

## Stakeholder Analysis

As we've touched upon already, getting people on board with your idea in the early stages of your project is essential for success. Tools such as a stakeholder map can therefore be very useful in terms of planning how best to engage with each interested party.

So who are your stakeholders? We would define that as anybody that your intervention would have an impact upon. At first glance, this might seem like a short list. However, given the complexity of the systems that we work in nowadays, when you dig a little deeper, you'll realise that your work will impact upon a wide range of people. By being aware of this, you can start to think about how best to involve them in your work to make it a success.

The first step of a stakeholder analysis is simply to list all of the groups of people that your project will not just have an impact upon, but also all of those who hold power and influence over you being successful. As discussed, this list can often be fairly extensive. Let's consider the stakeholders in our piece of work, which is to host a teaching session with the aim of reducing inappropriate antibiotic prescribing. The first few might be obvious, and these include:

- Doctors in the department, responsible for prescribing the antibiotics
- Microbiology department, who may deliver the teaching, but also have an interest in antibiotic prescribing
- The clinical lead for the department, who has an overall responsibility for the prescribing in their department
- Pharmacy, as they will control which drugs are stocked and dispensed
- Patients, who will benefit from your work, but may provide some resistance if they expect to receive antibiotics

Also think more widely:

- Nursing staff, who may be the first point of call for disgruntled patients who have not received antibiotics
- IT colleagues, who may help with data collection

- Admin staff, who may book rooms for the teaching to take place in
- Medical director – if you are successful, you may want to share this learning to other departments, and it certainly helps to have the medical director on board if so

The next step of the process is to start “prioritising” your stakeholders, thinking about them specifically in terms of the interest they have in your project, and the power they have to make your project a success. The best way to do this is to plot your stakeholders on a power vs. interest grid, which will look like this. Let’s choose a few stakeholders in our piece of work, and add them to the grid.

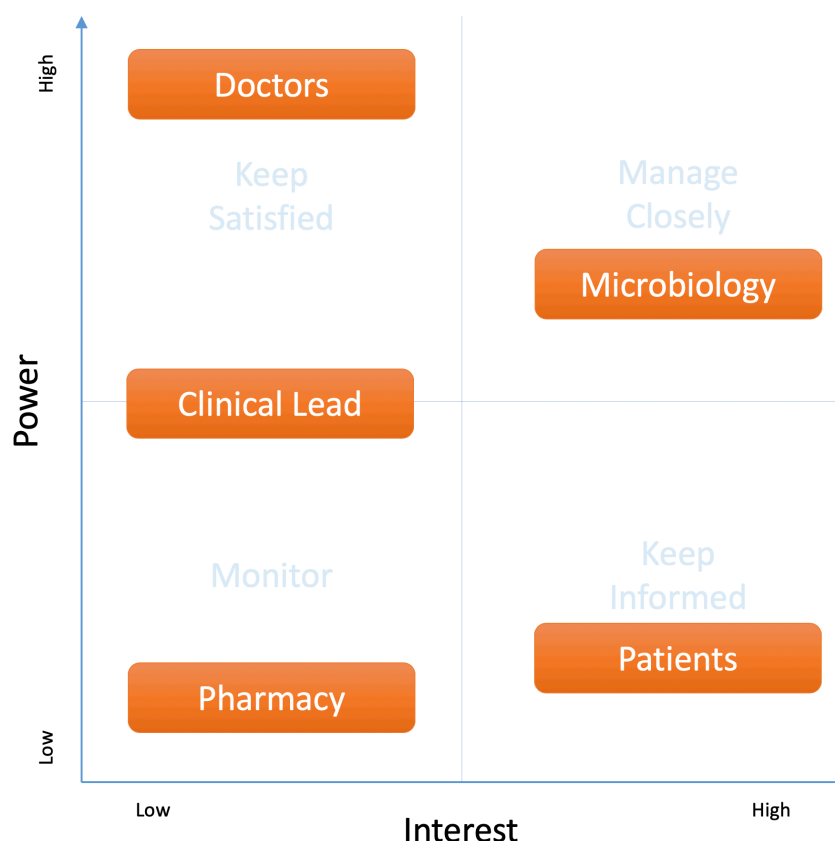
Firstly, we have the doctors. As we know, doctors are very busy, and have lots of things vying for their time, so your work probably isn’t the most interesting thing to them right now. However, as they will be doing the prescribing, they have a great deal of power over making your work successful. They’d therefore sit in the top left of the grid.

Secondly, we have the microbiology department. As they’re very interested in antibiotic stewardship, they’re probably very interested in your work. They also have a reasonable amount of power over your project. In addition to delivering your teaching session, if you sufficiently engage them, they may have other ideas for interventions to reduce inappropriate prescribing, so they’d sit in the top right of the graph.

In terms of the clinical lead for the department, they also have lots of competing interests, so may not be too interested initially. They could open some doors for you in terms of organising teaching sessions, and spreading the word of your project. For that reason, I’d put them on the left hand side of the grid, halfway up the y axis.

Next we have pharmacy. Your work will have an impact on them in the sense that it may change the amount of antibiotics they need to stock both in the dispensary, and in the TTO stock of your area. However, they’re unlikely to be overly interested in the project, and they would have little power in making it a success. They would therefore sit in the bottom left of the graph.

Finally, your patients may be interested in your work, as it is for their benefit, and it will have an impact upon their clinical management. However, it is unlikely that as a group, they’ll have much power over your work being successful. They’d therefore sit in the bottom right of the grid.



This grid that we've produced can be very useful in a number of ways. Firstly, we can overlay some general rules as to how to manage these stakeholders. You'll see that with people in the top right, with high power and high influence, we'd want to manage them closely. This means you should make great efforts to get them on board, and keep them on side.

Those in the top left of the grid, you should aim to keep satisfied. You don't want to overload them with information, but you want to keep them closely enough involved so that if you need to use some of their power, they are on your side.

Those in the bottom right of the grid should be kept informed. As they're interested, you should keep them up to date with your progress, as they may well have very useful suggestions for your next steps.

Finally, those in the bottom left of the grid, you should aim to monitor. Keep them loosely informed, in case either their interest or their power changes during the course of the project, and you want to look to them for support.

Another way this is useful is that it gives you a snapshot of where all of your stakeholders sit at this current time. You can then use this visualisation to think about whether any group needs to move around the map, from one quadrant to another. In our map, we see that doctors are very powerful, but not very interested. It'd therefore be very beneficial for our work if we can make them more interested. How do we do this? This is where the concept of understanding your stakeholders becomes essential.

Taking the doctors as an example, we should ask ourselves a few questions in order to understand the group better.

- More than anything, what motivates them?
- What interest do they have in your work being successful?
- What do you think are the key things that will get them on board with your work?

Keep these questions in mind when thinking about how to move groups of people around the grid. It may be as simple as communicating more (or even less) with the group, or it may involve working with them to shape your intervention, so that they have a true stake in your success.

We hope that this section has given you a feel for the importance of stakeholder analysis when delivering a project. We've put together an interactive template that you can use to conduct a stakeholder analysis for your own project. This is downloadable at the link below. We've also made our worked example available for download below.