Why spend time re-inventing the wheel when you can learn from the experience of others?

BPIR Best Practice Report
Business Excellence Series
Volume 1, Issue 4

Leadership: Engagement and Communication with Stakeholders
Business Performance Improvement Resource
supporting your quest for excellence

The TRADE Best Practice Benchmarking Methodology
(the latest version is available at BPIR.com)

The International Best Practice Competition and Organisation-Wide Innovation Award
(hundreds of best practice award videos and case studies are available at BPIR.com)
www.bestpracticecompetition.com

The Global Benchmarking Award
(dozens of benchmarking award videos and case studies are available at BPIR.com)
www.globalbenchmarkingaward.com
Welcome to BPIR.com’s Business Excellence series

The BPIR.com Business Excellence Series has been designed as a premium collection of more than 30 best practice reports. The reports are professionally crafted with all the criteria of Business Excellence Models and Frameworks in mind, in particular the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and the EFQM Excellence Model. Business Excellence Models are internationally recognised, holistic models that enable organisations to assess and improve their journey towards world-class performance. The series will assist organisations to find and implement best practices across all six major categories (and sub-criteria/items) of Business Excellence Models:

- leadership
- strategy
- customers
- information and knowledge management
- human resources, and
- operations.

The first three of these reports deal with leadership: Vision, Mission, and Values, Legal and Ethical Behaviour and Building a Successful Organisation.

The Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER) is a leader in research into Business Excellence and, as founders of BPIR.com, brings its expertise to this new series. COER is currently working on a number of exciting projects relating to Business Excellence, including the largest ever study on the design, deployment, and impact of national, regional, and sectoral Business Excellence programs. This research, called Excellence Without Borders, is supported by the Global Excellence Model Council and involves more than 35 of the 70+ countries that actively promote Business Excellence.

This new series builds on BPIR.com’s internationally acclaimed Best Practice Report series, which has been at the cutting-edge of business performance improvement research since 2002. Over the years, we’ve produced more than 100 Best Practice Reports, examining wide-ranging and diverse topics including Six Sigma, social media, manufacturing outsourcing, Lean techniques, flexible work arrangements, and product life cycle management. Each report provides a succinct review of the topic, expert opinion, best practice case studies, latest research, benchmarks, and self-assessment resources. Various materials—such as e-books, reports, and infographics—are provided as downloadable links. You will find a full list of these reports, all of which are available to members, on the back cover of this issue.

Become a member of BPIR.com

There are many benefits to becoming a member of BPIR.com – not least of which is receiving future issues of our best practice reports in your inbox and exclusive access to our best practice database of reports, videos, articles, and expert analysis. This treasure trove of information, hands-on experience, and learning will take your business to the next level.

If you are a non-member, you will find some of the links in this report do not work. To join BPIR.com simply click here or to find out more about membership, email membership@bpir.com or visit www.bpir.com – and be sure to follow us on Twitter at @BPIRcom.
Leadership: Engagement and Communication with Stakeholders

The Definition

A stakeholder is an individual or a group that holds a stake or, in other words, an interest in an organisation’s activities. Stakeholders can come from almost every area in which an organisation exists and operates: they can, for example, be employees, suppliers or customers; consumers, unions or legislators; banks, competitors or shareholders. Engaging and communicating with stakeholders is a fundamental ‘must’ for every organisation. Engagement goes beyond a simple exchange of information. Engagement involves listening, learning and collaborating with those who have a legitimate interest in an organisation’s activities, products and services. It is the process through which leaders (from CEOs to managers to team leaders) involve those people who may be affected by the decisions an organisation makes or might influence the implementation of the decisions. Stakeholder communication refers to all forms of communication—formal and informal—that leaders convey to the organisation’s stakeholders. Organisational communication can be considered a subset of the deeper role of stakeholder engagement, in which leaders play a critical role.

The Stage

Some of the most important activities an organisation can undertake relate to engaging and communicating with its stakeholders. The principal aim of any organisation’s engagement and communication process is to connect stakeholders with business strategy, and to demonstrate how it is proactive and responsive to stakeholders’ legitimate concerns.

Not all stakeholders are created equal: when it comes to furthering an organisation’s goals, some are more important than others. In most stakeholder models or maps, there are two key criteria to help identify the significance of stakeholders: stakeholder influence, and stakeholder dependence/interest. This enables engagement plans to be prioritised and targeted to specific stakeholders using appropriate forms of communication. However, leaders would do well to remember that their employees are probably the most important group of stakeholders, and it is important to inspire and motivate them to carry out the organisational mission.

A stakeholder engagement process is essentially about relationship building. Some organisations choose to have clearly defined, articulated policies and governance processes, while others prefer a less formal approach. In either case, there has to be a process to identify needs and to deal with issues, to align these needs and issues with the organisation’s strategy and goals, and to provide feedback and accountability to stakeholders. Stakeholders should feel they are active partners—that their ideas and inputs are understood and acted upon—rather than being passive recipients of a one-way stream of communication.

