

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING



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What is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder is anybody who can affect or is affected by an organisation, strategy or project. They can be internal or external and they can be at senior or junior levels. Some definitions suggest that stakeholders are those who have the power to impact on an organisation or project in some way.

What is stakeholder mapping?

Stakeholder mapping is also known as audience mapping or stakeholder analysis.

In the context of intelligence gathering it is a process that aims to understand on who the activity is likely to impact and who is interested. It also opens up ideas for how best to engage with stakeholders during the activity itself as part of the intelligence gathering process for example, as well as at a reporting stage.

There are four steps within a stakeholder mapping exercise:

- Identifying the relevant stakeholders/stakeholder groups
- Analysing their perspectives, current vision or arguments
- Visualising the relationships between the organisation and stakeholders, and the relationships between the different stakeholders
- Prioritising stakeholder groups over one another

The first step in building any stakeholder map is to develop a categorised list of the members of the stakeholder community. Once the list is reasonably complete it is then possible to assign priorities in some way, and then to translate the 'highest priority' stakeholders into a table or a picture. The potential list of stakeholders for any project will always exceed both the time available for analysis and the capability of the mapping tool to sensibly display the results, the challenge is to focus on the 'right stakeholders' who are currently important and to use the tool to visualise this critical sub-set of the total community.

The most common presentation styles use a matrix to represent two dimensions of interest with frequently a third dimension shown by the colour or size of the symbol representing the individual stakeholders.

HOW BEST TO
ENGAGE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS
DURING THE
ACTIVITY ITSELF
AS PART OF THE
INTELLIGENCE
GATHERING
PROCESS

Some of the commonly used 'dimensions' include:

- Power (high, medium, low)
- Support (positive, neutral, negative)
- Influence (high or low)
- Need (strong, medium, weak)

Benefits

Stakeholder analysis helps with the identification of the following:

- Stakeholders' interests
- Mechanisms to influence other stakeholders
- Potential risks
- Key people to be informed about the project during the execution phase
- Negative stakeholders as well as their adverse effects on the project

Task

Using an example of a recent local project, activity or service delivery you have been involved in, use the stakeholder categories of

