

BEST PRACTICES: Stakeholder Management

Stakeholder management plays a critical role in ensuring project success by effectively addressing the needs and expectations of key stakeholders. It involves identifying and prioritizing these stakeholders, understanding their requirements, and actively engaging with them throughout the project lifecycle. By doing so, project managers can foster positive relationships, gain valuable insights, and adapt to changes that may arise.

This active involvement not only enhances project communication but also enables project teams to adjust their strategies and plans accordingly, resulting in improved project outcomes.

Steps:



① IDENTIFICATION

Identifying stakeholders is a vital step in project management. It involves recognizing the individuals or groups who are relevant to the project and have a vested interest in its success or may be affected by it.



② ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis plays a crucial role in project management by providing valuable insights into stakeholders' interests, concerns, and priorities.



③ PLAN

Stakeholder planning is a critical step in project management that focuses on addressing the needs, expectations, concerns, and issues of stakeholders in a strategic manner.



④ ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is a crucial aspect of project management that emphasizes active involvement of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.

Key Tips for Effective Stakeholders Management

Do's:

- Identify all stakeholders
- Analyze stakeholders needs, influence and interest
- Develop a communication plan
- Engage stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle
- Address stakeholder concerns/issues
- Manage stakeholder relationships
- Build Trust

Don't's:

- Ignore stakeholders needs and expectations
- Overpromise and underdeliver
- Exclude stakeholders
- Disregard feedback
- Make assumptions
- React only when there is a problem

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① IDENTIFICATION

Identifying stakeholders is a vital step in project management. It involves recognizing the individuals or groups who are relevant to the project and have a vested interest in its success or may be affected by it. By identifying stakeholders early on, project managers can ensure that they consider all perspectives and incorporate them throughout the project's lifecycle.

This proactive approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder needs and expectations, enabling project teams to make informed decisions. Here are some actionable tips to improve stakeholder identification and management for a more successful project outcome:

Concrete actions:

- **Start Early:** Begin the stakeholder identification process as early as possible in the project. This will help you gather a comprehensive list of stakeholders and their interests, ensuring their perspectives are considered throughout.
- **Engage the Project Team:** Involve your project team members in the stakeholder identification process. They have valuable insights and can identify internal stakeholders who are directly associated with your organization. Their involvement will help in better understanding the project's internal dynamics.
- **Reach out to External Stakeholders:** Actively engage with external stakeholders such as clients, customers, users, and suppliers. Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups to understand their expectations, concerns, and how the project may impact them.
- **Consider Indirect Stakeholders:** Identify additional stakeholders who may have indirect or broader interests in the project. These could include community developers, influencers, or regulatory bodies. Understand their roles and potential impact on the project to ensure compliance and address any indirect concerns.
- **Maintain Regular Communication:** Establish clear channels of communication with stakeholders throughout the project. Regularly update them on progress, involve them in decision-making processes, and seek their feedback. This active communication will foster trust, engagement, and a sense of ownership among stakeholders.

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② ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis plays a crucial role in project management by providing valuable insights into stakeholders' interests, concerns, and priorities.

This analysis allows project managers to understand the diverse perspectives of stakeholders and identify potential challenges. Here are actionable tips to conduct an effective stakeholder analysis and enhance project outcomes:

Template:



Concrete actions:

- **Conduct a Comprehensive Analysis:** Take the time to thoroughly analyze each stakeholder group's interests, concerns, and priorities. This will help you gain a comprehensive understanding of their unique needs and expectations.
- **Identify Potential Challenges:** Look for potential challenges or areas of concern that stakeholders might encounter throughout the project. This proactive approach will enable you to anticipate and mitigate risks, ensuring smoother project execution.
- **Tailor Communication and Engagement:** Customize your communication and engagement strategies to address each stakeholder's specific interests and concerns. This tailored approach will foster stronger relationships and ensure effective information flow.
- **Proactively Address Concerns:** Take proactive measures to address stakeholder concerns and challenges. Engage in open and transparent dialogue, provide regular updates, and seek feedback to demonstrate your commitment to addressing their needs.
- **Build Positive Relationships:** Focus on building positive relationships with stakeholders. Show genuine interest in their perspectives, listen actively, and be responsive to their input. This will enhance stakeholder satisfaction and cooperation.
- **Integrate Stakeholder Input in Decision-Making:** Incorporate stakeholder input in your decision-making processes. Consider their perspectives, needs, and concerns when making important project decisions. This inclusive approach will build trust and support from stakeholders.