Finally, organisations need to deliberate on and implement metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) that will enable them to measure the success of their interactions with stakeholders. This will allow organisations to re-prioritise and re-position themselves in order to maximise the benefits of their stakeholder engagement programmes and activities.

In This Report...

1. What does ‘engagement and communication with stakeholders’ mean?
2. Which organisations have received recognition for engagement and communication with their stakeholders?
3. How have organisations reached high levels of success through engagement and communication with their stakeholders?
4. What research has been undertaken into engagement and communication with stakeholders?
5. What tools and methods are used to achieve high levels of success in engaging and communicating with stakeholders?
6. How can engagement and communication with stakeholders be measured?
7. What do business leaders say about engagement and communication with stakeholders?
8. Conclusion.

Author: Dr Alan Samuel, BPIR.com Limited
Editor: Dr Robin Mann, Centre for Organisational Excellence Research
Editor: Michael Adams, Thingwall Communications (Canada).
1. What does ‘engagement and communication with stakeholders’ mean?

1.1 Baldrige Classification of Stakeholders
Source: NIST, United States (date of information: 2019)
Link: Baldrige Excellence Framework
Application/Key learning points: Baldrige divides all stakeholders into two groups: 1) customers and stakeholders; and, 2) suppliers, partners and collaborators. Customers and stakeholders refer to and include the following: an organisation’s key market segments; customer groups; and, stakeholder groups and their key requirements and expectations for your products, customer support services and operations. Suppliers, partners and collaborators play a role in producing and delivering an organisation’s key products and customer support services, as well as enhancing its competitiveness. It is important to understand the key needs of both groups, as well as their function and contribution to the organisation’s own requirements.

1.2 Organisational Stakeholders: Who Are They and What Do They Do?
Source: Curious, United States (date of information: 2015)
Link (video): Organisational Stakeholders: Introduction to Organisations
Application/Key learning points: This five-minute video from Mean That is all you need to get a good understanding of what organisational stakeholders are. The video categorises the different types of stakeholder and describes what contributions they make to an organisation; it also explains what induces them to contribute to an organisation.

1.3 What Is Stakeholder Engagement?
Source: Future 500, United States (date of information: 2014)
Link (video): What Is Stakeholder Engagement?
Application/Key learning points: This three-minute ‘speed draw cartoon’ presentation tells you exactly what stakeholder engagement is all about. It explains how organisations should approach stakeholders in order to bring about mutually beneficial outcomes.

1.4 Stakeholder Engagement: Five-Step Process
Source: Online PM Courses, United Kingdom (date of information: 2016)
Link (video): Stakeholder Engagement: Five-Step Process
Application/Key learning points: Stakeholder engagement is a key discipline within project management. This four-minute video presentation explains just why stakeholders have a critical role in any project. It also explains why it is important to engage fully with stakeholders, and provides a five-step process to help with the engagement. The steps may appear simple, but a significant amount of effort is still required to make it work.

1.5 Six Myths about Communication in an Organisation
Source: PowToon, United States (date of information: 2013)
Link (video): Communication in Organisation: 6 Myths about Communication
Application/Key learning points: In under three minutes, this PowToon video will debunk six myths about communication within organisations. We often assume we know what good communication is all about and that we are engaging well with colleagues inside our own organisation. This video is a good reminder of the things we should not take for granted if we want to be effective internal communicators.

1.6 So What Is Power/Interest Stakeholder Analysis?
Source: Assist Knowledge Development, (date of information: 2019)
Link (video): What is Power/Interest Stakeholder Analysis?
Application/Key learning points: This informative five-minute video explains what power/interest stakeholder analysis is, and shows you how to use a power/interest grid to determine the engagement strategy you need for each stakeholder. Although the example is meant for a specific project, it is applicable to any stakeholder groups that might have an impact on the organisation in the longer term. It is a useful tool to help track changes in the dynamics of stakeholder groups over a period of time.
2. Which organisations have received recognition for engagement and communication with their stakeholders?

2.1 Examples of Stakeholder Engagement & Communication Awards

Sources & Links:

- Intranet and Digital Workplace Awards, Australia
- Global Community Engagement Awards, France
- The Gold Standards Awards (Communication & Stakeholder Engagement), Hong Kong
- Community Engagement Awards, India
- Sustainable Business Awards, Singapore
- The Corporate Engagement Awards, United Kingdom
- Communicate Magazine Awards, United Kingdom
- Engage Awards, United Kingdom

Application/Key learning points: These are examples of awards for stakeholder engagement and communication from around the globe. You will see some of the world’s best and most successful organisations in this space, and read about what makes them exceptional. Award winners are usually excellent organisations to contact and from which to learn.

