HOW TO …
ENGAGE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS WITH EMPATHY

Follow these five key steps to engage your stakeholders for project success

#1

Identify who your stakeholders are

This may seem obvious, but often we find this first step is either overlooked completely or done very poorly. Think about your project. Who is affected by it? Who has an influence over it? Who has an interest in its success? Who has an interest in its failure?

#2

Group your stakeholders

Your engagement approach will likely be directed at stakeholder groups rather than individuals, so group your stakeholders in a way that makes sense for your project. It could be because they are affected in a similar manner, or because they have a similar interest in the outcome of your project.

#3

Understand your stakeholders

Now it is time to get 'under the skin' of your stakeholders by understanding their thoughts, needs, motivations, feelings, attitudes and beliefs towards your project. You can use tools such as archetypes, personas and empathy maps to do this. Your goal is to understand what matters most to each stakeholder group and their preferences regarding who, what, when, where and how they are engaged.

#4

Design your engagement approach

Now that you understand your stakeholders and their needs, you can design an engagement approach that is empathetic to their respective change journeys and the manners in which they prefer to be engaged. What methods will you use? When will you engage with them? What will the engagement look like? How will you know if your engagement is having the desired effect?

#5

Be agile

The best stakeholder engagement techniques can come unstuck when we stick to them rigidly. Establish strong feedback mechanisms and don't be afraid to change your approach if the feedback suggests that your engagement is not being as effective as it needs to be.

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