

Project communication

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PMG112

Lecture 2



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What will we learn?



Explore various recommendations for identifying the audience in your project, including their role, their level of power and influence over the project, and their level of support for the project.



See the value of understanding what is important to the members of your audience—the WIIFM (what's in it for me)



Become familiar with stakeholder personas as a communication approach



Put it into practice: Know your audience in traditional and virtual project teams.

Lecture

Section 2

Prioritizing Stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement

Section 1

Defining our audience

Section One

Defining our audience

Audience = Stakeholders

In a project, the audience is the stakeholders.
Which we can define as “an individual, group, or organization that may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project, program, or portfolio.

In fifth stage, we witness a change in the concept which we spot the light on Stakeholder Management.

This change was in response to feedback around the need to expand stakeholder management concepts and recognize communications management and stakeholder management as two distinct areas.

The importance of looking at your project's stakeholders?

The project cannot be completed without those who initiate it, execute it, and live with the results once the project is complete.

Stakeholders can also be the barometer by which project success is measured stakeholder satisfaction is one of the criteria outlined.

They are assessing project success. If stakeholders are not satisfied with the project outcomes, it may not matter whether you have fully achieved the project's objectives.

Many of a project's stakeholders can be discerned by reviewing project documents, including the charter, business case, and agreements.

Another tool for identifying stakeholders in a project is expert judgment, which includes seeking input from:

Those who have a thorough understanding of the organization's functions, culture, and power structures. These people can help identify stakeholders who may have interest in or influence over the project.

Many of a project's stakeholders can be discerned by reviewing project documents, including the charter, business case, and agreements.

Another tool for identifying stakeholders in a project is expert judgment, which includes seeking input from:

Those with thorough knowledge of the industry, customers, or wider environment. They can help identify stakeholders and stakeholder concerns that derive from the external environment in which the project will exist.

Are all the stakeholders easy to identify?

No.

Some stakeholders will be easy to identify, such as the sponsor and the team. It may be more difficult, however, to identify *everyone* who will be impacted by the project.

Are all the stakeholders easy to identify?

Government

Contractors &
Subcontractors

Top Management
Project Team Members
Your Manager
Peers
Resource Manager
Internal Customers

External
Customers

Suppliers

Are all the stakeholders easy to identify?

Some stakeholders will be easy to identify, such as the sponsor and the team. It may be more difficult, however, to identify *everyone* who will be impacted by the project.

Some of the information you will want to track includes the role(s) the stakeholder plays in the project and the organization; the stakeholder's power and influence; and the stakeholder's level of support for the project.

Examples of Stakeholders in projects

- Investors
- Sponsors
- Financiers (the people)
- Suppliers
- Vendors
- Consultants
- Customers
- End users

- Project manager
- Team members
- Managers
- Resource managers
- Executives
- Senior management
- Company owners

Section Two

Prioritizing Stakeholders

The importance of Prioritizing stakeholders

Ensures that the project plans are a reflection of the real needs and priorities

Develops an environment of trusts by allowing the voices of the stakeholders be heard and their issues be known

Makes the project accountable to the stakeholders

Enables the voices of the stakeholders to be heard and by doing that the level of trust in the relationships increases.

The importance of Prioritizing stakeholders

Promotes transparency in the actions of the project and ensures that the project is held accountable for its actions.

Increases ownership by stakeholders who feel the project is taking in account their views and motivates them to sponsor the project, which ultimately leads to sustainability.

Is a key strategy to win support to the project, to gain commitment to the project, and ultimately to increase the chances for sustainability after the project has been completed.

Now that we've gained a solid understanding of the prioritization of tasks and risks, we can now address stakeholders: how to find them, what effects they can have on the project, and how they're affected by the project.

When it comes to finding stakeholders, the following guidelines are important to remember:

- Finding stakeholders is a team effort: Like risk identification, a more complete list requires everyone's participation. Brainstorming can be an effective tool here.
- Start early and revisit often: The team should use early project activities such as feasibility studies and requirements gathering to search for stakeholders. As the project progresses, stakeholder identification should be revisited often.

