

# How to Understand Your Stakeholders

4-step template to  
plan engagement for your change project



**FORMIUM**  
DEVELOPMENT

“Find the appropriate balance of competing claims by various groups of stakeholders. All claims deserve consideration but some claims are more important than others.”

Warren Bennis

When undertaking a change process, understanding who to influence is of vital importance as you allocate your time and effort. In addition to knowing who your key stakeholders are, it is important to devise strategies to engage them in your change, in the most effective way and making the best use of your resources.

No matter how big or small the change, whether something practical at team level or a strategic change in the organisations' direction, the following pages will help you gain clarity about your stakeholders, their level of influence and feelings about your proposed changes. This in turn will support you in devising the most appropriate engagement plan for them.

## 1. Who are your stakeholders?

Consider who has a stake in the proposed change or in the status quo. They may be internal or external to your team or organisation, they may be individuals or groups, and be directly or indirectly affected. Make a note of them here in the hexagons.

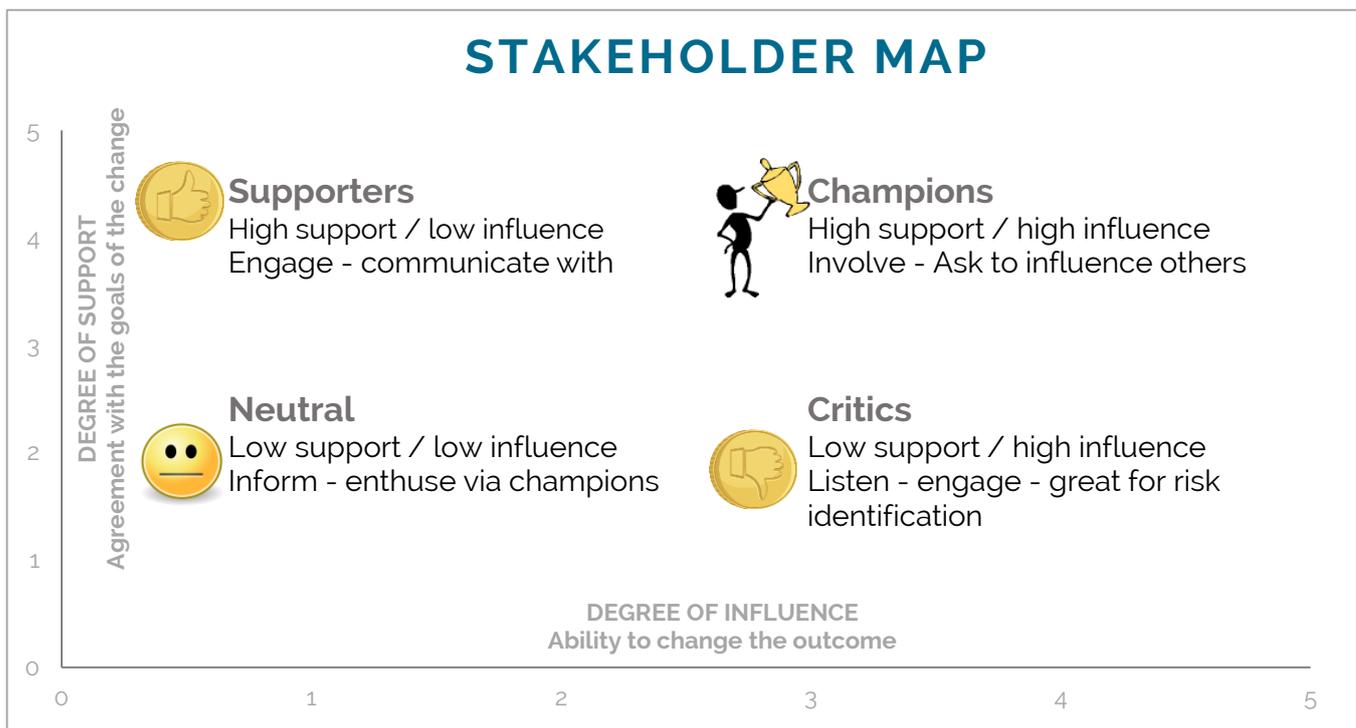


## 2. Plot stakeholders by influence and support

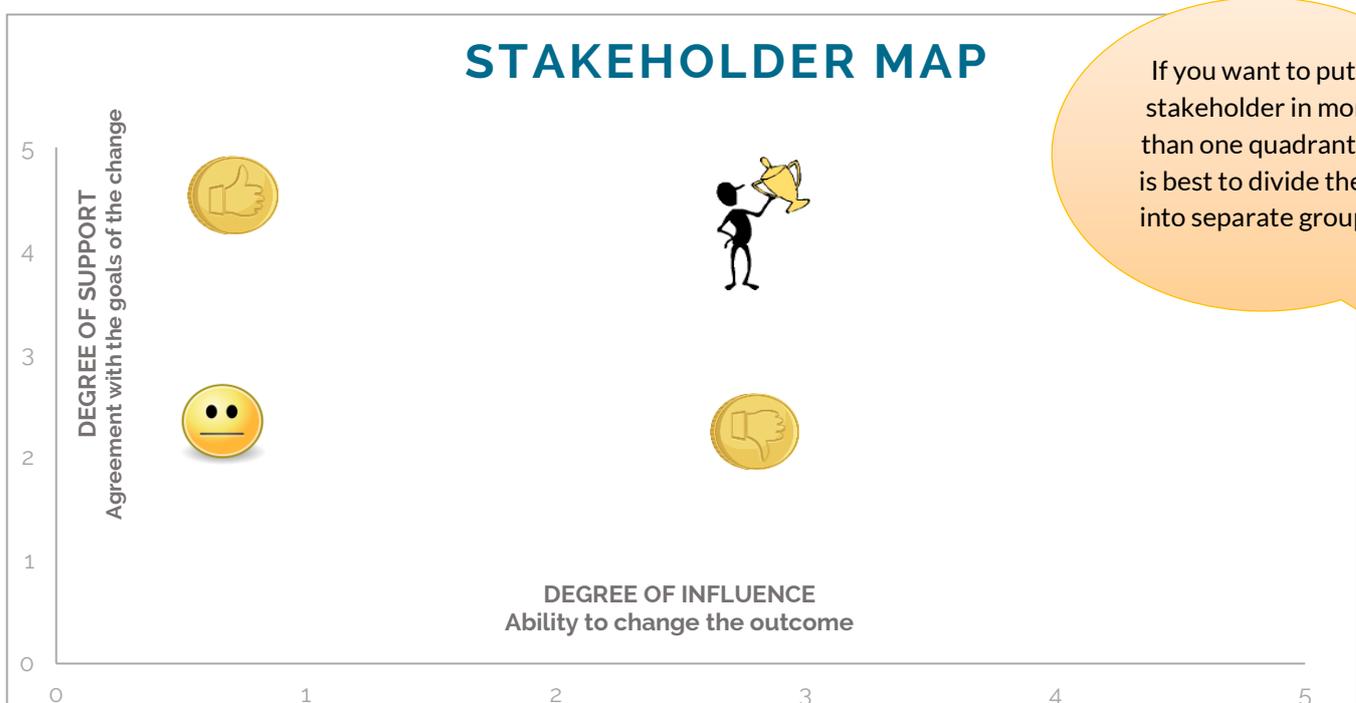
Now that you have listed them, ask yourself to what extent each stakeholder:

- agrees with the goals of your change programme
- has power and influence to change the outcome of the situation.

The stakeholder map helps you understand their relationship to each other and the proposed changes and includes the suggested approach.



Use the blank map below to plot your own stakeholders identified in the first step.



### 3. Understand stakeholder needs

Having considered the influence, now think about your stakeholders' different needs, wants and motivations. You may wish to ask them for their views.

	Supporters	Champions	Critics	Neutral
What motivates them? What do they want?				
What do they value most about the current state?				