2.2 Digital Impact Awards: Digital Stakeholder Management

Source: Digital Impact Awards, United Kingdom (date of information: 2018)
Link: Digital Impact Awards Past Winners

Application/Key learning points: The Digital Impact Awards is the United Kingdom’s industry-wide benchmark in digital stakeholder engagement. Honouring exemplary organisations from all over Europe, the awards have many different categories and types in which organisations can apply to participate. Categories include deliverables; social media; best use of digital to an internal audience; best use of digital to an investment audience; evaluation; and, the best use of digital by sector. In this age, a strong online presence is required if you want to stay competitive. Take the time to browse some of the past winners reports to learn how to improve your digital resource.

2.3 Australasia Stakeholder Engagement & Communications Conference

Source: International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), Australia (date of information: 2019)
Link: IAP2 Australasia Conference

Application/Key learning points: The IAP2 conference is one of the most popular conferences for engagement and communication professionals within Australasia. On this informative website, you will be able to see some of the videos from the most recent conference, including keynote sessions and the interactions between participants during electives or breakout sessions. This conference is particularly useful for professionals who are seeking higher public participation.

“Developing excellent communication skills is absolutely essential to effective leadership. The leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas to transmit a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others. If a leader can’t get a message across clearly and motivate others to act on it, then having a message doesn’t even matter.”

—Gilbert Amelio, President and CEO of National Semiconductor Corp.
3. How have organisations reached high levels of success through engagement and communication with their stakeholders?

3.1 World’s Top 10 IT Service Provider Aligns Corporate Interest with Stakeholders

Source: Tata Consultancy Services, India (date of information: 2018)

Application/Key learning points: The CEO of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) attributes corporate sustainability to its ability to align the organisation’s long-term interests with those of its stakeholders. TCS is consistently ranked among the top 10 IT service providers in the world, and has had a healthy compound annual growth rate of 21.6 per cent since 2005. In 2017 alone, TCS won awards for being a top employer; for being top in customer satisfaction (Europe); and, for having the most valuable IT service brand. It also won the United Kingdom Superbrands Awards (see p. 9 of the report). This 60-page sustainability report covers the economic, social and environmental impact of TCS around the globe. The whole document is excellent, and is a ‘must read’ to learn how TCS relates to and gains the trust of its stakeholders.

3.2 Gold Standards Awards Winner for Stakeholder Engagement: GSK Consumer Healthcare

Source: The Gold Standards Award, Hong Kong (date of information: 2017)

Application/Key learning points: The Gold Standard Awards received more than 300 applications from top global brands in 2017. The awards are given to outstanding communications and public affairs functions in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. GSK Consumer Healthcare’s “Allied Against Dengue” campaign aimed to galvanise public and private institutions to unite, take action and defeat the disease in Southeast Asia. It has been very successful in mobilising public and private agencies to combine their efforts to fight and prevent dengue. The campaign initiated a host of programmes and activities, including train-the-trainer workshops, resource and knowledge-sharing sessions, recruitment roadshows, clean-up exercises, and the provision of home care kits. As a result, within 18 months, the communities were sufficiently empowered to fight dengue. Most importantly, morbidity and fatality rates were also reduced.

3.3 Gold Standards Awards Winner for Corporate Communications: ICICI Bank

Source: The Gold Standards Award, Hong Kong (date of information: 2017)

Application/Key learning points: The winner of the Gold Standard Award for Corporate Communications in 2017 was India’s ICICI Bank. When India made a sudden decision to demonetise and made it illegal to make payments with 500 and 1,000 rupee banknotes, ICICI Bank, amongst others appealed to the population to switch to digital payments. ICICI, however, went much further, and organised an education campaign that included extensive media field trips, co-ordinated video broadcasting across different platforms, and TV interviews. This was followed by the launch of several digital payment products, demonstrations and video conferencing. As a result, 94 per cent of its customer transactions were performed outside branches, and the bank received a greater than 100 per cent increase in internet banking transactions. India’s finance minister declared the ICICI Bank was the absolute benchmark to follow to target rural areas.

“Keep things informal. Talking is the natural way to do business.”
—T. Boone Pickens, American business magnate
3.4 Digital Impact Awards in Stakeholder Management: Special Awards
Source: Digital Impact Awards, United Kingdom (date of information: 2018)
Link (& PDF): Digital Impact Awards Past Winners

Digital Campaign of The Year, 2017: Northern and Blumilk
Application/Key learning points: Northern and Blumilk’s “Buy Before You Board” campaign won the digital campaign of the year award for alleviating the perennial problem of passengers boarding trains without tickets. On p. 51 of the PDF, you will be able to read how Northern and Blumilk achieved this through cleverly devised road-shows, games and other techniques.

