



Influencing stakeholders

Aligning integrity and working with threat and reward systems to influence stakeholders

Welcome

Nothing gets done in organisations without engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders who are all being run by their own inner game, and threat and reward systems.

Some of these relationships are seamless; trust is in abundance, you can speak candidly about concerns and ideas, and you can count on each other to have each other's backs. Often this dynamic is built through time, and based on shared styles and interests. It can also mean all parties enjoy a sense of self-assuredness and confidence which allows them to effortlessly trust others.

Other relationships need more intentional effort.

For this session, we're going to work with one of your stakeholders where the relationship needs more work. Ideally we'll be working with a relationship that's important for you to succeed in your role,

and where there is some distance or tension.

We're going to prepare a stakeholder engagement plan that aims to cultivate a more connected, trusting relationship in three steps:

1. Assess the relationship integrity
2. Threat and reward system review
3. Relationship plan: Plan a candid conversation to build empathy and reset the relationship.



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Check-in

New insights and progress

Adaptive challenge and career strategy progress

- What progress have you made with your adaptive challenge?
- What new examples do you have of achieving this challenge? When did you find yourself stuck in behaviours that work against this goal? What stories did you make up about that ie did you make yourself wrong or could you accept yourself?
- What new insights did your sponsor have about your challenge and theirs?

Zone of genius

- How often have you been operating from your zone of genius?
- What upper limits have you noticed that stop you from operating there more often?
- What 'big leap' actions did you take eg ditch, delegate, reframe?

Your integrity gap

- In your life, where are you most misaligned across the four pillars of integrity – feelings, agreements, responsibility and candour?
- What did you learn from your stakeholder integrity assessment?

Relationship integrity assessment

Stakeholder name

Their relationship to you

How and why are they important for your success?

- Fulfilling your role and responsibilities to the highest standard
- Career progress and access to opportunities
- Feedback, guidance and growth

The following questions are based on the four pillars of integrity and can be used to assess the relationship and pinpoint ways to strengthen the dynamic. In your notes, reflect on ways both of you contribute to the relationship strength or tension.

Emotional intelligence

1. We understand each other's professional goals, challenges and fears, and support each other to achieve or overcome them.

1

2

3

4

5

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Comments

2. We speak openly about how we're feeling and use that insight to inform our thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

3. We have each other's backs when faced with challenges, obstacles and upsets.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

4. We celebrate our achievements and wins, together.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

Agreements

- 5. We set clear agreements and expectations (who, what and when), keep them most of the time, reset them when we can't and apologise if we let each other down.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

Responsibility

- 6. We own our outcomes and learn from mistakes. That means no blame.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

Communication

- 7. We provide candid feedback to each other so we can learn and grow from each other.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

8. We regularly share ideas and information so we can produce work to the highest possible standard

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

9. We enjoy a professional closeness – we share personal stories and insights and care about each other's wellbeing.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

Overall

10. There is a high degree of trust and mutual respect.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Comments

11. We achieve more together than we would individually.

1

2

3

4

5

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Comments

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Taking responsibility

Your assessment above is designed to provide some insight into how both of you are strengthening and at times undermining the relationship integrity and trust dynamics. The next step is to get clear about what's in your control - how you're showing up.

To provide a clear picture of your role in this relationship dynamic and start forming a view on how you can improve it, we're going to use Stephen Covey's emotional bank account analogy from his famous book, *The 7 habits of highly effective people*.

The deposits and withdrawals we make to our stakeholder's emotional bank provides a good picture of the trust we've built up and what we can do to increase trust.

Covey says there are two keys to making deposits:

1. Deposits need to be frequent and consistent
2. Deposits don't occur until the recipient records it as a deposit

Using the insights from your integrity assessment above, how are you making deposits and withdrawals, and what changes can you make to build deposits and improve trust?

Deposits and withdrawals	+ / -	Changes I can make to build deposits or repair trust

Threat and reward system review

Now let's get a more granular view of the relationship by assessing the threat and reward dynamics at play using Dr David Rock's SCARF model. The table on page 13 provides examples of steps you can take to constructively work with threat and reward systems.

