Assignment:

Manage Stakeholders

Duration: 60 Minutes

Identify Project Stakeholders

You are the project manager of the GHY Project for your organization. This project will create 25 miles of walking trail on an abandoned railroad as part of your city's "Rails to Trails" program. Marsha Long is the project sponsor, and she's hosting a meeting with citizens, some politicians, your project team, and the vendor that will supply some of the materials you'll use. While many people in your city are excited about the project, some of the local homeowners feel that the foot traffic may be disruptive, be noisy, and even invite crime. Here's a listing of the stakeholders in this meeting:

1. **You** You're the project manager in a projectized environment.
2. **Marsha Long** She is the project sponsor and the CEO of your company.
3. **Mayor Shelly Stevens** Is excited about the project.
4. **John Johnson** Represents a group of homeowners along the trail opposed to the project.
5. **Diane Ledbetter** Represents another group of homeowners along the trail in favor of the project.
6. **Michelle Smith** Represents a group of business owners near the trail that must approve the project plan.
7. **Doug Bennett** Is the vendor representative of the materials used to pave the trail.
8. **Frank Happe** Is the state representative for the ward where the trail will primarily reside.

Using the information provided about this project, consider these stakeholders, their roles in the project, and how they may influence the project. Answer the following questions:

1. If you were the project manager, what approach would you take to ensure that all of the stakeholders are identified?

2. What kind of a document would you create to suit these stakeholders in attendance?

3. What stakeholders would you consider positive stakeholders and why?

4. What stakeholders would you consider negative stakeholders and why?

5. In the space provided create a power-influence grid for these stakeholders:

Meeting the Project Stakeholders

Stakeholders are basically any person that has a vested interest in your project. Some stakeholders, called positive stakeholders, are cheerleading your project onward and can't wait for the project to be successfully implemented. Other stakeholders, called negative stakeholders, dread your project and don't want it to succeed at all. Still, you have neutral stakeholders, such as inspectors, some vendors, or the people in accounting that may be involved in your project but remain indifferent to your project's success.

Key stakeholders describe the people that are most involved with the project and can exert much influence over the project's success. Key stakeholders in many projects include these figures:

- **Project manager** Leads the project team from the project launch, planning, execution and into project closure
- **Program manager** Only present if the project exists within a program
- **Portfolio management review board** Some organizations use this board as a steering committee to determine which projects deserve an investment
- **Functional managers** Manage the day-to-day operations of the organization and can affect the assignments of project team members

- **Project customer** The recipient of the primary deliverable the project will create
- **Operations management** The management of the core business duties of the organization
- **Project team** The individuals doing the project work
- **Project management team** Individuals in addition to the project manager who are responsible for managing the project or making project decisions
- **Project sponsor** The executive that has the authority to launch the project and assign resources to the project manager
- **Sellers and business partners** Vendors, contractors, and partners that can affect the success of a project
- **Project management office** If the organization uses a PMO, the PMO is a stakeholder in the project

These stakeholders, depending on what's happening in the project, have influence over the project decisions, direction, and work in the project. The project manager must manage these project stakeholders as effectively as possible to move the project work toward a successful closure. Much of stakeholder management is based on effective communications.

Learning Objectives

In this assignment you will examine a project management scenario and consider the needs of each project stakeholder. By the end of this exercise you'll be able to

- Identify project stakeholders
- Document the needs and concerns of identified stakeholders
- Consider how stakeholder concerns affect project implementation

Identify the Project Stakeholders

Beth is the project manager of the recently launched HJG Project, and she reports to Thomas, the project sponsor, of the project. This project will replace 1,200 laptops in her organization with newer, faster laptops. Martin, the CIO, is concerned that the new laptops will be confusing for the new users to use, so he wants both live and web-based training. Donald, the Sales Manager, doesn't want the training or the new laptops to impede the 120 salespersons' time completing sales calls with customers of your company.

Harriet, the vendor who will be providing the new laptops, reports that they have a 20-minute tutorial that can show the user how to use all of the features of the new laptop. This can save time for developing the web-based training course. Jane, the HR Director, wants to know if the 20-minute video can be added to their existing web-based training seminars at no fee.

