



**Engagementworks**

# **Community Engagement Basics**

**Session 5 – Video 3**

**Engaging with Stakeholders**

# Engaging with Stakeholders



## Introduction

In this lesson we are going to outline how to decide levels of engagement for differing stakeholder groups.

We are also going to talk about some of the risks and challenges associated with stakeholders.

And we will also focus on difficult stakeholders with some tips for dealing with them.

## Levels of Engagement

You will remember the following table from lesson 2 in session 1.

We have included it here as a refresher about different levels of engagement because this becomes very much into focus when analysing stakeholders.

This particular example is based on the IAP2 engagement spectrum and includes for each level the goal, promise and example tools.

Increasing level of public input				
Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<i>Public Participation Goal</i>	<i>Public Participation Goal</i>	<i>Public Participation Goal</i>	<i>Public Participation Goal</i>	<i>Public Participation Goal</i>
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision development in the hands of the public
<i>Promise to the Public</i>	<i>Promise to the Public</i>	<i>Promise to the Public</i>	<i>Promise to the Public</i>	<i>Promise to the Public</i>
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating	We will confirm your recommended decision and

<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
	provide feed-back on how public input influenced the decision	reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feed-back on how public input influenced the decision.	solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	implement what you decide
<i>Example Tools</i>	<i>Example Tools</i>	<i>Example Tools</i>	<i>Example Tools</i>	<i>Example Tools</i>
Fact sheets Web sites Open houses	Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Deliberate polling	Citizen Advisory Committees Consensus building Participatory decision-making	Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decisions

We need to relate the engagement spectrum to the influence and importance of each group of stakeholders. We discussed influence and importance in lesson 2 of this session and you will recall the matrix which enabled you to classify stakeholders into four quadrants or groups.

- Quadrant A High importance but low interest
- Quadrant B High importance and high interest
- Quadrant C High influence but low importance
- Quadrant D Low importance and low influence

This enables you to develop strategies for working with the different groups and these strategies will include the level of engagement for each stage of the decision process for each stakeholder group.

There are different ways of doing this and below is a simple matrix analysing the appropriate overall engagement level for each group of stakeholders.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>A</b>		✓			
<b>B</b>	✓				
<b>C</b>				✓	
<b>D</b>			✓		
<b>E</b>			✓		
<b>F</b>			✓		

In the table below is a more likely matrix approach where for each stakeholder group differing levels of engagement have been applied for different stages of the decision process.

Just how detailed your matrix becomes will depend on the depth of analysis you carry out in the initial stages of identifying stakeholders, their interests, importance and influence. The nature of the decision to be made will also be relevant to this.

In this matrix you can see that we have

- identified a stakeholder group ( in this example A)
- included five different engagement levels and
- included each phase of the decision process.

When you have identified the appropriate levels of engagement you will then be able to focus on selecting the right tools.

Stakeholder: A					
Decision Phase	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Problem Definition			√		
Gather Information				√	
Decision Criteria		√			
Develop Alternatives			√		
Evaluation			√		
Decision		√			

## Stakeholder Engagement – Challenges

Here are some of the challenges that you will be confronted with when going through your stakeholder identification process.

- Failure to adapt stakeholder engagement to the operational context.
- Failure to identify the right stakeholders.
- Failure to choose the right engagement activities.
- Lack of effective stakeholder engagement at early stages of project development.
- Lack of a strategic approach to stakeholder engagement across the project lifecycle.
- Lack of capacity and support for effective stakeholder engagement.



You are also going to be confronted with a number of risks including –

- What is the role or response of the key stakeholders that must be assumed if the project is to be successful?
- Are there negative responses which can be expected, given the interests of the stakeholders?
- If such responses occur, what impact would they have on the project?
- How likely are these negative responses to occur, and are they major risks?

In summary, which views about stakeholders support or threaten the project?

Knowing the answers to these questions will help you to decide on importance and influence for each stakeholder group. It will also have a bearing on what levels of engagement to use and also appropriate tools.

## Difficult Stakeholders

'Difficult' is really an expression of difference. Behaviour is a symptom of unaddressed issues and unmet needs.

A variety of terms have been used to describe different types of difficult behaviour including:

- *Passive Aggressive Stakeholders* who avoid direct confrontation but are not satisfied that all relevant issues have been addressed
- *Disinterested stakeholders* who ignore all opportunities to become involved and contribute their ideas and concerns
- *Aggressive stakeholders* who are highly confrontational, very aggressive and will engage in personal attacks to intimidate and dominate proceedings to push their own agenda
- *Indecisive stakeholders* who, while not being confrontational or uncooperative, continually changes their minds and are very hard to get to make decisions. These are the procrastinators.



Other terms used include name dropper, empire builder, vanisher, bosser and there are others.

Stakeholder identification is an integral element of an engagement plan which should be prepared during the pre-engagement phase

### Tips for dealing with difficult stakeholders

- Make sure that all affected stakeholders have been identified before the engagement process begins and that you know their engagement preferences
- Engage early in the decision process and include stakeholder's right from the start
  - Engage on both the problem and the solution and keep stakeholders connected throughout the entire process
  - Keep stakeholders fully informed by providing full information about the decision to be made, who will decide, the decision time frame, impacts and intended outcome(s)
  - Use engagement tools that fit your stakeholders' preferences
- Clearly identify what is in scope and what is out of scope
- Identify communication channels and contacts that stakeholders can use to discuss ideas and concerns and contribute their input to the decision process
- Have an engagement plan that identifies the levels of engagement to be used at each decision phase, by stakeholder group and ensure that stakeholders are advised
- Close the loop by ensuring that stakeholders are advised of the decision(s) and how their input contributed



## Conclusion

In this lesson we have -

- talked about levels of engagement for different phases of the decision process for each stakeholder group
- Outlined the risks and challenges, and
- Provided some tips for dealing with difficult stakeholders