	How are YOU feeling in the context of this stakeholder?		How do you think THEY might be feeling in the context of your relationship and their career?		Facts and stories creating threat and reward reactions	How might you soothe yours and their threat responses, and trigger your own and their reward response?
	Threat	Reward	Threat	Reward		
Status Our perceived relative importance to this person.						
Certainty Our ability to predict the future.						

Autonomy

Our sense of control over the relationship and the thing you work on together.

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Relatedness

How safe you feel with this person.

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Fairness

How fair you perceive the exchange between the two of you.

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Ways you can work with threat and reward systems.

	Key points	What triggers my reward / approach response? How can I intentionally trigger it?	What triggers my threat / avoid response? How can I soothe or reframe it?
Status – our relative importance to others.	We are tribal creatures; status equals survival. Perception of lower status reduces cognitive capability.	Seek and give positive feedback. Create a culture of gratitude and appreciation for yourself and others. Focus on the most generous interpretation of others.	Negative / critical feedback. Connect with the body and the stories you're making up; rewrite them.
Certainty – our ability to predict the future.	The act of creating certainty is rewarding. Even bad certainty is better than uncertainty!	Make plans and /or envisage yourself in positive situations or handling difficult conversations.	Changing plans where the outcome is unknown. Envisage yourself handling changed plans confidently. Look for the upside of any changed plan.
Autonomy – our sense of control over events.	Even a small choice or anticipating making a choice is rewarding. Micromanaging elicits strong threat response.	Sort the files of what you can and can't control and focus on what you can control.	Leaders who micromanage. Connect with their threat response around control.
Relatedness – how safe we feel with others.	Lack of safe social interactions generates threat response. Small groups and personal interactions promote trust. That's why loneliness is one of the biggest killers in the western world.	Invest in friendships, community groups and incidental social interactions with random strangers.	Feeling like we don't fit into certain groups. Insourcing security, approval and control meditation.

Fairness – how fair we perceive the exchanges between people to be.	Fair exchanges are intrinsically rewarding. Unfairness at work affects mental and physical health.	Build fair processes.	Leaders who appear to treat people differently. Unpack facts from stories. Pay attention to the connection between fairness and righteousness.
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Relationship plan

Tricky relationships need work and provide a fabulous forum to practice our inner game. Not all relationships will be magically reset by one conversation. And some may be impossible to reset if both parties aren't willing to come to the party. That said, most people want collaborative, harmonious working relationships. And everyone benefits from their relatedness reward system being stimulated.

It starts with someone making the first move to make a stand for the relationship by leaning into a conversation that calls out any tension or awkwardness, with the intention to reset the trust and connection dynamics.

Using insights from the first two steps above, prepare a conversation script aimed at resetting the relationship.

Wants What do you most want for this relationship? For you and for them. Your integrity assessment will provide good insights.	
Context Provide context for the conversation so your stakeholder can understand the background that has prompted the discussion. Use your SCARF insights to position this feedback in a way that lands.	
Observations Use the integrity and SCARF assessments to detail the specific behaviours you've observed in them and yourself. Focus on facts. If there are stories getting in the way, be clear about any stories you might be making up about the facts. <i>This is your opportunity to take responsibility for your part in the relationship including any dramas you're creating.</i>	

Implications Connect the facts to the impact – on them, you, the team, the work and the organisation. <i>Share implications from a place of 100% responsibility for your emotional triggers.</i> Your creator, challenger and coach cards will give you some insights.	
Alignment Check in on their perspective and what's going on for them. <i>This is an opportunity for deep empathy around their threat systems.</i> Aim to find some agreement on the observations and implications, as well as what good would look like for both of you. This will create a shared understanding of the gap ie what needs to change.	
Actions Agree what steps need to be taken to achieve the shared vision of good. Be clear about what steps you can make to close the integrity gap and support their SCARF system. Include a check in at a set time to discuss progress.	
By when will you have this conversation?	
How will you set it up?	

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