There are eight stakeholders in this scenario. In the following table identify all of the stakeholders and what their concerns are for the project.

Stakeholder	Project Concern

Manage Stakeholder Expectations

You are the project manager of the HHI Project for your organization. This project will develop a training course for all sales employees in your organization. The training course is for a contact management software system that allows employees to track all communications with customers and prospects and record orders; it can create a history of contact information with the customers. Franz Hunt is the sales manager and a key project stakeholder. Franz is not, however, the final decision-maker on the course content, direction, and duration, as these elements have already been established by the project sponsor. Franz has several concerns for you to address:

- The project should create a course that won't take long to complete.
- The project should create a reference card for salespeople to use at their desk.
- The project must teach sales reps how to quickly use the software.
- The project should create an in-depth training manual for the users.

1. Franz has asked for a meeting to review his concerns about this training project and how you'll satisfy his concerns for the project. Why do you suppose Franz is most concerned with these items?

2. When the project was initiated, your project sponsor, Dawn Herring, invited Franz Hunt to a requirements gathering meeting. You, your project team, and a group of leading salespeople attended the meeting, but Franz Hunt could not attend. During the requirements gathering meetings, all of the issues Franz is demanding to meet with you about were already addressed and resolved. How would you handle this scenario?

3. You agree to attend the meeting with Franz to show him that all of these items are already addressed in the project scope. Franz wants to know why he wasn't included in the requirements gathering process for these elements. Given the scenario in this project, how would you handle this situation?

4. Beth, a technical writer on your project team, has reported that Franz is demanding that she allow him to review the reference card and the training manual for the project. Beth has asked you to intervene, as Franz's approval for the materials isn't in the project plan. How would handle this scenario?

5. Your project team has completed the first draft of the course based on the requirements and objectives assigned to them. The training course will last for four hours and covers all of the features that the project sponsor and the key salespeople wanted covered in the course. Because Franz is the sales manager, you've asked him to review the course for his comments. Franz is now very upset with you and your project team because he claims the course is way too long and the training manual has too many pictures and not enough step-by-step directions. Franz demands that the course be cut down to one hour rather than four hours. How would manage this situation?

Assignment Solution: Identify the Project Stakeholders

In this exercise you were to identify the eight project stakeholders and document their concern for the project. Here is the solution:

Stakeholder	Project Concern
Beth, project manager	Balancing stakeholder requirements and project objectives; delivering a successful project
Thomas, project sponsor	
Martin, CIO	Wants the laptops to be easier to use and wants live and web-based training.
Donald, Sales Manager	Is concerned the new laptops may slow or hinder performance from his sales team.
Harriet, vendor	She wants to support the project and her product with additional training.
Jane, HR Director	Is interested in the web-based training that Harriet's company may be able to provide.
120 Sales people	This group needs to be able to use the laptops without it impeding their sales.
1,200 recipients of the laptops	These individuals are the project customers as they'll receive the primary deliverable of the project. Note that the salespeople are included as part of the entire group of laptop recipient stakeholders. You could, if desired, remove the salespeople from this group and treat them as a separate group of stakeholders.

Assignment Solution: Identifying Project Stakeholders

1. If you were the project manager, what approach would you take to ensure that all of the stakeholders are identified?

   It's important to identify all project stakeholders, so it's best to start with the project documents you have assignments: project charter, procurement documents, organizational process assets, and the enterprise environmental factors. Part of stakeholder analysis is to ask the stakeholders probing questions about other stakeholders they may be aware of. You can also check with your vendors, the public at large, your project team, and the different groups represented in this meeting.

2. What kind of a document would you create to suit these stakeholders in attendance?

   One of the first documents you should create dealing with stakeholders is a stakeholder register. This document will help you through the project communications and planning.

3. What stakeholders would you consider positive stakeholders and why?

   Positive stakeholders are people and groups that want your project to succeed. Here are the positive stakeholders for this project:

   - **You** You're the project manager, so you obviously want the project to succeed.
   - **Project team** Ideally, the project team members are in favor of the project succeeding, as they're linked to the project success or failure.
   - **Marsha Long** As the project sponsor, she's a positive stakeholder and wants the project to succeed.
   - **Mayor Shelly Stevens** The mayor is excited about the project and wants the project to be successful for the community.
   - **Diane Ledbetter** She represents a group of positive stakeholders that own homes along the walking trail.

