

# Stakeholder Management Overview - PM Hut

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Stakeholder Management Overview  
By [Rob Llewellyn](#)

Stakeholder Management helps us ensure successful change. It helps managers assess and manage the environment around the planned programme and brings out the interests of the stakeholders and identifies potential conflicts to assign a level of risk or challenges to the programme's success.

It also helps identify existing relationships between stakeholders that can be leveraged to build coalitions and potential partnerships that go on to build valuable trust and collaboration among the stakeholders.

## But what is a Stakeholder?

A stakeholder is anyone who is:

- managing the programme of work;
- working within the programme of work;
- directly or indirectly contributing to the programme of work;
- affected by the programme of work or its outcomes.

So even the smallest programme will find itself with a long list of stakeholders who need to be managed carefully.

Understanding stakeholders as well as their needs, desires, characters, feelings, levels of influence, perceptions, etc is something that requires strong communication and people skills. Because we're not managing systems here - we're managing human beings and they're made up of all sorts! Remember - most people don't like change; it's human nature, whether we like it or not, and we need to work with that.

All our stakeholders (groups and individuals) will have their own set of thoughts when it comes to our programme of work. Some will see opportunity and want to see you succeed whilst others will see a threat and prefer to see your failure. Others won't care less about your programme until the day they realise it has an affect on them.

There are many ways to skin a cat but I'm using the OGC method and quite frankly it's very similar to other methods I've come across as they all consist of the core components of good stakeholder management. So here are the main areas to address in stakeholder management:

### 1. Identify stakeholders

Tip: [Create a stakeholder map](#)

Use categories if the list is long

### 2. Establish stakeholder management strategy

Tip: Address who, what, how, what and how

### 3. Analyse stakeholders

Tip: Create a Power/Impact Matrix and periodically update it.

#### 4. **Stakeholder communication**

Tip: Use, clear, concise, targeted effective delivery of your communications and encourage feedback.

This is your PR opportunity. Use it to your advantage!

#### 5. **Communications plan**

Tip: What, how, when, by whom.

Communicate early successes 'quick wins' to help win early commitment.

#### 6. **Communication channels**

Tip: Consider seminars, workshops, media, bulletins, web, etc.

Use a blend of whatever works best with your stakeholders but ensure communication is two-way, not one-way.

#### 7. **Managing stakeholders**

Tip: Apply your best people skills

#### 8. **Responsibilities for stakeholder management**

Tip: Use key contacts who are in a strong position to influence key stakeholders

The benefits of good stakeholder management are common knowledge but many organisations still suffer from poor stakeholder management.

### **Common failures include:**

- Engaging with stakeholder too late so their views can not be considered without substantial revision and delay.
- Inviting stakeholders to participate too early resulting in a complicated decision making process that causes delays.
- Inviting the wrong stakeholders to participate thereby reducing the value of the contribution and leaving the door open to damaging external criticism.
- Treating the participation of stakeholders as insignificant and inconsequential resulting in poor stakeholder "buy-in" at the implementation stage.

However stakeholder management is approached, it should be done diligently. It's amazing the difference it can make!

The author Rob Llewellyn is founder of C-Level consultancy The Llewellyn Group, and since the 1990s has been providing project and programme management services to organisations across Europe and the Middle East. You can visit his web site at [www.llewellyn-group.com](http://www.llewellyn-group.com).

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