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③ Plan

Stakeholder planning is a critical step in project management that focuses on addressing the needs, expectations, concerns, and issues of stakeholders in a strategic manner. To ensure successful stakeholder planning, consider the following actionable advice:

Template:

| Stakeholder | Current State | Desired State | Actions to be taken | Priority | Contact |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|----------|-----------|
| Stakeholder 1 | Neutral | Supportive | Conduct weekly discussions with Design Manager | High | Contact 1 |
| Stakeholder 2 | Resistant | Supportive | Ensure regular engagement with Project Manager | Critical | Contact 2 |
| Stakeholder 3 | Leading | Leading | Ask for tips on process & feedback | Normal | Contact 3 |

Concrete actions:

- **Identify and Prioritize Stakeholders:** Identify the stakeholders who have the most influence, interest, and impact on the project's outcome. Prioritize them based on their significance, as this will help allocate resources and attention accordingly.
- **Understand Unique Needs and Expectations:** Gain a deep understanding of each stakeholder group's specific needs and expectations. This knowledge will allow you to tailor your communication and engagement strategies to effectively address their concerns and keep them engaged.
- **Develop Effective Communication Strategies:** Determine the most appropriate communication channels, frequency, and format for each stakeholder group. Ensure that stakeholders receive timely and relevant information, promoting transparency and keeping them well-informed throughout the project.
- **Address Concerns and Issues Proactively:** Anticipate and address stakeholder concerns and issues through proactive measures. This could involve organizing stakeholder workshops, providing regular updates, or establishing feedback mechanisms to address any challenges promptly and transparently.
- **Incorporate Stakeholder Needs in Project Planning:** Integrate stakeholder needs into the project planning process. Consider their requirements when defining project objectives, milestones, and deliverables. By aligning the project with stakeholder interests, you increase the likelihood of successful project outcomes.
- **Foster Positive Relationships:** Build and nurture positive relationships with stakeholders. Actively engage with them, listen to their feedback, and respond to their concerns in a timely manner. Cultivating these relationships will promote collaboration and support throughout the project.
- **Manage Expectations:** Set realistic expectations with stakeholders regarding project scope, timelines, and potential challenges. Communicate openly about project constraints and limitations, managing stakeholders' expectations effectively to avoid misunderstandings or dissatisfaction.

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④ Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a crucial aspect of project management that emphasizes active involvement of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. To enhance stakeholder engagement and achieve project success, consider the following practical advice:

Concrete actions:

- **Build Trust and Credibility:** Foster trust and credibility by establishing a positive relationship between stakeholders and the project team. Demonstrate transparency, integrity, and competence in your interactions to build a foundation of trust.
- **Understand and Manage Expectations:** Actively engage with stakeholders to gain a thorough understanding of their expectations. Regularly communicate project updates, progress, and any changes to manage expectations effectively and avoid potential misunderstandings.
- **Seek Stakeholder Input:** Encourage stakeholders to provide their input and feedback throughout the project. Create opportunities for collaboration, such as workshops or focus groups, where stakeholders can contribute their expertise and perspectives.
- **Involve Stakeholders in Decision-Making:** Engage stakeholders in decision-making processes to foster a sense of ownership and collaboration. Seek their input on important project decisions, as this empowers stakeholders and makes them feel valued.
- **Communicate Effectively:** Maintain open and transparent communication channels with stakeholders. Tailor your communication to their needs, using clear and concise language. Ensure that stakeholders are well-informed and engaged throughout the project journey.
- **Incorporate Stakeholder Perspectives:** Value stakeholder perspectives, concerns, and feedback. Incorporate their insights into project planning, execution, and evaluation to enhance project outcomes and address stakeholder needs effectively.
- **Continuously Monitor and Adapt:** Regularly assess stakeholder dynamics and adjust your engagement strategies accordingly. Stakeholder interests and priorities may evolve, so stay proactive and adapt your approach to maintain their support and involvement.

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Concrete example:

