



5 strategies for effective stakeholder management

Insights Paper
Stakeholder
Engagement
2018

In the age of social media activism and online media, effective stakeholder management is more important than ever.

The influence of stakeholders on your project can be immense, and if not managed correctly, could lead to project delays, resource drain, political intervention or project termination.

Effective identification, understanding and management of your stakeholders, their triggers and their expectations will improve your ability to reduce risk, tailor mitigation measures and deliver a successful project.

Five strategies that will help you manage your project's stakeholders are:

1. Stakeholder mapping

Early in the project, conduct a thorough stakeholder analysis to identify your stakeholders.

Identify and examine key factors including proximity to your project, demographics, interest in the project, needs and concerns, expectations of your project and any previous public statements.

Also important is gaining an understanding of your internal stakeholders, such as immediate staff, suppliers and contractors, broader companies or alliances and shareholders.

Mapping your internal stakeholders will allow you to investigate whether you have the right resources and whether your team will function effectively.

2. Influence is key

Understanding levels of influence will allow you to predict how a particular stakeholder may interact directly with your project team or with others.

The range of possible influence is broad, from positive sentiment and support through to activism and engagement of other community members against your project.



To measure the possible influence of your stakeholders, identify their level on a scale ranking from high, medium to low:

High: indicates a stakeholder who has significant power to impact decisions, timeframes, or outcomes.

Medium: indicates a stakeholder with a significant interest in the project, however with a lower level of power to effect project change.

Low: indicates a stakeholder with little ability to change project outcomes.

3. Identify the triggers

Stakeholders will react in different ways to different project actions, however by identifying triggers and mitigation measures, you can avoid preventable complaints.

Often, it is when stakeholders experience changes to their environment or expectations of a business and its behaviour that may cause a reaction.

Correlate your stakeholder list with potential known triggers, such as loud or dusty construction works, visual amenity impacts or disruptions to their normal patterns.

Estimate the impact that these reactions may have to your project or strategies and identify whether targeted communication, mitigation or an alternative solution is required.

4. Look for opportunities

From a risk management perspective, it is tempting to focus on those stakeholders most likely to cause disruption to the project.

Equally important are those stakeholders who view your project favourably or may benefit from it.

Identify these stakeholders and investigate opportunities to leverage their positive perception as project advocates.

5. Proactive mitigation

With a solid understanding of your stakeholders, their influence and triggers, the next step is to develop a mitigation plan.

This step details the risks you are prepared to accept, share or avoid and outlines how you can reduce their impact.

Identify early what are your negotiables and non/negotiables.

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This may include minor changes to alignment, preferred noise mitigation measures, differing construction techniques or haulage routes.

Working with your stakeholders through this process will also improve project buy-in, credibility and ownership of the mitigation measure.

Phillips Group Community Engagement practise area continually works with clients in providing: stakeholder mapping, communication strategy development and implementation, issues and risk analysis, community and stakeholder engagement, and activism management.



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