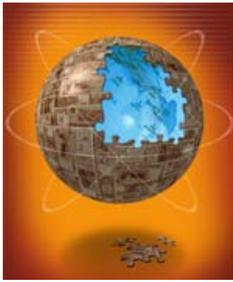# PMI® Community POST

Educational snapshot from SeminarsWorld®

Skills for defining, managing and monitoring project stakeholders.

A critical aspect of successful projects is successful stakeholder management. It is vitally important for project teams to identify the most appropriate project stakeholders for the various project phases. These individuals have varying degrees of authority, and their expectations and levels of influence differ as well.

Project teams first must understand the overall stakeholder community and determine the optimum level of effort to allocate to each stakeholder. Then, they need to strike a balance between the effort needed to maintain supportive stakeholders and the effort to minimize the impact of those stakeholders who are not as supportive.

While many experienced teams seem to achieve this balance intuitively, **applying a proven stakeholder management method improves consistency and the probability of successful project outcomes.**

Stakeholder Management: Define, Manage and Monitor Stakeholder Relationships (formerly titled Project Relationship Management and the Stakeholder Circle), is a SeminarsWorld course that helps project teams **identify the stakeholder community** and **manage expectations** for the benefit of both the stakeholders and the project.

The course introduces a five-step process to help project teams:

- Identify the stakeholders and understand their needs
- Prioritize stakeholders based on their assessed levels of power, proximity and urgency, with the "top" stakeholders getting the most focus
- Visualize the stakeholder community through a graphical depiction
- Develop strategies to engage both supportive and non-supportive stakeholders
- Monitor changes as the stakeholder community is reviewed and updated

The course helps to guide project teams to identify the most important stakeholder by teaching them to apply the following steps:

1. Pose a series of simple questions such as: what are the stakeholder's expectations
2. Assign descriptive statements to each stakeholder such as: this person has the power to terminate the project
3. Score and aggregate the statements to determine the priority of each stakeholder

This evaluation process is not affected by the stakeholder's attitude toward the project. Both supportive and unsupportive stakeholders are treated equally to determine who is the most important to the timely completion of the project.

Once the project team determines which stakeholders are most important to the project, they use an engagement profile, which shows how supportive and receptive each stakeholder is and what is the optimal level of engagement needed for project success. When team members have this information, they can focus their communications plan on determining how to engage each of the key stakeholders to achieve or maintain their support.

As the project progresses, changes in the stakeholder's engagement profile show where the communication strategy is working and where modifications are needed, allowing the team to adapt its strategies in a timely manner.

By applying the methodology addressed in the course Stakeholder Management: Define, Manage and Monitor Stakeholder Relationships, team members are able to minimize their subjectivity in the stakeholder assessment process, determine where they need to focus their stakeholder management efforts, and provide an ongoing capability to monitor the effectiveness of their stakeholder management efforts.

Thanks to Lynda Bourne, DPM, CCP, PMP, for contributing this educational snapshot from SeminarsWorld. Dr. Bourne is a PMI SeminarsWorld leader and managing director of Stakeholder Management Pty Ltd. For questions on the content of the seminar, please contact Dr. Bourne.

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