

GETTING THINGS DONE

Influences stakeholders to achieve desired change



Influencing stakeholders during change

Stakeholders are those whose work affects you and who your work impacts on. They can be inside the University (in your area or another faculty or department, for example) or outside the University, such as a supplier, partner or private organisation.

Influence means you can affect a person's attitude, behaviour and decisions to support your change without necessarily having formal power over them.

Change takes effort and new thinking, and often involves learning new behaviours and building new relationships. Transition is often uncomfortable and there may be some dip in performance whilst people are learning. There are a lot of reasons to resist change.

It is worth knowing who is impacted by your decisions before you make them, so you can focus on them first. If you have made provision for a stakeholder in the change, this in itself can lower the resistance. Your objective as an influencer is to get buy-in from your most important stakeholders, in order to give your project the best chance of success.

You can think of yourself and your team as the centre of a solar system and your stakeholders as satellites. Some are closer to you (more impacted by or impacting on you), some are further away, less important in this respect. Often a stakeholder's position in your universe is dependent on the issue at hand.

Any change you make will have advantages and disadvantages for your stakeholder. And each stakeholder will respond to different kinds of persuasion. It is worth answering these questions for each of your stakeholders:

- How will your decision cause them problems? Short, medium or long-term?
- What advantages might it bring to them? Short, medium or long-term?
- What would make it easy for them to support this change?

If you have answered these questions, you have a better chance of bringing your stakeholders along with you.

Smart communication in these circumstances is important. This is when all the effort you have put into your relationships at work will pay dividends. Most of us make more effort for those we know and trust. Stakeholders who know and trust you will help you reach your goals.



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Thinks strategically, taking an open and long-term view of possibilities

ACTIVITY

Think of a change you have implemented or are about to implement. It might be simple, such as a new way of handling queries; or complex, such as a new course to be offered to undergraduates. (If you don't have a live change, think of a change you have been involved with in the past.)

The change you are implementing

● Map out your stakeholder solar system. Answer the three questions for each of them. Use a separate sheet. Name each stakeholder. Which ones are most important – not just in terms of their place in the organisation, but also how much they could support or hinder this change?

- How will your decision cause them problems? Short, medium or long-term?
- What advantages might it bring to them? Short, medium or long-term?
- What would make it easy for them to say yes?



STAKEHOLDER

- How can this support your decision-making and planning?

- How does it improve your chances of successful influence?

- What else have you learnt from this process?



Complete the Reflection sheet