Now that we've gained a solid understanding of the prioritization of tasks and risks, we can now address stakeholders: how to find them, what effects they can have on the project, and how they're affected by the project.

When it comes to finding stakeholders, the following guidelines are important to remember:

- Stakeholders can be groups: One common mistake is to try and identify every individual stakeholder by name. If groups of people have a similar relationship to the project, identify and manage them as a group until circumstances require a change.
- Keep a record of stakeholders: A typical format for this is the stakeholder register.

Section Two

Stakeholder engagement

Term definition

The stakeholder register is simply a table containing information about a project's stakeholders. The following is an example of what a basic wedding stakeholder register may look like:

Table 3.2 Stakeholder register template

Stakeholder	Role	Power	Influence	Support	WIIFM
Stakeholder 1					
Stakeholder 2					
Stakeholder 3					

Roles

Roles include the person or group's position within the organization as well as their relationship to the project. Roles include titles or descriptors like project manager, business partner, sponsor, subject matter expert, business analyst, etc.

For example, in a software implementation project, the head of IT in the organization will certainly be a stakeholder, as will any employees expected to use the new software. Roles are an excellent starting point for building your stakeholder register, and for understanding how you can best communicate with each individual or group.

POWER

Power is a representation of the stakeholder's level of authority as it relates to the project.

For example, a project sponsor has the ability to stop or completely shut down the project, so they have a very high level of power with regard to the project. An end user who will be using the new product or software generated by the project, for example, may have a relatively low level of power.

Influence

Influence, which is often related to power, is an indicator of how much the stakeholder can affect others involved with the project. Who can they influence, and how strongly?

The software's end users may not have a high level of power, but they still have the ability to spread negative views about the project, which can influence others' support for the project, as well as the long-term adoption and integration of the project outcomes into the organization.

Direction of influence

Table 3.1 Stakeholder direction of influence⁶

Direction of influence	Those influenced (other stakeholder groups)
Upward	Senior management, sponsor, steering committee
Downward	Those working on the project
Outward	Stakeholders outside the project, including vendors, customers, or end users
Sideward	Peers, including other project managers and colleagues who have a similar level of power/influence

Support

Stakeholder support can make or break a project. In the section on planning stakeholder engagement. We offer five classifications of stakeholder engagement:

Stakeholder	Unaware	Resistant	Neutral	Supportive	Leading
Stakeholder 1	C			D	
Stakeholder 2			C	D	
Stakeholder 3				CD	

C = Current

D = Desired

Support

Stakeholder support can make or break a project. In the section on planning stakeholder engagement. We offer five classifications of stakeholder engagement:

Unaware: Stakeholders who are unaware do not know of the project's existence. They do not have the basic knowledge required to move to a different classification of engagement.

Resistant: Resistant stakeholders know about the project but do not support it. They may actively work to stop the project in whole or in part.

Support

Stakeholder support can make or break a project. In the section on planning stakeholder engagement. We offer five classifications of stakeholder engagement:

Neutral: Stakeholders who are neutral do not act in ways that either promote or detract from the project. Often these stakeholders are not highly impacted by the project.

Supportive: Supportive stakeholders take steps to support the project in words and/or actions.

Leading: These stakeholders take a leadership role in ensuring the project succeeds.

Support

Stakeholder	Unaware	Resistant	Neutral	Supportive	Leading
Stakeholder 1	C			D	
Stakeholder 2			C	D	
Stakeholder 3				CD	

