What’s at Stake?
Turning Stakeholders into Advocates through Effective Communication

Angie Pastorek, Ph.D.
Professional Workplace Communication Graduate Certificate

Department of Communication Studies
KU-Edwards Campus – Overland Park

August 10, 2016
Agenda

• Explore the role of environment and perspective in shaping how stakeholders evaluate messages

• Define 4 hidden stakeholder attributes that can aid creation of more effective communication with stakeholders

• Recognize how to streamline and prioritize communication efforts based on an assessment of stakeholders’ levels of power, legitimacy and urgency

• Review a few helpful research-backed workplace communication resources
Organizational Complexity Makes Effective Communication Challenging

- External environment
- Organization, business unit, site
- Team, Manager level
- Interpersonal
What’s the Real Message?  
Different Perspectives = Different Interpretations
3 Goals of Communication

1. **Instrumental goals** – achieve a goal, complete a task (duPre, 2014)

2. **Relational goals** – maintain effective, trusted relationships (West & Turner, 2007)

3. **Identity goals** – maintain consistency with how we [want to] see ourselves and live our values (Mead, 1934)
We are Always Communicating More Than We Think…

Never seeing your project sponsor at the monthly executive project update meetings that you lead

Even though you’re busy, taking the time to visit a junior team member at her cubicle to coach her on leading her first team meeting next week

Receiving an email from an executive about budget cuts in which your project is labeled as “low priority”
Stakeholder Dynamics - PMBOK

• **Power** – level of authority
• **Interest** – level of concern
• **Influence** – active involvement in the project
• **Impact** – ability to impact changes to the project’s planning or execution

What Else Matters?
Additional Stakeholder Dynamics

1. What counts as a *legitimate* stake?
   – Stakeholder’s perception vs. the project manager’s

2. What types of “stakes” are there?
   – Personal vs. organizational stakes
   – Material/resource vs. ethical stakes

3. “Engaging” vs. “managing” stakeholders
   – Outcomes: “Support” vs. Advocacy
Video: *Up in the Air*

- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are their stakes?
- Where did Jason Bateman’s character fail in terms of stakeholder management?
Who Matters *Most*?

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) suggest defining stakeholders by three attributes:

1. **Power** – ability of a stakeholder to impose will
2. **Legitimacy** – stakeholder has legitimate financial, material, *ethical and/or moral claim*
3. **Urgency** – stakeholder that has an urgent claim in relation to the change; a time-sensitive need

*Definitive stakeholders* possess all three characteristics.
Formal Versus Informal Structure

Formal Organizational Chart

Exploration & Production
Senior Vice President
Jones

Exploration
Williams
  Cohen
  Smith
  Hughes
  Ramirez
  Bell
  Cole
  Hussain
  Kelly

Drilling
Taylor
  Sen
  Moore
  Miller

Production
Stock
  O’Brien
  Paine
  Shapiro

Note: The organization chart is not to scale and is intended at the request of the organization.
Thinking Strategically about Informal Networks

**FIGURE 1-1b**

In informal structure as revealed by social network analysis.
4 Important Stakeholder Insights

1. Stakeholder attributes are **variable**, not steady

2. Stakeholder attributes are **socially constructed**, not objective reality

3. Stakeholders **may not be aware** of their stake

4. Interested / engaged stakeholders **will actively - not passively - process** and respond to your messages
Strategic Communication Planning Considerations

1. Stakeholder Salience: Power, legitimacy, urgency
2. Craft Message
3. Select Method
4. Monitor Feedback, Respond
Prioritizing Your Stakeholders

**Salience** – the degree to which managers give priority to stakeholder claims
Latent Stakeholders:
Low Salience

Latent Stakeholders
• Groups 1, 2 and 3
• Only one characteristic
Expectant Stakeholders: Moderately Salient

Expectant Stakeholders
- Groups 4, 5 and 6
- Possess two stakeholder characteristics
Definitive Stakeholders: Highly Salient

