Stakeholder Mapping

A RESOURCE FOR GROWER GROUPS

BACKGROUND

Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder mapping is the initial step in developing a stakeholder engagement plan. This first step is crucial to an effective plan, as engaging stakeholders requires that you know who they are. Mapping enables organisations to identify and prioritise its stakeholders, which in turn enables them to reflect on the best engagement mechanisms for each stakeholder.

Engaging with stakeholders is central to the business of grower groups, with partnerships and collaboration critical to their success

As not for profit organisations, grower groups often have limited resources and rely on relationships with a range of stakeholders to enable the group to function effectively and achieve their goals and targets.

This resource has been developed to support grower groups when undertaking a stakeholder mapping exercise within their management team, and subsequently assist in the development of a robust stakeholder engagement plan.

What is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest (and potential impact), either directly or indirectly, in the success of your organisation or your piece of work/project

Why map your stakeholders?

Stakeholders play important roles as advocates, sponsors, partners and agents of change

Stakeholder management has long been recognised as a central part of an organisation's effectiveness.

Stakeholder mapping enables identification and prioritizing of stakeholders, which in turn enables organisations to reflect on the best engagement mechanisms (such as a single meeting, open forum, social media, or an ongoing stakeholder panel) for their business.

METHOD

Stakeholder mapping is a simple process to facilitate with your organisation. It should only take one - two hours, and to have the biggest success should be completed with key staff or board of your organisation. You will not need a professional facilitator, rather use this resource as a tool/process to follow.

DEFINING THE "WHY"

Define why you are wanting to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise. Is it to grow your organisation and its success? Is it to get involvement in and/or the promotion of a specific project? It is important to think about why you are doing the exercise before you start, as this will help you set direction. You might like to set up a question or statement that you can refer back to during the mapping exercise that will keep you on track with your 'why' (i.e. who can influence the success of your organisation?).

IDENTIFYING THE “WHO”

List all the stakeholders your organisation works with or could potentially work with to achieve the ‘why’. The final list will depend on your organisation, its impacts, and your current engagement objectives. As a result it should not remain static, but rather a working document that is updated as your objectives evolve and your stakeholders change. Also remember to think of specifics, i.e. a researcher at a particular organisation may be very different (in terms of relationship and influence) to a policy officer at the same organisation.

The first step in the mapping process is to understand that there is no magic list of stakeholders

ASSIGNING THE RELATIONSHIP

Using butcher’s paper or a sticky wall, draw a target diagram to represent different relationship tiers of stakeholders (see Figure 1). Stick stakeholders up on the target diagram relating to where they fit on a relationship tier.

The relationship tiers describe the current level of support or involvement a stakeholder has in your organisation or project. There are three tiers used in this process (Table 1). It is important to determine this ranking as it indicates the strength of the relationship your organisation currently has with the stakeholder, and how closely or frequently you work with them. Refer to Table 1 to help decide the relationship tier each of your stakeholders fits into.

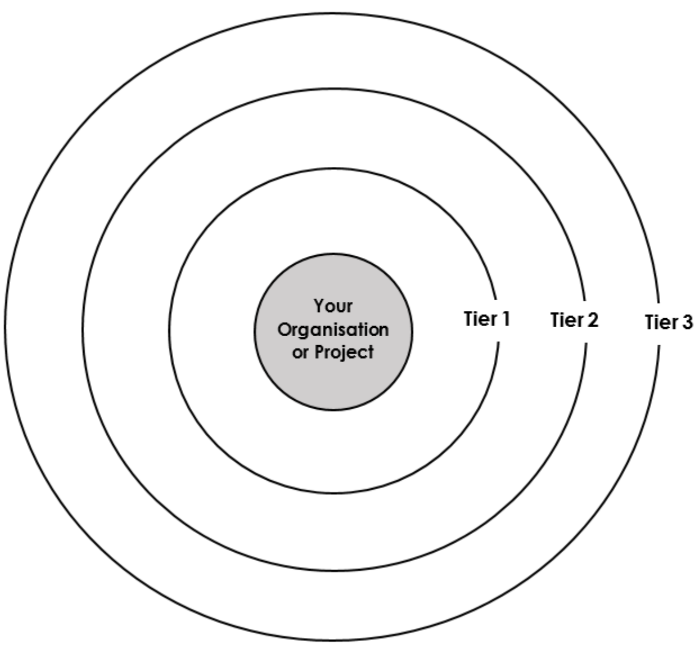

FIGURE 1. Target diagram to represent different relationship tiers of stakeholders

TABLE 1. Definitions of stakeholder relationship tiers

Relationship Tiers of Stakeholders

This describes the current level of support for or involvement in your organisation or project

(Current relationship/connection/involvement with stakeholders)

Tier 1. Central Stakeholders: The "go-to" people within your network, the ones you have a direct relationship with. These stakeholders have a strong connection to your organisation.

Tier 2. Boundary Stakeholders: Those people within your network who you occasionally connect with, but may not have a strong relationship with.