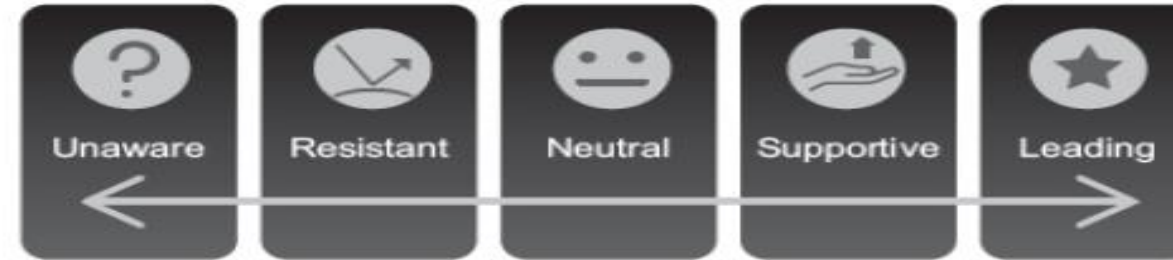
C = Current

D = Desired



The spectrum of stakeholder engagement

In your stakeholder engagement planning, you should attempt to identify where each of your stakeholders are on this spectrum, and where they need to be in order for the project to progress smoothly and achieve its goals.



Why is this important? Because knowing where your stakeholders sit on this spectrum can help you and the project team develop and implement communication strategies that align with stakeholders' expectations and interests.

WIFM

Frequently referred to as “what’s in it for me” or WIIFM, this concept is basic but powerful. Simply put, people respond better and engage more when you talk about what matters to them.

Why is this important? Because knowing where your stakeholders sit on this spectrum can help you and the project team develop and implement communication strategies that align with stakeholders’ expectations and interests.

WIFM

“Just as the stakeholders may affect the project, the project affects stakeholders”

Stakeholders want to know how the project will impact them, when it will happen, and what kind of support they will receive in adjusting to the changes the project brings.

A project team member might care most about what will be expected of them and who they will be working with. The project sponsor might want to know about factors that impact whether the project will deliver its intended results, and the project's priority within the organization.

WIFM

Finding the WIFM

A good place to start is to simply put yourself in their shoes.

Take your list of stakeholders and imagine how you would feel as a team member, a sponsor, a subject matter expert, a functional manager, end user, etc.

Try to write down What would be most important to you? Would you be concerned that the project could affect your status in the organization, either positively or negatively, or the way you do your work?

WIFM

Finding the WIFM

Another way is to collect additional data about stakeholders and their interests, such as surveys and brainstorming meetings with the project team. If you're using expert judgment, as previously noted, this can also be a valuable tool for identifying not only who your stakeholders are, but what their concerns are about the project.

WIFM

Finding the WIFM

Meetings are another technique that can be useful with a wide range of stakeholder types and groups, especially when done early on in the project.

In fact, face-to-face or virtual meetings can be invaluable in understanding stakeholder concerns because you will be able to learn from nonverbal communication as well

WIFM

Finding the WIFM

When talking with stakeholders to understand their interests in the project, ask basic questions like:

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is extremely low and 10 is extremely high), how impactful is this project on your day-to-day work?
What do you see as the biggest benefit of this project?

Is there anything about this project that worries you?

Are there aspects of this project that conflict with your other priorities?

WIFM**Finding the WIFM**

Add all of the data you collect to your stakeholder register. It should have a robust and nuanced “WIIFM” field for every stakeholder group that covers everything you have learned in your identification of stakeholders

Table 3.2 Stakeholder register template

Stakeholder	Role	Power	Influence	Support	WIIFM
Stakeholder 1					
Stakeholder 2					
Stakeholder 3					

Knowing your audience

Traditional project teams

- Encourage team members to meet in a less formal setting (e.g., coffee, tea, or lunch) to get to know one another and to learn from each other.
- As the project manager, interview each team member prior to the start of the project to get to know them.
- For each key stakeholder group, assign specific team members to research their background (company annual report, website, executive team, what they do, business core values, etc.) and give a presentation to the rest of the team. Post the presentation on the project website for ease of reference.

Knowing your audience

Virtual project teams

- Post a map on a “virtual wall” and have each team member pinpoint their location and share a photo of their home or work environment.
- Consider using an icebreaker (e.g., What is your favorite television show, or What is your hobby?) at the start of virtual team meetings to encourage team members to get to know one another.
- As a team, discuss where each of your stakeholders fall on the engagement spectrum: unaware, resistant, neutral, supportive, or leading. Create a visual representation of your findings and post it on your virtual team wall for easy reference.



Thank You