

# STAKEHOLDER MAPPING: POWER, POTENTIAL AND INTEREST

A short guide to start mapping the people who can make or break your work

## WHAT THIS IS

This tool helps you identify and understand the **people who most affect the success of your project, campaign, or idea**, not just the teams or departments around you.

It's based on the *Power vs Interest* model used in strategic planning and change management, reframed through the lens of *Be More Strategic, Chapter 11: Be Persuasive, Be an Influencer*.

"Stakeholder mapping isn't a spreadsheet exercise. It's a leadership conversation about people, power and purpose."

## WHY IT MATTERS

Every idea, project or strategy depends on people.

Some have the **power** to advance or block it. Others have the **interest** to care deeply about its success or failure.

Understanding who sits where helps you:

- Focus your energy on what (and who) matters most
- Anticipate risks, resistance and alliances
- Build relationships that turn strategy into action
- Communicate with empathy and precision



## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This isn't about listing everyone you know, it's about mapping *the 12 people* who matter most **to this specific piece of work**.

Use it as a team conversation, not a solo task. The discussion itself will reveal more insight than the grid.

## STEP 1 – CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS

Pick **one project, idea or campaign** that matters right now.

**Ask:**

"Who are the people that could most influence whether this succeeds or fails?"

Resist the temptation to list *functions* ("Finance", "HR", "Comms").

Name **people**.

If you don't know their names yet, that's useful data. Go and find out.

## STEP 2 – LIST ≈ 12 STAKEHOLDERS

Write the names of up to twelve people who currently have, or could have, an effect on your work.

Include a mix - supporters, neutrals, potential blockers.

**Tip:** Diversity of perspective matters. Build this list with two or three colleagues from different parts of your organisation, not just your immediate team.

## STEP 3 – ASSESS POWER AND INTEREST

For each person, discuss and record:

- **Power or Power Potential:** How much influence do they really have over the outcome? Can they approve, fund, block, or sway others?
- **Interest:** How much do they care about this project or its results? Are they invested emotionally, politically, or practically?

Use what you *know* and be honest about what you *don't*.

Assumptions are fine at first – the aim is to surface and test them.



## STEP 4 – PLOT ON THE POWER–INTEREST GRID

	HIGH INTEREST	LOW INTEREST
High Power	<b>Key Players:</b> Engage closely. Keep involved in decisions.	<b>Keep Satisfied:</b> Maintain trust. Update them selectively.
Low Power	<b>Keep Informed:</b> Share progress and seek input.	<b>Monitor:</b> Stay aware but minimal contact.

Once names are plotted, step back and look for patterns:

- Are all your high-power, high-interest players aligned or divided?
- Who has influence but little interest, could they be engaged?
- Who cares deeply but lacks power, can they be allies or advocates?

## STEP 5 – TURN INSIGHT INTO ACTION

Ask as a group:

- What relationships do we need to strengthen or rebuild?
- Who do we need to spend more time with next week?
- Who's missing from this map entirely?

Then assign ownership: one name per stakeholder and who will take the next step to connect, brief, or learn more.

**Tip:** Revisit the map weekly. Stakeholder power and interest shift quickly as projects evolve. Treat it as a living conversation, not a static chart.



PITFALL	BEST PRACTICE
Listing teams or departments.	Always map <i>people</i> . Strategy is personal.
Assuming you already know everyone.	Include names you need to find, that's useful insight.
Treating it as a one-off.	Update weekly; relationships change faster than plans.
Doing it alone.	Involve colleagues. Collective intelligence beats guesswork.

## NEXT STEPS

Once you've completed your first map:

1. Highlight three relationships to strengthen this month.
2. Schedule short "learning conversations" with those people to understand their interests, pressures and priorities.
3. Update your map after each interaction.

**Remember:** Influence begins with understanding. The more you see the world through others' eyes, the easier it becomes to build alignment and momentum.



## TAKING IT FURTHER

Combine this exercise with:

- **The Persuasive Communication Framework:** To tailor your message for each stakeholder's logic, emotion and values.
- **Influence Without Authority Toolkit:** To build trust and credibility across boundaries.

If you'd like a **facilitated session** for your leadership or project team to deepen stakeholder insight and alignment, contact Charlie to design and lead it.

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## REMEMBER:

*Mapping people isn't about politics, it's about perspective.*

*When you see who really shapes outcomes, you can engage with intention, not assumption.*