Digital In-house Team of The Year, 2017: Gatwick Airport
Application/Key learning points: London’s Gatwick’s Airport won the in-house team of the year award by transforming the way 200 organisations within the airport share mutually beneficial information in real time through an industry-first application. For example, hotel staff can use the app to help passengers search flight and contact information. You can read more about this campaign on p. 53 of the download.

Digital Agency of The Year: Omobono
Application/Key learning points: Omobono won the digital agency of the year award for repositioning businesses by harnessing its superb brand-building expertise. It helped agencies such as Accenture produce and launch a creative and influential report called Technology Vision, and achieve outstanding metrics to prove its results. You can read more about this campaign on p. 54.

3.5 Malcolm Baldrige Award Winner: Charter School of San Diego
Source: BPIR.com, New Zealand (date of information: 2017)
Download (PDF): Charter School of San Diego
Application/Key learning points: The Charter School of San Diego (CSSD), part of the public school system in Southern California, became the first school of its kind to earn a Baldrige Award. CSSD used the Baldrige framework to exceed stakeholder requirements, and to develop robust processes in leadership, strategic planning, knowledge management and operations. The school improved its results every year, and these improvements were directly attributed to CSSD having applied the Baldrige criteria to every aspect of its operations. One of the most unexpected outcomes of applying the Baldrige criteria was the development of a common language around process improvement within the entire workforce. This common language helped CSSD shape a positive workforce environment, and contributed to high levels of workforce engagement compared to top industry performance. Winning the Baldrige Award helped reinforce a strong culture among the stakeholders of the school.

3.6 Singapore Quality Award Winner: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority
Source: BPIR.com, New Zealand (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Singapore Immigration & Checkpoints Authority
Application/Key learning points: To drive performance, Singapore’s Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA), a government agency and winner of the 2015 SPRING Singapore Quality Award with special commendation, engaged stakeholders through its three-level Stakeholders’ Engagement Framework (SEF). The three levels of SEF are 1) inform; 2) consult; and 3) collaborate and co-create. These levels are supported by multiple internal and external communication platforms such as meetings and dialogue sessions. ICA leaders served as ambassadors and role models, personally reaching out to the stakeholders. Through its various levels of interaction and communication channels, SEF brought about an improved appreciation of ICA’s values and desired culture. Stakeholders were kept informed of ICA’s policies, and community and environment initiatives through various communications channels, as well as other structured and unstructured sharing platforms.

“You must not only focus on the consumer, but also on what it does to you internally - getting people aligned to the strategic mission of the company – what it does to the suppliers, governments, all your stakeholders.”
—Sir Martin Sorrell, British businessman.
4. What research has been undertaken into engagement and communication with stakeholders?

4.1 Future of Stakeholder Engagement: Transformative Engagement for Inclusive Business
Source: BSR (Business for Social Responsibility), Germany (date of information: 2016)
Download (PDF): The Future of Stakeholder Engagement Report
Application/Key learning points: Organisations are constantly being called upon to play a more inclusive role in society, adding value to their communities. This report discusses the untapped potential of stakeholder representatives to fill that gap by providing input into corporate strategy. The contributions stakeholders can make include expertise, credibility, social networks, innovation and collaboration. This 33-page report provides many innovative examples of these types of partnership.

4.2 Communications & Stakeholder Engagement: Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML)
Download (PDF): Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML): Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Guide
Application/Key learning points: UNESCO, in collaboration with GAML, has developed a guide to measure learning across nations. The 26-page guide is based on The Education 2030 Framework for Action, where a highly collaborative approach with relevant stakeholders, experts, donors and decision makers is used to ensure good representation and effectiveness. The guide’s structured approach makes it useful to those organisations requiring both a stakeholder analysis and targeted communications plan, and especially those that need to work with government agencies.

4.3 Views of Senior European Communicators on Stakeholder Engagement
Source: Brunswick Group, United Kingdom (date of information: 2013)
Download (PDF): The Future of Stakeholder Engagement
Application/Key learning points: This research explores stakeholder engagement from the viewpoint of frontline communicators in large European corporations, government bodies, NGOs and associations. Although the document is six years old, the research provides consistent findings about creating a successful stakeholder engagement programme. Among the requirements are trust; mutual respect; commitment from leaders; and, alignment with long-term goals. This informative research document will help you understand the priorities of organisations when engaging with traditional and non-traditional stakeholders.

4.4 Organisational Communication
Source: The World Bank, United States (date of information: 2017)
Download (PDF): Organisational Communication
Application/Key learning points: There are two approaches to organisational communication. The ‘container approach’ suggests organisations exist independently of communication and are containers that influence communication behaviour. The ‘social constructionist approach’ suggests communication creates the very form and shape of an organisation. The definition of and approach to organisational communication may be best represented by both approaches, balancing limitation as containers with creativity from the second approach. In this six-page paper, five research areas of organisational communication are summarised: leadership; teams; communication network; organisational culture; and, organisational learning.

