Analyzing stakeholders' support and influence: Strategies for engagement

Change teams must strategically engage stakeholders on an ongoing basis to achieve and sustain change throughout the change process. This can begin with activities such as the identification of a problem or the selection of a best practice guideline (BPG) and prioritized recommendations, per the results of a gap analysis.

Stakeholders can be assessed for their potential support of the change and influence level based on their roles and responsibilities. As the factors of both support and influence for a change can exist across a continuum from low to high, four groups of potential stakeholders can be assessed:

- High support, high influence
- High support, low influence
- Low support, low influence
- Low support, high influence

Tailored strategies can be applied for each group of stakeholders depending on their degree of support and influence to mobilize engagement and/or mitigate risks associated with non-support.

For example, high influence and high support stakeholders can be counted on the most to support adopting and integrating BPGs. In contrast, those who have low influence and low support may be the lowest priority group of stakeholders and are best managed by moving them to a neutral position to minimize negative effects.

For more ideas on stakeholder strategies as per their degree of support and influence, see the attached table.

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Stakeholder influence and support grid with strategies for engagement

H i g h

S U P P O R T

- Have the ability to positively affect change and influence policy
- Need a great deal of attention and information to maintain their active engagement throughout the change initiative

Strategies:
- Communicate vision and project plan and seek active participation in the implementation process
- Empower people to champion the change initiative
- Keep in contact by providing regular updates about the project

**High Support
High Influence**

- Can positively affect dissemination and adoption of change
- Need attention to maintain their interest and engagement
- Keep focus on shared vision

Strategies:
- Collaborate
- Engage in ongoing feedback throughout the change process
- Empower them to engage and emerge as informal leaders

**High Support
Low Influence**

**Low Support
High Influence**

**Low Support
Low Influence**

L o w

- Can negatively impact change in a big way
- Need a great amount of attention to obtain support and/or neutrality
- Aim to inspire shared vision

Strategies:
- Build relationships based on trust, outline the benefits of the change
- Acknowledge and recognize their concerns
- Monitor their involvement and provide opportunities for engagement

- Least impact on change – could negatively impact change
- Aim to inspire shared vision
- Some attention to obtain support and/or maintain neutrality

Strategies:
- Consensus
- Build relationships
- Use external stakeholders and consultants to influence their perspectives
- Involve them at some level
- Monitor their involvement and encourage their participation in the change initiative

High   **INFLUENCE**   **Low**

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