

# FRIEND OR FOE

Any product change, project plan, change management initiative requires assessment of and approach to working with stakeholders, a term we use to describe anyone who can impact a decision. Stakeholders often slow or block change; in other cases, they bust obstacles and accelerate progress. To increase your likelihood of success, check out this activity and identify your stakeholders to understand how they feel about your work.

## OBJECT OF PLAY:

The object of this game is to create an organizational map of your stakeholders. In some cases this may look like your organizational chart. In other cases situation and context will dictate a unique shape -- likely familiar but undocumented. In addition to mapping stakeholders' organizational relationships, you'll also analyze their contextual disposition regarding your initiative.

## HOW TO PLAY:

### **Step 1: Map organizational structure**

Invite your players to a five minute stakeholder brainstorm, ask: Who are our project stakeholders? Ask them to consider teams and individuals both inside and outside your organization or company. Have players write one stakeholder per sticky note. Once the brainstorm ends, have each player present their stakeholders by placing their sticky notes on a wall and provide to the group a brief description of their thinking. With all the sticky notes on the wall, ask the group to organize them into a rough organizational chart. This needs only to be an imprecise draft.

With the sticky note draft organizational chart as your guide, create a cleaner version of the organizational chart using a whiteboard and dry-erase markers. Ask for a scribe to map the organization from top to bottom. When the scope is quite big (e.g. you are mapping a large enterprise), map the parts of the organizational structure that are less relevant to the analysis with less detail, and vice versa. To help with navigation label all stakeholders. Draw a boarder around the areas that are affected by the change/initiative or are in the focus of the analysis.

### **Step 2: Add insight**

Begin a group discussion with the goal of mapping stakeholder disposition and level of support regarding your initiative.

Discuss each stakeholder one-by-one, try to uncover:

Level of impact: How much influence will this stakeholder have?

High, medium or low?

Relationship strength between stakeholders: Who they influence?

Who influences them? To what degree?

As you near consensus, draw your findings using tokens or icons.

Discover what works best for you, some examples:

-A green smiley face for a supportive stakeholder

-A battery with one out of three bars charged for a low-energy stakeholder

-A cloud overhead signals a confused stakeholder

