

# Stakeholders and Picking the Right Project - PM Hut

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Stakeholders and Picking the Right Project  
By Lisa Sieverts

One of the first steps to take when initiating a project is to identify the stakeholders. These are all of the folks who care about the project. There are always some obvious stakeholders:

- the project sponsors (the funders)
- the project team
- the customers
- the end-users

But there are often stakeholders who aren't so easily identifiable. For example,

- government
- the local community
- the media
- vendors
- suppliers
- IT support staff
- opponents

We take the time to identify the stakeholders so that we have a hope of building something that they will accept. The task of listing the stakeholders should be done as a brainstorming exercise with the project team, and the list should be shared widely in order to validate it. Try to have a conversation with a representative of each stakeholder group. Describe the project objectives and note any objections or strong opinions.

Project opponents are an interesting class of stakeholder. On many projects there is a temptation to pretend that opponents don't exist, or worse, that their opinions don't matter. Nothing could be further from the truth. Project opponents provide valuable information about the potential problems associated with the project. Even better, if you can win over a project opponent you often end up with someone who's especially committed to the project's success.

Lisa Sieverts is certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) by the Project Management Institute (PMI), a global leader in the development of standards for the practice of project management. Before she founded Facilitated Change, she worked for Hewlett-Packard in California and Idaho for 12 years as a systems administrator and project manager. Lisa also teaches at the graduate level and is an experienced meeting facilitator and workshop leader. She holds an MBA from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Lisa's website is <http://www.lisasieverts.com/>. Her professional blog can be found at <http://project-tips.com/>.

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