DISCUSSING THE INFLUENCE

The next step is to determine the influence each stakeholder has on your organisation or project. It is important to refer back to your 'why' when discussing influence. Think about how influential the stakeholder is in helping to achieve success for your organisation, or your outlined outcome.

It is essential to understand the influence a stakeholder has on your organisation, to ensure that you engage effectively with key people and organisations to achieve your desired outcomes

Influence is the ability of a stakeholder to control what decisions are made or facilitate the implementation of projects or activities. It is the extent to which the stakeholder is able to persuade or coerce others into making decisions, and therefore follow a certain course of action.

On the target diagram, write the level of influence on a scale of 1-5 next to each stakeholder to record your discussion and decisions on influence. Refer to Table 2 to assist you in deciding the level of influence each stakeholder has on the success of your organisation.

TABLE 2. Definitions of levels of stakeholder influence

Levels of Stakeholder Influence

Influence = the ability to affect the implementation or outcome of a project or goal

1. **No influence on your organisation**
2. **Very little influence on your organisation** - the stakeholder has little influence over the desired outcome"
3. **Some influence on your organisation** - achievement of the goal is possible without this stakeholder's support, but will not be easy"
4. **Strong influence on your organisation**

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP VS INFLUENCE INTERACTION

Maintaining a strong relationship with your stakeholders can take up a great deal of your organisations time and resources.

Organisations have relationships with many different stakeholders, from strong connections with key people or groups in the community, to detached connections with stakeholders in other regions or industries. The influence of these stakeholders on the success of your organisation is not necessarily in proportion to your relationship with them.

By understanding your relationships with stakeholders and their influence on your organisation, you can develop a plan that will assist you in prioritising your valuable resources to best effect

The mapping process allows you to understand where each stakeholder sits, and how much effort you should be investing into engaging with them.

This is what drives a stakeholder engagement plan

Mapping stakeholder relationship vs. influence allows you to identify who you need to engage more effectively with, to strengthen your relationship with them (due to their influence).

For example, it could be that a stakeholder with a tier 3 relationship (poor) has a strong influence on the success of your organisation – you just haven't engaged with them yet. On the other hand, you may have a tier 1 relationship (strong) with a stakeholder who has low influence on your organisation, and in this case it may be worth reviewing how much time you spend on this relationship and consider if a more general approach to engagement would be sufficient.

The matrix outlined in Table 3 shows how to plot relationship vs influence and make decisions on how to prioritise and choose your engagement strategy with stakeholders who fall into the different categories.

TABLE 3. Stakeholder relationship vs influence Matrix

Low .... Stakeholder influence .... High

DEVELOP CONNECTION ***Inform + Consult***	**WORK TOGETHER** ***Inform + Consult + Collaborate***
Establish a plan to work more closely. Prioritise time and resources connecting with these stakeholders. Make an effort to inform and consult with these stakeholders to raise their interest in your organisation. The goal is to move these stakeholders from a weak relationship to a strong relationship, or to develop a network with other stakeholders as a way of reaching them, to ensure they are kept informed and consulted where necessary.	Evaluate relationship to ensure both your organisation and the stakeholder are receiving benefit from the relationship. Maintain connection using resources required. Keep these stakeholders well informed, continue to consult on relevant issues, and form collaborations where possible.
MINIMAL EFFORT ***Inform***	**SHOW CONSIDERATION** ***Inform + Consult***
May be no need to connect with these stakeholders, or an occasional connection may be sufficient. Minimal effort is required. Inform through basic communication channels if interested.	Review the amount of time and resources invested in this relationship. Show consideration and consult when necessary, however basic communication channels may be sufficient.

Weak .... Relationship to Stakeholder .... Strong

NEXT STEPS

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The next step after undertaking a stakeholder mapping exercise is to feed the information into a stakeholder engagement strategy. When thinking about how to engage with stakeholders, think about what you do already and where there are opportunities for more creative or relevant engagement methods. Effective stakeholder engagement strategies will incorporate a combination of different approaches.

> **An effective stakeholder engagement plan will incorporate a combination of different approaches**

The ladder of participation outlined in Table 4 outlines different types of engagement approaches based on level of stakeholder involvement required. The different approaches also relate to an increase level of time and resources required to undertake each activity successfully, for example partnerships requiring more investment than simple pull communications.

TABLE 4. Ladder of stakeholder participation

Engagement approach	Description
Partnership	Shared accountability and responsibility. Two-way engagement joint learning, decision making and actions
Participation	Part of the team, engaged in delivering tasks or with responsibility for a particular area/activity. Two-way engagement within limits of responsibility.
Consultation	Involved, but not responsible and not necessarily able to influence outside of consultation boundaries. Limited two-way engagement: organisation asks questions, stakeholders answer.
Push communications	One-way engagement. Organisation may broadcast information to all stakeholders or target particular stakeholder groups using various channels e.g. email, letter, webcasts, podcasts, videos, leaflets.
Pull communications	One-way engagement. Information is made available stakeholder choose whether to engage with it.

Time & Resources

(Source: Stakeholdermap.com – "Stakeholder Engagement Processes" http://stakeholdermap.com/stakeholder-engagement.html)