new challenge appeared as the building was very old and the floor height above the slab bottom was 2900 mm as per the drawings. Work is being done to raise the ceiling to 2400 mm. This turned out to be another communication problem, as the HVAC drawings suggested a ceiling height of 2300 mm, which was duly approved by the consultant. 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 more of an 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, after a client visit and a follow-up visit from the architect, the drawings were revised again, and the changes were communicated informally.

The battle for consolidated drawings 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.

The client of a foreign delight visiting the office declared a deadline; the ultimate due date was July 7, 2022. All required clearances were received.



When the major lights failed to arrive in time for the three-day visit on July 3, 2022, the lights were delivered as hanging lights with clutch wire arrangements, and the challenge was figuring out 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 general contractor was aware that the electrical consultant had previously authorized the lighting plans, but neither the architect nor the C&I vendor had been informed.

#### IV. OBSERVATION

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 [4]. The above scenario is apparent since the client failed to properly communicate his requirements to the architect. [5] As a coordinator, the PMC failed miserably. [1] The company erred in communicating the change to the affiliate member. [2] If Sujata's request to directly contact the stakeholders had been granted, the story might have turned out differently. [3] It also raises the question of how this type of diversity can harm the project; what do you recommend?

#### V. CONCLUSION

The communication channel must be properly designed at the beginning of the project. The preceding scenario demonstrates the significance of stakeholder involvement. Multi-level communication like including the subcontractor in the design-related meeting will not only aid in subcontractor planning but will also provide significant progress and serve as a useful tool in the accurate assessment of the project's impacts because of changing the design mid-project. Additionally, the levels of attention and impact—both actual and desired—of various stakeholders will vary. The sunk cost related to stakeholder engagement can be decreased, and the client will be able to manage the expense.

#### DECLARATION

Funding	Not applicable
Conflicts of Interest/ Competing Interests	Not conflicts of interest to the best of our knowledge.
Ethics Approval	Not relevant
Consent to Participate	Not applicable
Consent for Publication	Not applicable
Availability of Data and Material	Not applicable
Authors Contributions	Not applicable, I am only the sole author of the article.
Code Availability	Not applicable

#### REFERENCES

1. Atul R Nikumbh, D. S. (Jan, 2014). Role of Project Management Consultancy in Construction. IOSR Journal of Mechanical and Civil Engineering (IOSR-JMCE). [CrossRef]
2. Elias Defalgn Debelo, Z. B. (2022). Effect of Contractor – Subcontractor Relationship on the Performance of Construction Project: A Case Study of Dire Dawa Construction Projects. American Journal of Civil Engineering. [CrossRef]
3. Hongyan Li, J. F. (vol. 2021). "Collaborative Evolution Mechanism of PMC Project Organizational Management System from the Perspective of Organizational Conflict". Mathematical Problems in Engineering. [CrossRef]
4. Institute, P. M. (2008). A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK® guide) (Fourth ed.). Project Management Institute.
5. Udo, N. (2009). Starting right: establishing requirements. Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress.

#### AUTHORS PROFILE



**Sahil Kumar Arora, Education:** PGP ACM from NICMAR (2020 batch), B.E.–Civil Engineering. Project Manager, Special Construction Division, Maldives Transport and Contracting Company plc, Maldives. He was born in Saharanpur and plays district cricket. He also has an interest in singing. He graduated in 2016 from AKTU (formerly UPTU). Later, he began working in the construction industry. Before joining the Nicmar, he worked as a project engineer in Nepal for an ADB-funded project. The post-graduate experience instilled in me the ability to write and a keen interest in research publication. He got placed in an interior design project, and during those times, the idea stuck in his mind to write this case study when he was in a similar project and experiencing the same challenges.

