Category

Consulting

Change Management & Stakeholder Engagement Playbook (RACI, Stakeholder Maps)

A practical method for mapping stakeholders by influence and sentiment, assigning clear decision rights with RACI, and running an engagement plan that converts resistance into support.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included
- Workshop Ready

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- 8 minute(s)

Overview

Map stakeholders by influence and sentiment, assign clean RACI decision rights, and run a tailored engagement plan, so resistance gets surfaced and converted early instead of derailing go-live.

What's the single biggest mistake teams make with a RACI?

Naming more than one person Accountable for the same decision. It feels collaborative in the moment but in practice means nobody actually owns the call, decisions drift into ambiguous back-and-forth, and when something goes wrong there's no clear owner to trace it back to — the fix is almost always to split the decision into two narrower decisions rather than share the Accountable role.

How do you rate a stakeholder's "influence" objectively instead of guessing?

Use concrete signals rather than gut feel: formal authority (do they approve budget or sign-off), informal credibility (do others visibly defer to their opinion in meetings), and resource control (do they gatekeep a team, system, or approval queue the program needs). Where you genuinely don't have evidence for a placement, mark it explicitly as an assumption to validate rather than treating a guess as fact.

How often should the stakeholder map and RACI be updated?

At minimum, review both at every major program milestone and at every steering committee cycle — biweekly is a common cadence for active delivery phases. Sentiment in particular shifts quickly once a program moves from design (where it's abstract) into delivery (where people feel the actual impact), so a map that was accurate at kickoff is frequently stale by the time rollout begins.

What should we do with a stakeholder who is high-influence and actively resistant?

Prioritize direct, one-on-one engagement with them before broader rollout communication goes out, and treat their specific objections as data to investigate rather than an attitude to manage around. In most cases their resistance points to a real design gap — surfacing and addressing it early is far cheaper than discovering the same objection company-wide after go-live.

Can a RACI have zero people in the "Accountable" role for a minor decision?

No — every decision in scope for the RACI needs exactly one Accountable person, even a minor one; if a decision seems too small to need a named owner, it's a sign it doesn't need to be tracked in the RACI at all, rather than a reason to leave the Accountable column blank.

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