- A roadshow to optimize the success story: ADEME Guadeloupe organized a "roadshow" series of meetings between TransformAr technical partners and local stakeholders with four main objectives, including introducing the project and technical partners to the stakeholders, benefiting from their inputs, improving partners' knowledge, and ensuring the legitimacy of the project's actions. The success was evident as these meetings facilitated trust-building, enhanced local engagement, and promoted effective capitalization on existing initiatives, resulting in valuable feedback and improved solutions.
- Guidelines: A guide for technical partners in Guadeloupe was successfully designed, incorporating inputs from local stakeholders and relevant literature. UA and ACTERRA's contributions in mapping adaptation governance policies and stakeholders, along with updated data on key concerns in agriculture and tourism, further enhanced the guide, which was then distributed to all relevant partners for effective solutions' implementation.
- Partnerships: I4CE, a national consultancy group specializing in climate finance, conducted a study on adaptation financing in France through their project Finadapter, which was funded by ADEME three years ago. During a meeting between I4CE and ACTERRA, they agreed to provide papers and feedback for the development of the Local Adaptation Fund. Additionally, ADEME established a partnership with the Department of Exact Natural Sciences at the University of the Antilles to access their climate projection research, and they will also host an intern from the Master's in Risk Management and the Environment program to support TransformAr partners in modeling efforts. As part of their commitment to supporting further projects aligned with TransformAr's goals, ADEME facilitates the sharing of contacts of local stakeholders with its partners.
- The organization of an open and inclusive consortium meeting: The successful third Consortium Meeting in Guadeloupe achieved its objective of providing TransformAr partners with concrete examples of ongoing initiatives while recognizing and valuing local efforts. Local experts were contracted for the opening session, where they shared updated research on climate risks and challenges facing the archipelago during the "Highlighting Guadeloupe demonstrator" session. Additionally, planned and spontaneous site visits to the University of the Antilles further enriched the exchange of knowledge and experiences.
- Visibility and transparency to ensure trust and progress: ADEME has achieved success in promoting the TransformAr project by actively attending local climate change and environmental events as panelists or regular attendees, disseminating information through presentations and brochures, and leveraging social media and newsletters for broader outreach. The establishment of technical and investors committees to develop and evaluate the Local Adaptation Fund, as well as plans for an observation committee for the nudging experiment on tourism, reflects their commitment to inclusive collaboration and effective monitoring of project initiatives, resulting in a significant impact in Guadeloupe and other French-speaking regions.

Other Best Practices:

- "Plan your strategy to address stakeholders' needs: Based on 3 components; (a) who are the stakeholders (background, level of understanding) (b) what I want to accomplish (climate awareness, build adaptation pathway) and (c) what are the next steps of implementing solutions, a plan on what and how to present (definition, interactivity) and find the stakeholders that will be more valuable for the future (help in implementation, provide insights, future collaborations etc) was constructed." – EGALEO
- "As part of the engagement with stakeholders, including the co-creation stakeholder workshops, it was important to consider what benefits the stakeholders would derive from their time and efforts in attending e.g. identifying needs. It was therefore important that the adaptation pathway solutions were relevant locally and where something that the group could utilise going forward. Regarding the information and science demonstrated, it was key that this information would be helpful and novel to some extent, providing a higher layer of resolution to data they would have previously had access to." - WRT

BEST PRACTICES: Change Management

Change management is a crucial process that helps organizations navigate and adapt to changes effectively. It involves systematically planning, implementing, and communicating changes to minimize disruption and maximize stakeholders' acceptance. Here are key steps for successful change management:

Prepare and Plan: Begin by clearly defining the change and its objectives. Assess the impact on various aspects, such as processes, systems, and people. Develop a comprehensive plan outlining the steps, timeline, and resources required for the change.

Engage and Communicate: Engage stakeholders throughout the change process to foster ownership and buy-in. Communicate the vision, goals, and expected outcomes of the change. Provide regular updates, address questions, and listen to stakeholders' feedback.

Support and Empower: Provide the necessary support and resources for stakeholders to adapt to the change. Offer training, coaching, and guidance to build their skills and confidence. Empower stakeholders by involving them in decision-making and recognizing their contributions.

Steps:



① Assess the need for change

To assess the need for change, it is essential to thoroughly evaluate the current state of affairs.



② Develop a change strategy

When developing a change strategy, define clear objectives and desired outcomes.



③ Create a change management plan

A detailed change management plan is crucial for effectively managing the change process.



④ Communicate the change

Effective communication is key when introducing change.



⑤ Engage stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders is essential for successful change implementation.



⑥ Implement the change

During the implementation phase, follow the change management plan while remaining flexible.



⑦ Monitor and evaluate

Continuously monitor the progress of the change initiative against defined objectives and outcomes.



⑧ Reinforce and sustain the change

To reinforce and sustain the change, celebrate successes and recognize the efforts of stakeholders involved.

Key Tips for Effective Stakeholders Management

Do's:

- Build a case for change
- Create a communication plan and roadmap
- Leverage a structural but flexible approach
- Include everyone who might be involved
- Learn from stakeholders' feedback

Don't's:

- Start too late
- Loose your change momentum
- Ignore internal resistance
- Exclude or sideline specific people
- Be silent about your ideas
- Expect a new system to change behavior

BEST PRACTICES: Change Management



① Assess the need for change

To assess the need for change, it is essential to thoroughly evaluate the current state of affairs. Identify pain points and areas of improvement within the existing system or process. Explore potential opportunities for growth, innovation, and efficiency. Consider external factors such as market trends, stakeholders' demands, technological advancements, and regulatory changes that may impact the situation. By conducting a comprehensive analysis, you can gain a clear understanding of the need for change and make informed decisions for the future.