4.5 High-Impact Communicating
Source: Pepperdine University, United States (date of information: 2016)
Link: High-Impact Communicating: A Key Leadership Practice
Application/Key learning points: This fascinating paper argues that communicating for high-impact is fundamental to enhancing leadership effectiveness, and that this, in turn, helps produce desired organisational results and create economic value. Leadership communication is pervasive in the workplace – but how do leaders communicate with others to create high impact? This 12-page document presents a proven practice framework that has integrated six key components of high-impact communication. The model presented is rooted in a theoretical and practical understanding of the interpersonal influence leaders may exert—given the power and reach of their office—to engage the workforce for higher performance.
4.6 **Effective Organisational Communication Has Significant Impact on Employees**

**Source:** Southern Utah University, United States (date of information: 2014)

**Download (PDF):** Effective Organisational Communication Affects Employee Attitude, Happiness, and Job Satisfaction

**Application/Key learning points:** Smart leaders are well aware that good organisational communication has a direct, positive impact on their employees, which in turn makes a significant contribution to the organisation’s success. This comprehensive paper shows that bi-directional communication – between all levels of employees – improves attitude and happiness. The section on a new way of organisational happiness in Chapter 2 is interesting, as it delves into self-governed teams and autonomy in the workplace, and how such an environment promotes deeper levels of communication. The literature review clearly suggests open and deeper levels of communication will heighten an employee’s motivation to contribute to the organisation’s bottom-line results.

4.7 **Influence of Learning Organisations on Creativity & Communication**

**Source:** EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, China (date of information: 2017)

**Download (PDF):** A Study of the Influence of Learning Organisation on Organisational Creativity and Organisational Communication in High Tech Industry

**Application/Key learning points:** This is an interesting eight-page study on how a learning organisation affects organisational communication and creativity within the high-tech industry. Using Peter Senge’s five disciplines of learning organisations, a study was undertaken in a high-tech firm with a sample size of 376 respondents. The study concluded that a strong positive correlation exists between learning organisations and organisational communication; organisational communication and organisational creativity; and, learning organisations and organisational creativity. In other words, to strengthen organisational communication or creativity, organisations would be well advised to adopt learning organisation principles.

4.8 **Trends & Insights in Internal Communication**

**Source:** Institute for Public Relations, United States (date of information: 2019)

**Link:** Current Research Trends and Insights in Internal Communication

**Application/Key learning points:** This set of 36 slides on internal communication, change communication and leadership communication gives you a quick overview of the latest research trends and insights. Internal communication: as internal and company-wide social media use increases, leaders should capitalise on connecting and personalising messages to capture the hearts and minds of their workforce. Change communication: understand the phases, prepare the communication plan and deal with resistance by building bridges. Leadership communication: realise the importance of senior leadership communication as a role model; understand different communication styles; and choose the right channels of communication wisely.

“It’s about communication. It’s about honesty. It’s about treating people in the organisation as deserving to know the facts. You don’t try to give them half the story. You don’t try to hide the story. You treat them as … true equals, and you communicate, and you communicate and communicate.”

—Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Former CEO of IBM
5. What tools and methods are used to achieve high levels of success in engaging and communicating with stakeholders?

5.1 Improving Stakeholder Communication in Non-Profit Organisations
Source: Theseus: Universities of Applied Sciences, Finland (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Developing Stakeholder Communication in a Non-Profit Organisation
Application/Key learning points: There are two very useful features to this 100-page thesis. First, from an academic perspective, the key concepts relating to organisational communication, stakeholder relationships, engagement and image building are well researched and presented. Second, from a practical perspective, the approach used (surveys, focus groups and interviews) provides an in-depth look at what is seen to be successful stakeholder engagement or communication.

5.2 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy & Communication Plan: National Regulatory System for Community Housing
Source: National Regulatory System for Community Housing, Australia (date of information: 2018)
Download (PDF): Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Communication Plan
Application/Key learning points: This is a superb example of an engagement strategy and communication plan. In 19 pages, it lays out simply and concisely how Australia’s National Regulatory System for Community Housing plans to engage and communicate with its stakeholders. This framework is suitable for any organisation to use and adapt, regardless of whether it is a public or private entity. On p. 6, you will find a useful model to help you represent your stakeholder groups and function. Similarly, the engagement principles, existing mechanisms for engagement, communication requirements, risk management, and performance and monitoring sections, are applicable to any stakeholder engagement strategy and communication plan.

5.3 Stakeholder Communication & Engagement: Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Source: California Department of Water Resources, United States (date of information: 2018)
Download (PDF): Stakeholder Communication and Engagement
Application/Key learning points: Although this document is intended as a guide for groundwater sustainability agencies, it is useful for organisations heavily involved in public engagement. The approach, the communication and engagement plan, and, the methods and tools, are good resources for a complete public engagement plan. In addition, the 20-page document has numerous links throughout to augment the resources. One such resource is the digital toolkit on p. 18.