- Group 7
- Possess all three stakeholder characteristics
- Highly salient

**These individuals and their concerns should receive the highest level/most frequent attention and communication.**
# Types of Change Management Messages / Framing (Lewis, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Project Managers’ Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Disseminating Information/</td>
<td>Offering official view, answering questions, inviting “participation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting Feedback**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**One-sided vs. Two-sided</td>
<td>Positive selling, forewarning about negatives; refuting others’ arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>message**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gain or Loss Frame</strong></td>
<td>Cooperating=advantage; not=loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blanket / Targeted Messages</strong></td>
<td>Determining high-value interests &amp; info. needs of key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discrepancy / Efficacy</strong></td>
<td>Communicating urgency and/or “we can do it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Change Message Review
# How Stakeholders Respond

*(Lewis, 2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Project Managers’ Focus</strong></th>
<th><strong>Stakeholders’ Response</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disseminating Information/ Soliciting Feedback</td>
<td>Offering official view, answering questions, inviting “participation”</td>
<td>Considering alternative views, asking questions, providing/seeking outside expertise, producing knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-sided vs. Two-sided message</td>
<td>Positive selling, forewarning about negatives; refuting others’ arguments</td>
<td>Raising new arguments; engaging with refutation; inoculating others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain or Loss Frame</td>
<td>Cooperating=advantage; not=loss</td>
<td>Identifying new gains, refuting stated losses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket / Targeted Messages</td>
<td>Determining high-value interests &amp; info. needs of key stakeholders</td>
<td>Comparing messages to those received by other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy / Efficacy</td>
<td>Communicating urgency and/or “we can do it”</td>
<td>Supporting or refuting urgency, efficacy of messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worksheet:
Stakeholder Identification & Messaging Plan

With partner(s), identify & discuss two stakeholder groups for a current project, including for each:

- Name and title
- Power, legitimacy, urgency in relation to your project?
- Most compelling message type?
- Most important content?

Consider:
1. Stakeholder and stakes
2. Message
3. Method
4. Timing – and need for repetition?
Final Tips & Take-Aways

• Not all stakeholders are equal – focus majority of your communication effort on your **definitive** stakeholders.
• Communication is an ongoing process, not a one-time event
• Craft message content strategically – the **message** matters most
• Stay connected to your organization’s informal relationships and networks – listen for and solicit feedback
“THE SINGLE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN COMMUNICATION IS THE ILLUSION THAT IT HAS TAKEN PLACE.”

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

© Lifehack Quotes
Here’s a Great Research-Backed Resource on Planning Effective Change Messages…
Check Out Our Free Online Workplace Communication Link and Learns

**See flyer for registration link**

October
- Managing Change Through Communication Strategy: Stakeholders, Methods & Message

November
- Managing Interorganizational Collaborations: Communication Strategies for Engaging with External Stakeholders

December
- Setting Your Career Action Plan for 2017
KU Graduate Certificate in Workplace Communication

4-course graduate certificate; 12 credit hours

Two Core Courses
- COMS 811: Applied Organizational Communication (Fall, 2017)
- COMS 730: Speaking & Writing for Decision-Makers (Spring, 2017)

Two Elective Courses - COMS 930, topics vary by semester
- Identity & Stigma in Organizations, Spring 2016
- Organizational Culture, Fall 2016
- Organizational Socialization, Spring 2017
- Communication in Health Organizations (future)
Check Out Our Program Website

- http://edwardscampus.ku.edu/link-and-learns
Like Us on Facebook!

- Also, Like us on Facebook for programmatic developments and discussion of Organizational Communication in the News....
Let’s Keep in Touch!

Link and Learn Registration
(See handout for details):
http://edwardscampus.ku.edu/link-and-learns

Like us on Facebook:
KU Edwards Professional Workplace Communication

Angie Pastorek
Program Manager & Lecturer, Professional Workplace Communication Graduate Certificate
KU Edwards Communication Studies
913-897-8665
apastorek@ku.edu
1. Dormant stakeholder
2. Discretionary stakeholder
3. Demanding stakeholder
4. Dominant stakeholder
5. Dangerous stakeholder
6. Dependent stakeholder
7. Definitive stakeholder
8. Nonstakeholder