② Develop a change strategy

When developing a change strategy, define clear objectives and desired outcomes. Consider the scope of the change and its potential impact on the whole situation. Assess available resources, both in terms of personnel and budget, to ensure feasibility. Identify potential risks and challenges that may arise during the change process and develop contingency plans. Establish a realistic timeline and milestones to track progress. By considering these practical factors, you can create a change strategy that aligns with your goals and sets you up for success.



③ Create a change management plan

A detailed change management plan is crucial for effectively managing the change process. Outline specific activities, milestones, and responsibilities for each stage of the change. Break down the plan into actionable tasks to ensure clarity and accountability. Assign roles and responsibilities to all stakeholders, ensuring everyone knows their contribution to the change initiative. Set realistic deadlines for each activity and establish clear communication channels to facilitate coordination. Regularly review and update the plan as needed to adapt to any unforeseen circumstances.



④ Communicate the change

Effective communication is key when introducing change. Clearly communicate the reasons for the change, emphasizing the benefits and expected impact. Tailor the message to each stakeholder group, addressing their concerns and highlighting how the change aligns with their interests. Use various communication channels, such as town hall meetings, emails, or newsletters, to reach all stakeholders. Provide ample opportunities for questions, feedback, and dialogue to foster understanding and buy-in.

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⑤ Engage stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders is essential for successful change implementation. Gain support by involving stakeholders in the change process. Seek their input and feedback, and tailor the change management plan to address their needs and concerns. Involve key stakeholders in decision-making, encouraging a sense of ownership and commitment. Provide regular updates on progress and involve stakeholders in celebrating milestones. By actively engaging stakeholders, you can build a coalition of support and increase the likelihood of successful change adoption.



⑦ Monitor and evaluate

Continuously monitor the progress of the change initiative against defined objectives and outcomes. Collect feedback from stakeholders, to gauge their satisfaction and address any concerns. Analyze performance metrics and compare them to pre-defined targets. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the change management plan and make adjustments as necessary. This ongoing monitoring and evaluation process ensures that the change initiative stays on track and allows for continuous improvement.



⑥ Implement the change

During the implementation phase, follow the change management plan while remaining flexible to accommodate any last-minute adjustments. Provide adequate training and support to individuals involved in the change. Communicate expectations clearly and ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. Monitor progress closely, addressing any obstacles or challenges promptly. Regularly communicate updates to stakeholders and maintain open lines of communication throughout the implementation process.



⑧ Reinforce and sustain the change

To reinforce and sustain the change, celebrate successes and recognize the efforts of stakeholders involved. Provide positive reinforcement and rewards to individuals or teams who contributed to the successful implementation of the change. Reinforce the benefits and outcomes of the change by sharing success stories and testimonials. Embed the change into the organization's culture and processes to ensure its long-term sustainability.

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Concrete example:

Presentation of the Galician demonstrator to the Key Community System (Ria de Arousa STH)

Aim: to exchange information about the Climate Change local perceptions and the goal of the TransformAr Project in order to understand the current overall concerns and prevent resistance to the process and smooth future adaptive activities

Steps:

- Selection of actors
- Contact through different means: mailing, telephone, previous projects and in person notice
- Organization of bilateral meetings adapted to the STH agenda, and location (visits to their headquarters). Then, a general workshop with all STH of the 5 helix took place.
- Contact with the STH to keep them inform about the coming activities / validation of the results

To be remembered:

- Clear objectives for the meetings and workshops.
- Not too long meetings
- Time to share the information and listen to the concerns and opinions (two ways communication)
- Use of different communication and participatory tools both to collect information and to share it.
- Coordination with other projects, actors and partners to review climate data and projections, or take into account results from previous projects

Other Best Practices:

“One of the Challenges faced locally was around the NBS for nutrient neutrality as described in the bid document. Originally there was a expectation to utilise ICW (Integrated Constructed Wetland) on farmland to trap nutrients and provide mitigation. However, regulations in the UK mean that this can be very challenging as there should not be 'run-off' or pollution leaving the yard, which would be the natural source for the constructed wetland. Therefore, WRT had to change strategy regarding the NBS utilised, utilising some of the finding from across the region and the co-creation workshops, the strategy was changed to the restoration of wetland areas and the creation of wider buffers, which was a solution well supported by the stakeholders. This could then be communicated through project presentations to the wider partnerships and at regional meetings.” - WRT