5.4 Stakeholder Engagement Framework: Economic Transformation
Source: Department of State Development, Australia (date of information: 2015)
Link or Download (PDF): Stakeholder Engagement Framework, Economic Transformation
Application/Key learning points: One word describes this excellent document from Australia’s Department of State Development: visionary. The framework is structured to create opportunities for the public to contribute to the decision-making process in the development of the state. The scales on pp. 6-8 show the various levels of departmental engagement and stakeholder participation. This gives a clear indication of the current state of engagement and levels to which the department might aspire with time. On p. 13, you will find a snapshot of the entire engagement framework.

5.5 Community Planning Toolkit: Community Engagement
Source: Community Planning Toolkit, United Kingdom (date of information: 2014)
Download (PDF): Community Planning Toolkit
Application/Key learning points: This is a creative and comprehensive resource for anyone who wants to fully engage with the community over the long term. It helps you to ask insightful questions when developing and designing your engagement plans. It also provides numerous links to further your understanding of standards, best practices and other reference material. If you are looking to develop methods and techniques for engagement events, pp. 9-22 will provide you with many suggestions and ideas.
5.6 Customer & Stakeholder Engagement Framework: Ausgrid Power

Source: Ausgrid, Australia (date of information: 2016)

Link or Download (PDF): Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Framework: Ausgrid Power

Application/Key learning points: Ausgrid is an energy company serving some 1.7 million customers in Australia. It has produced a clearly structured, 26-page engagement framework for its customers and stakeholders. The document contains a good deal of useful information, including the ‘key issues and lessons learned map’ (p. 4), and the ‘stakeholders map’ (p. 11), which shows influence and interest levels. Another useful portion of the document is the ‘how we improve our engagement practice,’ which can be found from p. 21 onwards.

5.7 Creating Value Through Stakeholder Engagement

Source: Delivering Tomorrow (Deutsche Post DHL), Germany (date of information: 2015)

Link (PDF): Exchange, Engage, Excel: Creating Value Through Stakeholder Engagement

Application/Key learning points: Deutsche Post DHL is a global logistics company at the forefront of stakeholder engagement and management. It premises sustainability as an integrated effort by every stakeholder. It has produced a superb 112-page document with input from international experts and integrating the results of a global survey. The emphasis of the company is on having an authentic conversation with its stakeholders. This emphasis is most clearly seen in “Chapter 2: Entering Dialogue – Drivers, Strategies and Expectations,” and “Chapter 3: Deutsche Post DHL – Listening, Learning, Engaging.” There are also many examples and case studies from renowned companies from which to learn.

5.8 Improving Leadership Communication Strategies

Source: Deloitte, United Kingdom (date of information: 2015)

Link (PDF): Elevate your Leadership Communication Strategies

Application/Key learning points: This insightful five-page article has been designed to help C-level executives create a disciplined approach to communication that aligns with the core objectives of their organisation. It frames a simple model to establish clarity around nine elements that should be included in any organisational communication programme. These elements will help you strengthen your communication programme with your workforce and stakeholders.

5.9 Communicating During Organisational Change

Source: Queen’s University Industrial Relations Centre, Canada (date of information: 2015)

Link (PDF): Communicating During an Organisational Change

Application/Key learning points: This 36-page paper is a treasure trove of information about change communication, and is guided by six key questions for executives, steering committees and corporate communication teams. It provides case studies and possible responses that might have been taken to avert communication disasters or to exploit communication opportunities for organisational gain. The case study about Domino’s Pizza on p. 6 is one such example of crisis management in communication. Two of the pizza company’s employees posted videos of deliberately contaminated food on YouTube; the case study tells how Domino’s managed to avert a disaster, even though they made several avoidable mistakes along the way.

5.10 The Leadership Communication Model

Source: The Humphrey Group, Canada (date of information: 2016)

Link (PDF): The Leadership Communication Model

Application/Key learning points: Leaders communicate all the time – whether or not they are aware of the impact they are having on their audience. The Humphrey Group, an expert communication consultancy from Canada, has integrated all aspects of how a leader interacts with others—on stage, in conversation, in writing or via media—into a single 70-page guide. Part 1 outlines how a leader should approach communication as an act of leadership. Part 2 takes a comprehensive look at how to implement the leadership communication model in various situations.
6. How can engagement and communication with stakeholders be measured?

6.1 Measuring the Effectiveness of Stakeholder Engagement & Partnering
Source: Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials, United States (date of information: 2011)
Download (PDF): Measuring Effectiveness of State Stakeholder Engagement and Partnering Efforts
Application/Key learning points: This nine-page document presents a series of relevant and well-argued principles, which describe eight components of an effective stakeholder engagement programme. It highlights the need to emphasise process, understanding and decisions rather than simply measuring the impact of decisions. Nine indicators are proposed for stakeholder engagement and partnering efforts.

