

Before the goals of the stakeholders can be aligned with the purpose of the project, they must be identified. Most commonly the expert judgment of the PM and project team are employed to identify the stakeholders. After identifying the stakeholders, a stakeholder register should be created to maintain key information about them, including contact information, their requirements and expectations, and what stage in the project they have the most interest in. In addition, separate from the stakeholder register, a stakeholder issue log should be maintained to catalog issues that arise and how they were resolved.

Once the stakeholders have been identified, a number of tools can be used to analyze them to gain insight about how to manage the relationship with them. And as additional information is learned about a stakeholder, the stakeholder register should be updated.

For the purpose of illustrating a couple of representative stakeholder analysis tools, we will use the example of a process improvement project that is about to be launched at a hospital with the goal of reducing the turnaround times for patients' stress tests. The turnaround time for a stress test is measured as the elapsed time from when the stress test was ordered by a cardiologist until the results are signed off by a radiologist. Delays in receiving the results from stress tests impact the timeliness of treating patients, which in turn impacts the patients' length of stay at the hospital. For the purpose of this example, we further assume that during an early project team meeting, the PM and process improvement team identified the following stakeholder groups: radiologists, cardiologists, hospital administration, the stress test technicians, and the patients/families.

One tool that is useful for analyzing stakeholders is the Power-Interest Grid. As its name suggests, this tool analyzes stakeholders on two dimensions: (1) their interest in the project and (2) their relative power in the organization. Based on these two dimensions, the model suggests the appropriate relationship between the PM and the stakeholder group from *monitoring* to *keeping informed*, to *keeping satisfied*, to *closely managing*. Figure 4.1 provides an illustrative Power-Interest Grid for the stress test process improvement project.

Referring to Figure 4.1, we observe that the PM should closely manage the cardiologists and hospital administrators given their high interest in the project and their power in the organization. Likewise, the radiologists should be kept satisfied. Finally, the patients/families should be monitored and the test technicians kept informed on the status of the project.

In addition to thoughtfully considering the type of relationship the PM and project team should have with stakeholders, it is also important to assess how much engagement and commitment is needed from various stakeholder groups in order for the project to succeed. A useful tool for accessing the level of commitment needed from stakeholders is the Commitment Assessment Matrix. In this matrix, both the current level of commitment and the desired level of commitment are assessed for each stakeholder group.

Figure 4.2 provides an example Commitment Assessment Matrix for the stress test process improvement project. In comparing the current and desired levels of commitment to the process improvement project, we observe that the cardiologists are more committed than desired, perhaps indicating the risk that they will interfere in unproductive ways with the project. On the other hand, for the project to succeed, greater commitment is needed from the test technicians and especially the radiologists. Thus, the PM and project team need to develop an appropriate communication plan to reduce the cardiologists' commitment to the project and to substantially increase the commitment of the test technicians and radiologists.