Power H, M, L

Support +, - or neutral

Influence H or L

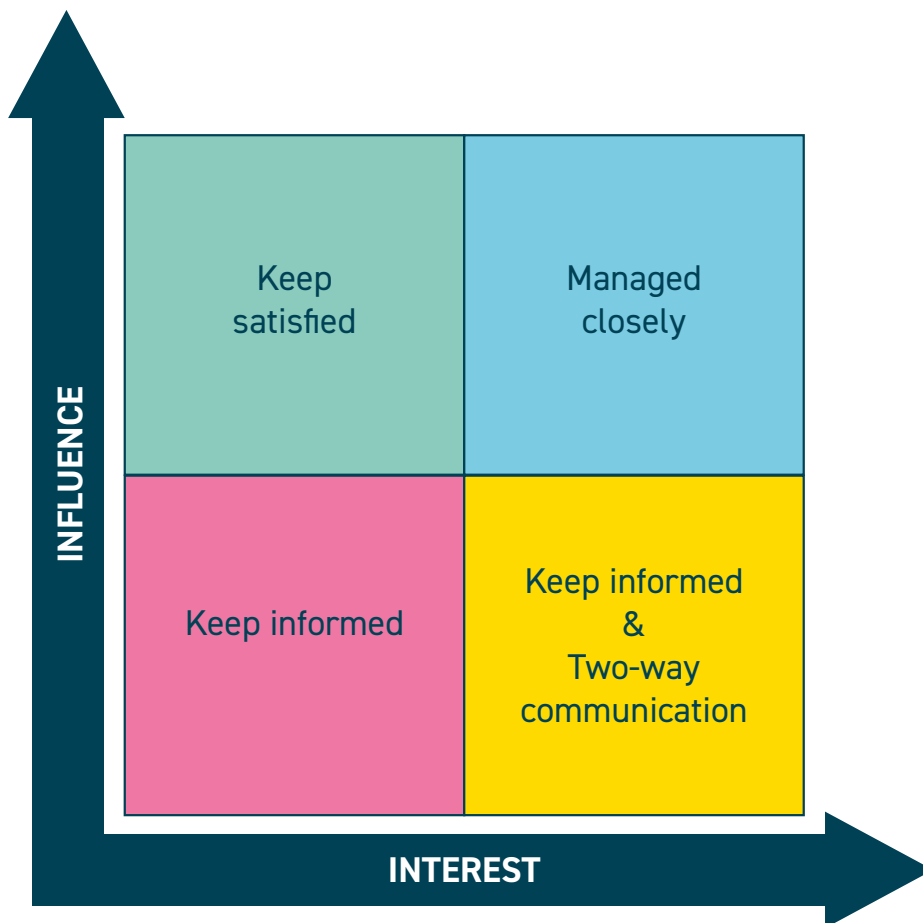
Need S, W, M

- List people and organisations that you would define as key stakeholders – a key stakeholder being anybody who can affect or is affected by an organisation, strategy or project and list them using the 4 stakeholder category headings.
- Reflect on what your list makes you think in terms of engagement with key players in the outcomes and success of the project.
- Share with colleagues your key observations.

A stakeholder map provides us with a means to group stakeholders together so we can think about managing them as groups rather than individuals. This is very important in a large programme where they will be hundreds or even thousands of people involved in or interested in the programme, so that you as the programme manager don't get bogged down with day-to-day stakeholder management during the execution of the programme.

A Stakeholder Map has two axes. On the horizontal axis we have "Interest", representing the level of interest an individual has in the programme. This will typically be a function of how the programme will impact them or their organisation, or how much input into the programme they will have. On the vertical axis we have "Influence", representing the level of influence or power an individual has in shaping the programme and its direction.

STAKEHOLDER MAP
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HIGH INFLUENCE, HIGH INTEREST:
 YOU WILL WANT TO ENGAGE THESE PEOPLE FULLY AND MANAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM CAREFULLY

Let's examine the different sections of this stakeholder matrix:

High Influence, High Interest

Obviously, you will want to engage these people fully and manage your relationship with them carefully. You may want to keep them included in the general programme communications which go to everyone, but additionally you may want to distribute more focussed communications specifically for them, or even meet with them regularly, individually or as a group.

High Influence, Low Interest

These are people who could exert a large amount of influence over your programme, but don't have a direct interest in the programme execution or its benefits. These are people you may need to draw on to get things done in spheres outside of your immediate control, so in addition to the regular programme communications, you may want to devote specific time to this group to keep them on-side, making it easier to gain their support later if you require their help.

HIGH INFLUENCE, LOW INTEREST:
 PEOPLE WHO COULD EXERT A LARGE AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE OVER YOUR PROGRAMME

Low Influence, High Interest

Typically, this group involves the people working on the detailed execution of the programme, such as technicians and software developers. Despite the fact that this group can't exert huge influence over the programme direction, they can exert huge influence over achieving the schedule. You should keep this group motivated with regular communications, and also take time to collect feedback from this group, so you can tailor your communications and make alterations to the program as you go. The traditional Stakeholder Map as drawn in most Project Management books identifies this category as "Keep Informed", but research suggests you need to do more, as this group is vital to the successful execution of the programme, which is why it includes "Two Way Communication" as well as "Keep Informed".

Low Influence, Low Interest

These are people who simply need to be kept informed as to the programme status, as they are neither that influential or that interested in the programme's execution or benefits.

Project management books typically show an example of mapping individuals to the map, but in a large programme this is impossible as so many people are involved, so you may want to keep a spreadsheet to map individuals to one of the four categories above.

As you can see, A Stakeholder Map makes it easier to define the types of communication you might need during your programme, and gets you thinking about how to manage your relationship with various stakeholders early in the programme, helping you to start on the right foot when managing stakeholders.

LOW INFLUENCE,
HIGH INTEREST:
INVOLVES THE
PEOPLE WORKING
ON THE DETAILED
EXECUTION OF THE
PROGRAMME

LOW INFLUENCE,
LOW INTEREST:
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TO BE KEPT
INFORMED AS TO
THE PROGRAMME
STATUS