6.2 How to Evaluate Stakeholder Engagement & Consultation
Source: Darzin Software, Australia (date of information: 2018)
Link: How to Evaluate Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation
Application/Key learning points: Evaluating engagement practices and processes are not without their challenges. The framework presented here comprises three key areas: core principles and indicators drawn from the Brisbane declaration; a rating scale to measure performance, principles and indicators; and, a set of questions to provide clarity on guiding the evaluation processes. The e-guide may be downloaded from the website.

6.3 Toolkit for Evaluation of Communication Activities with Stakeholders
Source: European Commission, Luxembourg (date of information: 2016)
Download (PDF): Toolkit for the Evaluation of Communication Activities
Application/Key learning points: This is a comprehensive, 128-page toolkit to assist with the evaluation of communication activities with stakeholders from their multiple framework contract. There are five different parts covered in the toolkit: planning; tendering; the evaluation process; publishing; and, follow-up. Within each part, numerous links and PDFs can be downloaded, studied and used. The most useful of these are probably “Document 3: How to develop your indicators and your monitoring system,” and “Document 6: Tools and methods for evaluation of communication activities.”

6.4 How to Assess Stakeholders’ Attitudes
Source: PMWorld Journal, United States (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Assess Your Stakeholders’ Attitudes
Application/Key learning points: Assessing stakeholders’ attitudes is an essential part of ensuring effective stakeholder engagement. The three steps demonstrated here include assessing current attitudes, determining a desirable attitude, and, working out how to close that gap. Use the simple support and receptiveness matrix on p. 3 to profile stakeholders. From there, prepare a suitable communication strategy to engage with them.

6.5 Self-Assessment on High Performing Partnerships
Source: BPIR, New Zealand (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Self-Assessment on High Performing Partnerships
Application/Key learning points: This self-assessment tool aims to assess whether potential partnerships are likely to be sustainable and add value. If they have already been formed, it helps you to improve the partnership. The assessment focuses on five elements that have an impact on forming successful partnerships: purpose and leadership; outcomes and customer focus; culture and communications; learning and innovation; and, management for partnership performance.

6.6 How to Set Social Media KPIs for Stakeholder Groups
Source: The Measurement Standard, United States (date of information: 2014)
Link: Social Media Measurement: How to Set KPIs for Each Stakeholder Group
Application/Key learning points: Setting KPIs for stakeholders using social media will help you assess whether your efforts are worth it or not. This article is the fourth in a series of eight that are relevant and useful to ‘virtual stakeholder’ engagement. What is valuable here is how the author presents the need to be specific and granular when designing KPIs to achieve objectives. There are many good suggestions on how to measure what really matters.

6.7 Leader Communication Self-Assessment
Source: JRS Consulting Inc., United States (date of information: 2019)
Link: Leader Communication Assessment
Application/Key learning points: Are your communication skills helping you get the most out of your team members or employees? Take this simple five-minute self-assessment, categorised into five important communication areas, to find out if you are. The results are explained at the end of the self-assessment.
7. What do business leaders say about engagement and communication with stakeholders?

“For productive collaboration adopt five principles: involve the relevant stakeholders, build consensus phase by phase, design a process map, designate a process facilitator and harness the power of group memory.”
—David Friedrich Strauss, German theologian and author

“It’s about communication. It’s about honesty. It’s about treating people in the organisation as deserving to know the facts. You don’t try to give them half the story. You don’t try to hide the story. You treat them as … true equals, and you communicate, and you communicate and communicate.”
—Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Former CEO of IBM

“Developing excellent communication skills is absolutely essential to effective leadership. The leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas to transmit a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others. If a leader can’t get a message across clearly and motivate others to act on it, then having a message doesn’t even matter.”
—Gilbert Amelio, President and CEO of National Semiconductor Corp.

“A true architect is not an artist but an optimistic realist. They take a diverse number of stakeholders, extract needs, concerns, and dreams, then create a beautiful yet tangible solution that is loved by the users and the community at large. We create vessels in which life happens.”
—Cameron Sinclair, Humanitarian, Airbnb, United Kingdom

“What my experience has taught me is that regardless of how complicated the problems might appear, it is possible to work through them and find solutions that are mutually satisfactory to every stakeholder in the problem ... Most of our problems on this earth are created by us and therefore we have the capacity and the obligation to unmake them.”
—Hizkias Assefa, International conflict mediator, Ethiopia

“You must not only focus on the consumer, but also on what it does to you internally - getting people aligned to the strategic mission of the company – what it does to the suppliers, governments, all your stakeholders.”
—Sir Martin Sorrell, British businessman and Founder of WPP plc.

