Stakeholder Map

Idea In Short

As a consultant, it is your responsibility to ensure a successful engagement delivery. You can understand your stakeholders and their posture for change through Stakeholder Analysis. The Interest / Influence Grid helps classify project stakeholders by their Interest and Influence in an engagement.

Stakeholder map is a tool used in Stakeholder Analysis to group people by their power and interest. Stakeholder analysis helps you to plan, manage, and understand how to engage and communicate with all the key people who could have an impact on your project.

What is Stakeholder Mapping?

Stakeholder mapping is a way of organising all of the people who have an interest in your project in a single visual artefact. This allows you to easily see who can influence your project, and how each person is related to the other. As a consultant on a new engagement, you could typically analyse & map out your stakeholders early on during the project & continuously revise this map as stakeholders join or leave the project. Subsequently, undertaking a comprehensive stakeholder mapping early on will help prevent miscommunication, ensure that all stakeholder groups are aligned on the objectives & manage expectations about outcomes and results.

Why is Stakeholder mapping important?

Imagine you're starting on a new project and want it to be as successful as possible. Therefore, you need answers to the following questions regarding who you should:

- Involve?
- Keep updated?
- Likely have questions or objections?

These are all important questions that can even derail or delay an engagement.

Benefits of Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholders aren't just your allies; they can also deliver insights and advice that help you shape your project. Usually, when you involve a diverse group of stakeholder from the start, they will help you create the best outline and plan for your project that will set it up for success. However, at times, you might think a certain stakeholder has a high level of influence in an engagement. But, in reality, they may actually not! Hence, identifying and gauging the interest and influence levels of stakeholders is critical for stakeholder prioritisation. You can ensure that you have considered the full range of relevant people & organisations by constructing a stakeholder map. Analysing stakeholders, grouping them based on their posture, and understanding their concerns will also help target your communications and engagement strategy. Here's an example of who you might involve in a new product launch / market entry consulting project:

- Retailers
- Suppliers
- Management
- Financial institutions
- business consultants

If you're working on a project in the public sector, you have a different set of stakeholders to engage with, including:

- Business groups
- Elected representatives
- Local councils
- Courts
- Trade unions
- The media

Stakeholder Mapping with MindMaps

If you need a tool for stakeholder analysis, you may find mind map very useful. A mind map is a diagram that represents words and ideas linked to and arranged radially around a

central key word or idea. It is a graphical means of taking or making notes that represents connections between portions of information. You can used Mind maps to generate, visualise, structure and classify ideas. Mind maps have many applications in personal, educational, and business situations, including note taking, brainstorming, summarising, organising, problem solving, writing, revising, studying, and general clarifying of thoughts. Usually, the challenge for most clients is that they lack a structured process to identify the right opportunities & turn them into strategic advantages. Hence, they engage the services of external professional services firms. Mind mapping helps consultants structure the various factors to create powerful pictures that provide insight and guidance to clients. Clients appreciate completed mind maps because they have, usually, never seen all of their issues & potential solutions aggregated into one place & presented in an engaging visual format. In your initial client meeting, mind maps are an effective tool to perform a situation analysis & identify problems & client expectations. By building a mind map together in real-time, consultants can visualise the entire discovery process & provide clients with the confidence that they are truly understood. As successful client relationships are built on mutual understanding, effective communication & trust, using mind maps helps consultants even present even complex strategies in a way that's easy for clients to understand & stay engaged throughout the journey to project completion.

Benefits of Mind Maps

Using Mind maps, Engagement Managers can quickly show relationships between the project activities and stakeholders. They can also develop mind maps that:

- Define roles and responsibilities
- Describe alternative project approaches
- List project outcomes, and
- Provide project status

Mind maps are particularly useful when the Engagement Manager and stakeholders do not share a common language; using pictures & symbols helps convey key project information in a common format that is easily understood by all parties. Furthermore, Mind maps are creative tools that can help an engagement teams design solutions to existing problems. Consultants can also use Mind maps to create a new process, service, or explore & develop objectives for a strategic goal. It also helps teams to think outside the box in a non-linear fashion & determine how things are inter-related to the issue at hand. Mind Mapping is a

very intuitive way to organise your thoughts, since mind maps mimic the way our brains think; bouncing ideas off of each other, rather than thinking linearly.

Summary

Engagement managers can use these tips for stakeholder mind mapping activities as part of their overall project communication planning strategy. Using pictures to represent project goals, status and background information usually helps clarify complex scenarios. Using mind mapping to facilitate effective communication with stakeholders can help the project manager and her team ensure a successful project outcome.