

# MANAGING STAKEHOLDERS

A Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence toolkit

The list of failed projects and business changes that faltered because they didn't engage with important individuals at the right time and in the right way is a long one.

# THE ART OF MANAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Taking time to identify and understand those who are important to your project or business change initiative is an extremely worthwhile activity. Knowing who they are and how to bring them along on the journey through change will save time, money, energy, stress and possibly your project. As a heads up they may not be the most senior or important members of the organisation.

## **Using this toolkit**

This toolkit guides you through a tried and true process for engaging with stakeholders in an effective and successful way. The three-step process of identifying, mapping and managing stakeholders is outlined step-by-step and supported by models and templates. Blank templates for use with your own projects are included as appendices to the document.

### Step One:

#### Identifying Stakeholders

A stakeholder is an individual or group of individuals who control or have access to the resources needed to deliver an initiative successfully or a group or individual that has a stake in the outcome of the initiative. Having a stake in a project means that the project's activity or outcome touches the individual in some way – their work environment may change, their job may disappear or change, their way of working may be different, their power or status may be diminished or be perceived to have diminished.

Stakeholders are important individuals to consider in planning or executing any change or communication activity as they can positively or negatively influence your chances of success.

# HOW TO FIND YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Understanding how to manage relationships with stakeholders is critical to the success of project. First you need to find them before you can analyse their position.

To identify stakeholders, think about the people in your organisation who:

- ▶ Set performance objectives or measures
- ▶ Control the budget
- ▶ Have access to resources
- ▶ Are directly affected by your project/campaign
- ▶ Have direct influence or influence the influencers
- ▶ Have access to information
- ▶ Make the key decisions

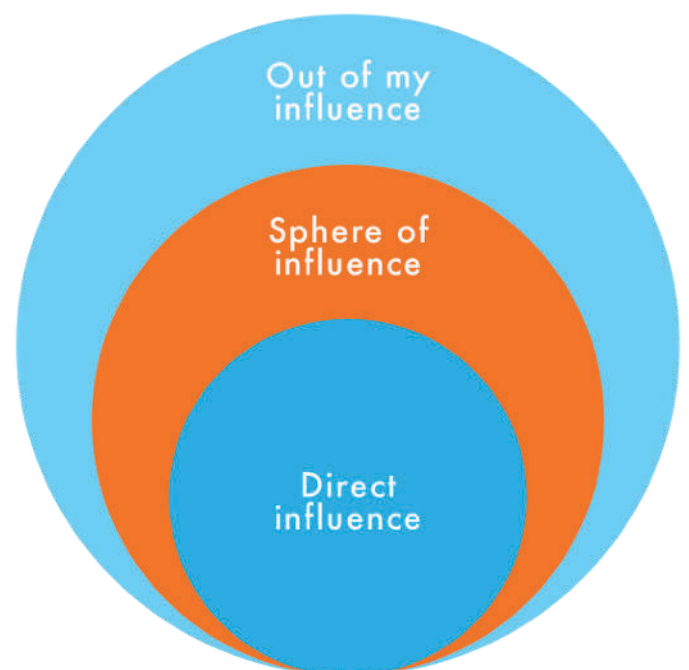
Once your list is complete, think about where these individuals fit into your Circles of Influence as in the model.

**The Inner Circle** where you have direct influence (the right relationship) among the people who control what you need

**The Sphere of Influence** where you have influence over those who have the right relationship with the people who control what you need

**Out of My Influence** where you have neither direct influence or influence over those with the right relationships with the people who control what you need

This important first step crystallises where you need to focus your efforts by locating and gaining access to the various stakeholders. For example, Executive Assistants are gatekeepers for senior managers and if they are within your sphere of influence you may be able to gain access to a particular stakeholder.



# STAKEHOLDER BRAIN DUMP

A stakeholder brain dump helps you determine the key people who have a stake in your project or business, or business change initiative. It allows you to evaluate their importance and influence as it relates to the project or activity. You can also use this activity to pinpoint where these stakeholders fit in your Circles of Influence.

It is important to remember that the terms “importance” and “influence” relate directly to the project. They are not reflective of the stakeholder’s position in the organisational hierarchy.

STAKE HOLDER NAME (INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP)	IMPORTANCE	INFLUENCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT	LOCATION IN MY CIRCLE
Regional IT Manager	High	High	Low	Out of my influence
Local HR Manager	Medium	Medium	Low	Direct Influence
Contact Centre Team Leader	Medium	Medium	High	Sphere of Influence
Customs Service Officer	Medium	Low	High	Sphere of Influence

Table 1: Example of a Stakeholder Brain Dump for a project introducing new call centre technology

## Step Two:

### Mapping Stakeholders

After you have identified your stakeholders, you should analyse their position by mapping them on a grid. You can use the template on page 10 to help you do that.

Mapping stakeholders provides a clear indication of where your engagement efforts will be best focused and provide a visual aide on where to find them and what strategy best suits your needs.

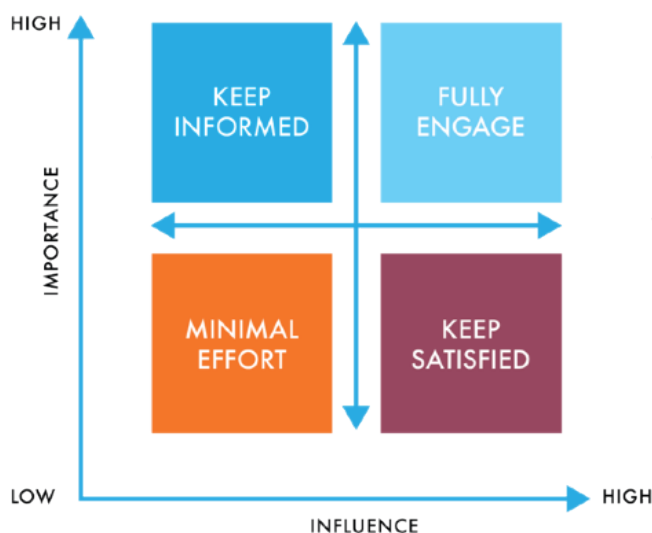


Figure 1:  
Segmenting Stakeholders by  
Importance and Influence  
Source Johnson & Scholes

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