“What we need is political leadership which can give guidance to the development of global governance. We need business leadership which goes beyond shareholder value to understand the needs and fears of other stakeholders and their communities.”
—Juan Somavia, Former director-general of International Labour Organization, Chile

“Keep things informal. Talking is the natural way to do business. Writing is great for keeping records and putting down details, but talk generates ideas. Great things come from out luncheon meetings which consist of a sandwich, a cup of soup, and a good idea or two.”
—T. Boone Pickens, American business magnate

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”
—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright & Nobel Prize Winner in Literature
8.0 Conclusion

Engaging and communicating with stakeholders is one of the most important responsibilities of a leader. Engagement involves listening, learning and collaborating with those who have a legitimate interest in an organisation’s activities, products and services (e.g., employees, customers, banks, suppliers, shareholders, etc.) with the aim of developing, improving and building the organisation. Stakeholders should feel they are active partners, and that their ideas and input are listened to and acted upon.

The Baldrige classification of stakeholders (see Section 1.1) provides an excellent starting point to identify your stakeholders and understand the value of their contribution to your organisation. The short Future 500 video provides an easily digestible explanation of what stakeholder engagement involves (1.3), and we have also provided a simple five-step process to help with engagement (1.4).

Benchmarking against world-leading organisations is always recommended, and in 2.1 you will find a selection of award winners from which to learn. In addition to this, you can learn how Tata Consultancy Services in India have successfully aligned their long-term interests with those of their stakeholders (3.1), leading to numerous international awards, including the United Kingdom Superbrands Award. Also in India, learn how the ICICI Bank became a benchmark for the national government as a result of its successful (and much-lauded) communication campaign around digital currency (3.3).

Section 4 provides you with synopses of current research into stakeholder engagement and communication, and practical tools and methods to implement your ideas are available in Section 5. Here, the outstanding stakeholder engagement strategy and communication plan from Australia’s National Regulatory System for Community Housing is worth a special mention (5.2). It provides a simple, concrete example of how to engage, and can be adapted as a model for your own use. Germany’s Deutsche Post DHL has also produced an excellent, if somewhat more comprehensive document (5.7).

Section 6 provides ways to measure how successful you have been in your engagement and communication strategies, and includes tools from Darzin Software in Australia (6.2) and the European Commission (6.3). There is also an excellent tool to measure the success of your social media strategies (6.6). As always, you can rely on us here at BPIR.com to help in any way we can. Feel free to contact us as you need.

Disclaimer: Recent information has been included in this report to ensure our readers are kept up to date with the latest research; where possible, permanent links have been provided. At the time of publishing, all links are live. We apologise in advance for any broken links that might occur after publication due to matters beyond our control.
Topics for best practice reports are suggested by our members through our member-only Research Request Service. Since 2002, BPIR.com has produced more than 100 of these reports, to read them click on the links below.

- Action Planning
- Activity Based Management
- Awareness & Prevention of Diabetes
- Benchmarking
- Benchmarking 2
- Business Continuity Planning
- Business Excellence
- Business Excellence 2
- Business Outsourcing
- Call Centre Representatives
- Change Management
- Collaborative Tools and Methodologies
- Compensation Schemes
- Corporate Culture
- Corporate Governance
- Corporate Performance Management
- Customer Complaint Resolution 2
- Customer Complaints Resolution
- Customer Knowledge Management
- Customer Loyalty
- Customer Loyalty 2
- Customer Market Segmentation
- Customer Order Management
- Customer Profitability Management
- Customer Satisfaction Management
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Customer Service Excellence
- Customer Service Training
- Customer Support and Service
- Customs
- Design Thinking
- Design Thinking 2
- Diversity Planning
- Drones
- Emotional Intelligence
- Employee Communication
- Employee Development
- Employee Happiness
- Employee Interviewing
- Employee Motivation
- Employee Motivation 2
- Employee Onboarding
- Employee Suggestion Schemes
- Employee Recognition
- Enterprise Risk Management
- Ethical Business Practices
- Excellence in Local Government
- Fleet Management
- Flexible Work Arrangements
- Green Supply Chain Management
- Healthcare Excellence
- Holacracy
- Ideas Management
- Information Communication Technology
- Innovation
- IT Outsourcing
- Knowledge Creation
- New Product Development Tools
- Occupational Safety
- On the Job Training
- Organisational Ethics
- Paramedic Training
- Performance Management
- PM Systems for Emergency Services
- Procurement
- Product Lifecycle Management
- Product Lifecycle Management 2
- Project Management
- Quality Education
- Recruitment and Selection
- Relationship Management
- Six Sigma
- Smart Services
- Social Media
- Strategic Planning
- Strategy Deployment Metrics
- Succession Planning
- Succession Planning 2
- Supply Chain Management
- Sustainable Development
- Target Marketing
- Think Tanks
- Total Quality Management
- Training for the Arts and Culture Sector
- Work and Life Balance
- Workplace Conflict Resolution
- Workplace Wellness