What are they worried about losing through this change?				
What could they gain through this change? What would a successful outcome look like to them?				
What is the best method of communication to reach them?				
What is my next action to engage this group?				

## 4. Devise your action plan

The final planning stage involves creating a stakeholder engagement plan. If you have followed the steps above, you should have a much clearer idea of what to include in your stakeholder engagement plan.

Write down

- what you will do
- for whom and with whom
- when
- using what channels and resources

Start with your priority stakeholders, those with the most influence. Bring your Champions on board early, involve them in shaping the change and ask them to talk about the expected positive outcomes. Listen to their language and the emotions and hopes they describe and use this language in your communication with others, building a motivation for change.

Seek out your Critics and listen to them. They may see the risks which, unless tackled early, can jeopardise your plans. Addressing Critics' objections meaningfully and positively may turn them into your most vocal champions and also bring some Neutral stakeholders into the Supporter camp.

You may wish to have some external guidance or support in planning or implementing your change projects, including consultancy and advice, facilitated engagement sessions, appreciate inquiry summits or project planning and management support.

If so, we can support your change management or stakeholder engagement efforts using strength-based approaches, which minimise resistance and galvanise commitment.

Schedule a convenient time and book a no-obligation discussion about your requirements here: <https://calendly.com/leadershipqualification/60min/>, or contact us.

**Website:** <http://formium.co.uk/what-we-do/organisation-development/>

**E-mail:** [info@formium.co.uk](mailto:info@formium.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 7416 6648

**International:** +44 20 7416 6648

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