

# Stakeholder mapping for success and influence

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this strategy is to deepen understanding of the impact an individual has on others.

## **Description**

Recognizing that all executives need strong, positive working relationships with a range of people within and outside their organization, this exercise helps to identify key stakeholders and to provide an action plan for positive influence. Often, individuals have their own agendas and special concerns and seek to protect their vested areas of interest. We hear about the silo-mentalities within functional business areas, which serve to separate, divide and work against the best interests of the organization. The identification of key stakeholders can help to remove boundaries within the organization, a clear benefit, and can also support the career development and promotion of the client.

## **Process**

There are a number of ways to produce a stakeholder map. A wheel can be divided into segments and labelled with stakeholder information, or this can be presented in a hierarchical chart format. It can also be insightful to plot each person/group on a  $2 \times 2$  matrix to assess the relative level of power and influence. Draw out your network/power map and

consider how each identified person can help you with your objectives. Be specific and develop a plan to connect. Look for any gaps and consider how to draw in additional supporters. Beware of people who may have their own agendas and may want to hold you back. Consider working with a key ‘mentor’ and be specific about what you would like to gain from the relationship. Ensure that you make your goals transparent. Review your progress against your objectives. Questions to ask:

- Whose support do you need the most to succeed with your objectives?
- What politics are at play?
- Who are your personal champions?
- How can you check out your assumptions about support and opposition?
- How can you leverage inside–outside links?
- How can these identified stakeholders support you in your future priorities and challenges?
- What tactics will you use to engage each stakeholder?

## **Pitfalls**

The drawing of the stakeholder map will provide real insight into the nature of key stakeholders but without action to move forward against personal objectives it will limit any potential for development. Gaining commitment to future actions and reviewing the impact of this will provide the real momentum.

## **Bibliography**

Garavan, T. N. (1995) ‘Stakeholders and strategic human resource development’, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 19(10): 11–16.