4. What stakeholders would you consider negative stakeholders and why?

   - **John Johnson** He represents a group of negative stakeholders that own homes near the walking trail.

   Note that Michelle Smith, Doug Bennett, and Frank Happ may be neutral stakeholders, as the question didn't provide enough information about these stakeholders and their concern for the project.

5. In the space provided create a power-influence grid for these stakeholders:

   Illustration 1

Assignment Solution: Managing Stakeholder Expectations

1. Franz has asked for a meeting to review his concerns about this training project and how you'll satisfy his concerns for the project. Why do you suppose Franz is most concerned with these items?

   As Franz is the sales manager, he wants to make certain his sales team has appropriate training for the new software. If the sales team can't use the software efficiently, then that will likely affect their sales and the sales of the company. Franz also wants to make certain that the sales team will have some take-away information for post-classroom support.

2. When the project was initiated your project sponsor, Dawn Herring, invited Franz Hunt to a requirements gathering meeting. You, your project team, and a group of leading salespeople attended the meeting, but Franz Hunt could not attend. During the requirements gathering meetings, all of the issues Franz is demanding to meet with you about were already addressed and resolved. How would you handle this scenario?

   Initially, it may be best to meet with Franz, even though you've already addressed these concerns and he didn't come to the meeting. When you meet with Franz, you can show him how you've already accounted for the concerns he's listed and tactfully address the previous meeting that he couldn't attend. Ideally, you would have already followed up with Franz with the notes from the prior meeting to share what was covered and what has already been addressed.

3. You agree to attend the meeting with Franz to show him that all of these items are already addressed in the project scope. Franz wants to know why he wasn't included in the requirements gathering process for these elements. Given the scenario in this project, how would you handle this situation?

   You should tactfully remind Franz that he was invited to the prior meeting but that he couldn't attend. If possible, share with him a communication trail, such as e-mails, where we declined to attend the meeting. You don't want to be confrontational with a stakeholder, just help him remember why he couldn't attend the meeting.

4. Beth, a technical writer on your project team, has reported that Franz is demanding that she allow him to review the reference card and the training manual for the project. Beth has asked you to intervene, as Franz's approval for the materials isn't in the project plan. How would handle this scenario?

   Franz is a stakeholder in this project, but there's no evidence that Franz has any authority over the project decisions. If Franz is a key stakeholder, the project communications management plan, a RACI chart, and a requirements traceability matrix should have tracked Franz's participation in the project. If Franz has no authority, then there's no pressing need to share the information with Franz and you may need to let him know that the project doesn't have time for additional reviewers of the training material. The escalation process in your organization may need to be invoked if Franz pushes this issue.

5. Your project team has completed the first draft of the course based on the requirements and objectives assigned to them. The training course will last for four hours and covers all of the features that the project sponsor and the key salespeople wanted covered in the course. Because Franz is the sales manager, you've asked him to review the course for his comments. Franz is now very upset with you and your project team because he claims the course is way too long and the training manual has too many pictures and not enough step-by-step directions. Franz demands that the course be cut down to one hour rather than four hours. How would manage this situation?

   Again, if Franz has authority over the project decisions, then these elements should have been decided early in the project planning. Assuming that Franz does not have authority over these elements of the training, then the project manager and project team are not obligated to reduce the training based on his demands. It's possible that Franz is feeling left out of the development of the training of the salespeople he manages and wants to exert his opinion and power over the project. The legitimacy of that power, however, may be questionable.

   As the project manager, you should tread lightly and speak with Franz to manage his expectations, address his fears, and explain the value of the training your team has created. Project managers never want to make enemies of any stakeholders, but the project manager must also adhere to the defined and approved requirements of the project. If the project requirements were deemed to be a four-hour class and Franz is not a decision-maker on the project, then he can only submit a change request and hope for the best. Most likely, however, the project manager must adhere to the already established requirements of the project.