

## CONTROL: PHASE 4

[intro radio show theme music]

PHIL:

Hello out there and thanks for setting your radio dial to PM 105.9. We've got a great show lined up for you today. I'm your host Phil Mullin, and as always, I'll be taking your calls throughout the program, so please get on the horn if you've got a burning question about...

Project management.

Yes, that's right, our focus for this program is project management. Now, if you've been tuning in over the past few weeks, you'll know that we've covered the first 3 phases of project management. So, today we're going to take a closer look at the fourth phase: the Control phase.

For those of you tuning in for the first time, what you need to know about me is that I am a project management guru. I have over a decade of experience as a project manager, and I've recently adopted the SPECS model to support my practice.

I'm here to answer any and all questions you have about the Control phase of SPECS.

Hang out with me for the rest of the show today, and I am confident that you'll be able to:

- Recognize the importance of effective communication
- Determine which communication methods are appropriate when sending project information to your client; and
- Identify the difference between verify and validate

The phone is ringing off the hook so let's get right to it. Caller 1: what have you got for me and my listeners?

CALLER 1:

Hi Phil, first I just want to say I LOVE the show. I listen every week.

PHIL:

Ah, so *you're* the one!

CALLER 1:

That's me!

PHIL:

And you have a question for me today?

CALLER 1:

Yes, so I'm managing a project and it's going fairly well, except, well, I'm having some problems with one of my contractors.

PHIL:

Ah!

CALLER 1:

So, in short, there have been some delays...

PHIL:

.... and you're not going to make your deadlines.

CALLER 1:  
Exactly.

PHIL:  
Hmm.

CALLER 1:  
I just think that stuff's out of my control, but it's hard to explain that to a client without it reflecting poorly on me and my company, ya know?

PHIL:  
And your question is about how best to navigate the situation with your client.

CALLER 1:  
Yes.

PHIL: OK, if you've been in the game for any amount of time, you'll know that delays with contractors happen, and even though that's usually beyond your control, planning for delays is within it. Did you account for possible delays with contractors in your risk analysis?

CALLER 1:  
I actually didn't.

PHIL:  
That's OK, but next time you should consider any possible delays and communicate them to your client early on during the Plan phase.

CALLER 1:  
Got it.

PHIL:  
But that's beside the point. At this stage and if possible, find another resource to pick up the slack from your contractor. You can let your client know about the delay and that you've taken the best course of action to get the schedule back on track.

CALLER 1:  
OK.

PHIL:  
Remember: maintain control of your project and communicate all relevant information to your team and client.

CALLER 1:  
Thanks Phil.

PHIL:  
That's what I'm here for Caller 1. Let's keep things rolling and hear from another caller. Caller 2, you're on the air.

CALLER 2:

Phil, I'm just wondering what you think is the best way to communicate with a client?

PHIL:

Communication: the key to all healthy relationships.

CALLER 2:

(laughs) Indeed.

PHIL:

The answer to your question is simple: ask. Ask your client in the kick-off meeting what their preference is. Be as flexible as possible, and document everything so you can refer to it later on.

CALLER 2:

OK, and what if they said they prefer to be contacted by phone, but I can never reach them?

PHIL:

I'd send a follow-up email that covers what you were going to discuss by phone, and ask again if they'd prefer communication by email going forward.

CALLER 2:

It all sounds so simple until you're actually in the situation.

PHIL:

Of course, and different variables are at play in every case. Just try to keep the lines of communication open, adapt things if you need to, and document everything. I should also mention that the method of communication with clients and your team might be different depending on what it is you're sending.

CALLER 2:

Right.

PHIL:

You might send project updates by email to team members who're usually out of office. You might post stuff on a blog for those that just need to be kept up-to-date. You might keep notes in a personal agenda so you can easily refer to them when on weekly calls with your client.

CALLER 2:

OK perfect. Makes sense.

PHIL:

Thanks Caller 2. Let's take a quick break and hear from our sponsors.

[radio show transition music fades out for an ad and then back in:]

PHIL:

Ladies and gentlemen, we're cruising here on PM 105.9 and we want to hear from you. Caller 3, what's shakin'?

AUTOMATED MESSAGE:

(robotic) Congratulations! You have won a cruise. Press the number sign to accept—

PHIL:

Whoa! ... OK. (comically) Can the real caller 3 come forward please?

CALLER 3:

I'm here, Phil. How's your day going?

PHIL:

Couldn't be better, Caller 3. Apparently I just won a cruise.

CALLER 3:

Oh nice!

PHIL:

(laughs) You've got a question for me.

CALLER 3:

Yes, what's the difference between verify and validate?

PHIL:

Ah yes.

CALLER 3:

I've heard the terms tossed around and was never really sure.

PHIL:

Great question: the terms are used after work is reviewed. You can tell the difference based on who's doing the review.

CALLER 3:

OK.

PHIL:

Verification is an internal process. You and your team look at the work and *verify* that the requirements of the work align with the scope of the project.

CALLER 3:

And how is that different from validation?

PHIL:

Validation is an external process, meaning the work was reviewed by your client or any stakeholders. By validating the work, they're actually acknowledging, or *validating*, that the quality of the work meets their expectations and the work was completed as desired.

CALLER 3:

All right: verification is an internal process, and validation is external.

PHIL:

You got it, Caller 3.

PHIL:

Well folks, it seems like we just got to the carnival and now they're closing down the rides. This marks the end of another great show on project management here on PM 105.9. I hope you had as much fun listening as I'll have on my cruise. I'll see ya next week when I answer questions on the fifth and final phase of SPECS: Sign-off.

And this is me, Phil Mullin, signing off.