

# Stakeholder Management

## Introduction

Successfully managing information technology projects begins with identifying ALL the people, who, in one way or another, will be involved with the project. These are the project stakeholders, and collaborating with all these stakeholders is critical to the success of IT development projects. Determining who the stakeholders are early in the process, adding people to the list when necessary and involving them when needed in the development process is one of the keys to a successful project.

To ensure identification of all stakeholders and successful communication and dissemination of pertinent project information a Stakeholders Table and a Project Contact List must be created and kept up to date throughout the project lifecycle. These simple, yet often overlooked documents will enable the team to keep up to date regarding the project progress.

## Description

As soon as the project has been given the green light, a stakeholders table should be created. This three-column table lists the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders (Figure 1). Once the stakeholders are identified, a project contact list (Figure 3) is created containing contact information for all stakeholders. This list must be kept up to date. Doing so will ensure that project information is disseminated to all stakeholders.

## Purpose

Beyond identifying ALL the people involved in the project, the stakeholders table also enables identification of project scope. Knowing the full scope of the project (even though it will change over the course of the project) is another key to success. Creating a stakeholders table enables identification of technical support, managers, and project sponsors, as well as the expected users. For example, establishing a relationship with tech support early in the process can reduce problems within the development environment and increase the chance of a smooth transition to the production environment.

## Creating a Stakeholders Table

At the kick-off meeting, everyone who will benefit from the project should be identified. This may include, but is not limited to: management, sales, customers, engineering, system administrators, technical support and other potential users. A little research and asking the project sponsors questions will aid in identifying all the stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities. Once the stakeholders table is created, disseminate copies to the key stakeholders.

Identifying ALL the team members informs your core team members of the dynamic inter-organizational relationships that exist and must be managed to ensure a successful project.

Figure 1. Sample Stakeholders Table

### PROJECT NAME HERE

#### User Community

Role	Responsibility/Function	Name and/or Title (if known)

#### Development Community

Role	Responsibility/Function	Name and/or Title (if known)

## Creating a Project Contact List

After creating a stakeholders table a project contact list is created containing pertinent stakeholder information. This template includes: name, title, company, office phone, office location and email (see Figure 3). The contact list should include the firm's preferred

communication methods. To be effective, the project contact list should be regularly updated and disseminated to all stakeholders. The better the contact list the better the flow of information to all who need to know.

## Benefits

Creating a stakeholders table is the first step in getting the project organized. It introduces all stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities. By identifying everyone involved in the project, the “big picture” and the full project scope begin to emerge. There are always more people to consider as stakeholders than a project team expects. Neglecting to create a complete stakeholders table at the onset can lead to disastrous consequences later in the project.

Creating a contact list, updating it regularly and always using it ensures communication flow. Sub-lists can be made from this master list. For example, the technical team may not always need all the pertinent information of the marketing team and vice versa.

## Tips for Completeness

- The stakeholders table should include as wide a range of users as possible. This leads
- Do not assume that your team will know all the answers. For example, in an early version of the Waldorf school stakeholders table the team listed “need to determine” for a couple rows in the Developer Community section. This is a tip that research will need to be done such as talking with already identified stakeholders to find out who the unidentified stakeholders are.
- Keep the project contact list up to date. People come and go for various reasons, knowing all the stakeholders at all times is very important.

to a better understanding of the current scope of the project and will help in prioritizing requirements. Sometimes, users will be unavailable to contact. List them on the stakeholders table anyway. For example, the stakeholders table for a project done for the Waldorf School, a private school in Austin, listed both “Parents” and “Prospective Parents.” (Figure 2) Needless to say, prospective parents would not be involved however; in this example, a focus group of parents or other likely users with a relationship to the client could add value and perspective to the project.

Figure 2. Example Stakeholders Table for an MIS 374 Project – Initial Table to Discuss with Clients

### Stakeholders Table for Austin Waldorf School (AWS)

#### User Community

Role	Responsibility/Function	Name and/or Title (if known)
AWS Admin	Provide website content.	Susan, Kim, Chip and AWS Office staff
AWS Teachers	Provide administration with content for website.	
Parents	Access up-to-date information and donate.	
Students	Check dates for events and stay current with classes.	
Prospective Parents	Review website to determine if AWS is a good fit for child(ren).	
Prospective Students	Review website to see if he/she would like to attend AWS.	
Alumni	Access Alumni Portal and stay up-to-date with AWS. Donate.	





## High Quality Delivery Tips

- Identify **everyone** who will potentially benefit from the project as part of the user community.
- Identify **everyone** who will be part of development for the current release as part of the development community.
- Identify **everyone** who will support and enhance the system after the current release as part of the development community.
- Review an Organization Chart to ensure you have considered all functions and users; ask clients for an organization chart to help determine all stakeholders.
- Create or review an existing web flow diagram as part of a discussion with clients to determine all stakeholders, including prospective web site users.
- If a specific name is available for a stakeholder role, make sure to include it.

## Template and Examples on [Resources Page](#)

- [Stakeholders Table Template](#)
- [Stakeholders Table for the Hillel project](#)
- [Stakeholders Table for the Austin Waldorf School project](#)
- [Stakeholders Table the Texas Comptroller Project](#)
- [Stakeholders Table for Latinitas](#) – posted after Exercise 2 in class