

Powerful Business Skills: Stakeholder Engagement

“Effective Stakeholder Management creates positive relationships with stakeholders through the appropriate management of their expectations and agreed objectives. Stakeholder management is a process and control that must be planned and guided by underlying principles.” *Wikipedia 2015*



A stakeholder can be an individual, a group – internal or external to your organisation; or another organisation that has an interest in, can be affected by, or affect your project or programme.

The following hints and tips will be critical to your success when prioritising, communicating with and managing these stakeholders:

Find out who they are – analyse who you think your stakeholders are – who will promote or resist the change you are implementing? Write them down and keep referring to them.

Starting your research – research these stakeholders – LinkedIn (you can gain insight to their other connections too) or Google are good places to start.

Find out more about ‘them’ – using your research, try and find out what they like/care about and use ‘open’ questions to try and build rapport when communicating with them.

Meet as soon as you can – aim for a meeting with key stakeholders as-soon-as-possible. Zoom, phone or e-mail are great time-saving tools.

Can’t get to them? Try networking others who may help you, you may have an insight to links between stakeholders from your research.

Be quick – be front of mind – contact everyone quickly and meet at least once. Keep a log, this could be a diary or spreadsheet, on who you have contacted and met; what you know about them; and who else they are connected to.

Utilise other stakeholders – cross check your assumptions about who are the most important stakeholders with other stakeholders - just in case your analysis is wrong!

Be careful of jumping to conclusions – read and re-read their e-mails and other correspondence. It’s easy to jump to conclusions and mishear, especially if you are stressed or

excited.

Make time to think – take time out to read and understand all the data you have gathered, think clearly about what you can understand from it – keep checking for the links between key stakeholders and other stakeholders, you may need to use these if some ‘influencing’ is required.

Persistence pays – stakeholders will usually be neutral or even negative to begin with, be quietly persistent. They may not become ‘raving fans’ but neutral or compliant is something to aim for.

Go for the gatekeeper – never underestimate ‘gatekeepers’ (people who ‘guard’ access to the key stakeholders). Receptionists, PA’s, security staff are well worth building credit with, they can give you some great insight into your stakeholder and get your message through.

Learn through simulation - wouldn't it be sensible to have some form of ‘driving lesson’ to help you or your people to manage their stakeholders more effectively?

Managing Stakeholders™ is just one of the products from our suite of project and programme focused management simulations (a unique blend of instructor-led workshop and gamification) to allow you, your team and even your whole organisation to practice your stakeholder, programme and project management skills in a safe, web-based facilitated workshop.

More about the workshop at:
www.indigobusiness.co.uk/msta



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