

# Challenge #17

When to involve which stakeholders and  
with what agenda?

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## The nut to crack

### Involve stakeholders

In today's organisations people often have different roles and are part of multiple teams. Decisions are being made within the formal hierarchical setup, as well as through informal communication chains. To be able to manage an organisational transformation in this forcefield, it is of great importance to know who your stakeholders are. **Who are your stakeholders?** When and how do you **involve** them? And what **information** do you share with whom?

## The solution

### The 80/20 rule

It is not unconceivable that, even with a relatively simple organisational change, there will be tens of stakeholders. This number will **grow exponentially with increased complexity and scale of the transformation**.

The 80/20 rule will help you manage your and your teams' capacity and time in involving stakeholders. Becoming aware of the fact that, if you reach the key 20% stakeholders you can influence 80% of your outcome, **results in smarter choices and interactions**. That doesn't mean you shouldn't reach the other stakeholders, it just means **a different level of interaction**.

**Support tool I**, the stakeholder mapping tool, facilitates making those smart choices.

**Support tool II**, which is the "do, feel, know, say" analysis can help determine which conversations to have with whom and on what subject. The real-life example illustrates how to mobilise an important stakeholder group: the informal leaders.

### Support Tool I: Differentiated stakeholder management

When reaching out to your stakeholders it helps to differentiate between stakeholders who need **comprehensive managing** because of their sizable stake and influence and stakeholders who require **minimal effort in keeping them in the loop**.

Draw up a table. Place the different stakeholders in four groups on the vertical axes; manage thoroughly, keep a close eye, match basic needs, minimal effort. Then plot key names, their attitude with regards to the change, what you want to discuss, how you want to have the discussion and who and when should deliver the message per stakeholder or group of stakeholders on the horizontal axes.

### Support Tool II: Do – feel – know – say

Thinking in terms of the four elements "do, feel, know, say" is helpful in figuring out **who to have which conversation with**.

For example, let's say you want the director of a business unit to actively support the new circular business model (do), even though you know he is not really into this 'green business' yet. How do you mobilise this person? How does he have to feel to speak positively about this on a day-to-day basis? It could mean, this person must not only feel inspired, but also confident and responsible before he will comment. That may require him to better understand the advantages for himself and for the business than he does now, and he may need to become conscious of the role model he is expected to be (know).

Once you have formed a clear picture on what is required for this person, you can decide **who needs to have a conversation (say) with him and what should be on the agenda**. In this particular case, it could be a meeting for this director with his peers from the industry to exchange ideas on their approach on circularity, which could give him the nudge he needs to also start experimenting in this field. And a conversation with his boss in which he is being asked to take accountability to proactively put this subject on the map and take responsibility as a role model.



## Real life example

### Find the informal leaders

A director is on the verge of integrating two banks. To merge the banks successfully she wants to **know who the most important informal leaders of the organisation are**. How does she find and utilise them?

An organigram only tends to tell you part of the story about who has the real influence. She therefore analyses the informal social relationship network by asking the employees a few simple questions. Her questions are about transactional and emotional relationships, like: 'Who do you go to for work related questions?' or 'Who do you ask to brainstorm about a challenge you are facing?' or 'Who do you go to for advice

before taking an important decision?'. Using supporting software, she can create an anonymous visual showing where the informal leaders are located. She concludes that the innovation department hardly ever gets consulted and that there is a middle management layer in one of the business units which contains numerous informal leaders who also influence leaders of other business units. Based on this information she decides which people to pull into the transformation as ambassadors. This helps her execute the integration faster and smoother.

## Conclusion

Have the right conversation at the right time: Worst case scenario stakeholder management is ticking boxes in a matrix with no actual influence or impact. Make sure stakeholder management is about having those **effective two-way conversations** by the right people at the right time, through which individuals become mobilised.



Tip for the  
change leader

By partnering up with a buddy who is regarded as an informal leader in a part of the organisation you don't have easy access to, **you can boost your impact naturally**. Should you choose to partner with a much younger buddy, it can be an effective way to bridge the gap between the age categories within the organisation.

By periodically **assessing stakeholders' level of commitment**, you can identify which conversations are needed at which times. Challenge number 45 explains how to measure the individual commitment levels.



Tip for the  
change enabler





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