Stakeholder communication – gaining approval for your product strategy

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Decision making process in some organizations

https://dilbert.com/strip/2009-10-09

Icebreaker

Who of you has ever experienced that an individual or a group of people hindered you to advance with your project or task?

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Successful stakeholder communication – key initiatives

Empathy for your stakeholders

Argumentation around the customer

Plan whom, when, and how

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What is a stakeholder?

- "A stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by the achievement of a corporate's project purpose."

  Ed Freeman, Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach, 1984

  → Stakeholders can harm or facilitate your undertaken, be it a project, product strategy or any other non-isolated activity

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Who are your stakeholders really?

https://dilbert.com/strip/2010-07-01

Empathy for your stakeholders

- Emotion researchers from the University of California, Berkeley[1], define Empathy as the ability to sense other people's emotions and the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling:

Affective empathy	Cognitive empathy
Share a feeling, have emotions upon someone else's emotions	Switch perspectives, look at things from someone else's side

- Engage with stakeholders with empathy, use your brain and heart

- Be open and interested in them as person, imagine you were them

[1] https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/empathy/definition

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Customer-oriented argumentation

- Build your argumentation around the customer
  - Do so by answering the question, how is the customer affected by XY?

- The customer is of interest to all internal stakeholders (in your organization)

- Chances increase that your situation, your undertaken or proposal will be taken into consideration more seriously

- If the focus is on the (shared) customer, any impact on the stakeholder can be accepted more easily

  → You will provoke less resistance and will come to a consensus more likely

# Make a plan
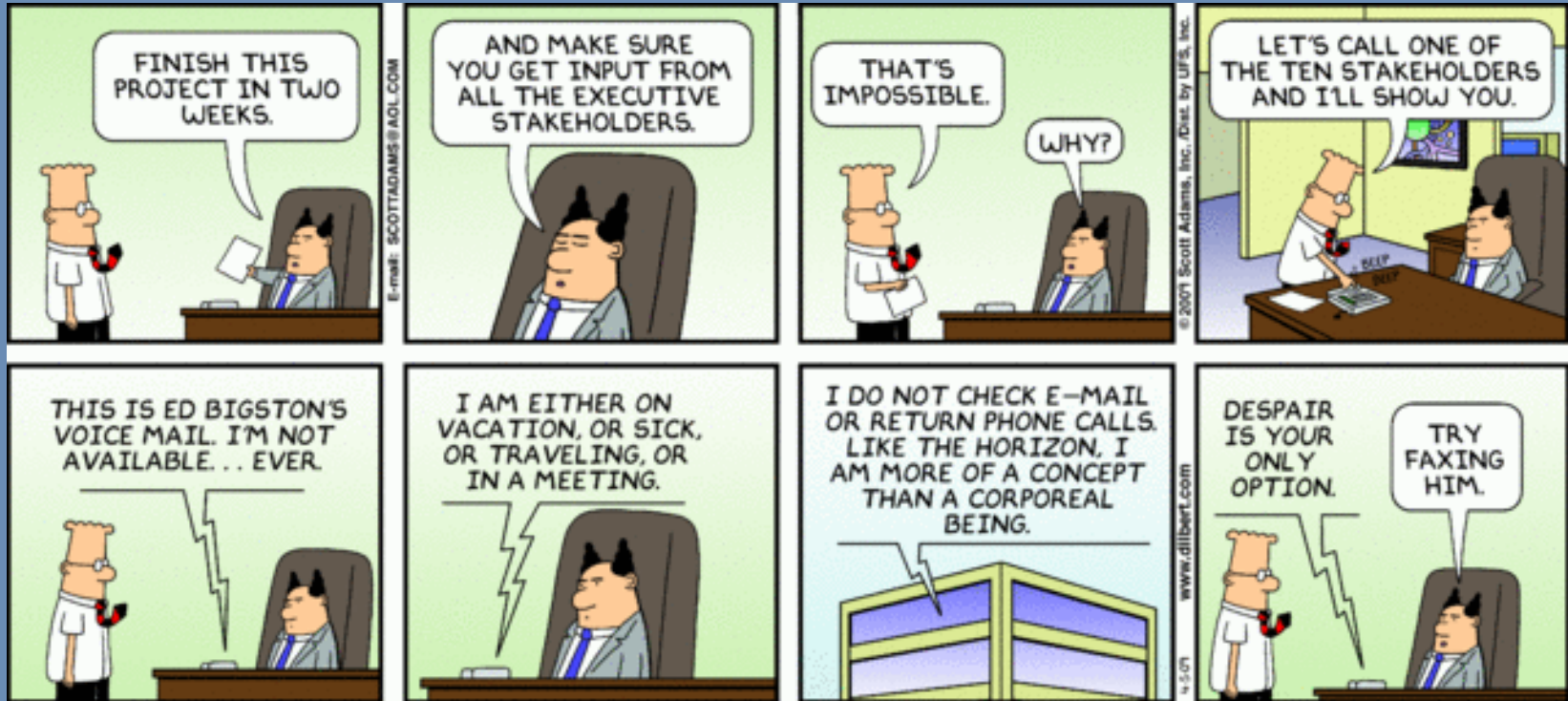
Plan whom to talk to when and how

- Treat it as regular task, as an important part of your job

- Plan it
  - Think of how you can reach the ones you need to involve and to convince
  - Map the formal and informal network of your company (who is connected to whom), use it to determine the order (whom to convince first, who can help you winning others or providing access)
  - Ensure frequent exchanges (e.g. book slots in your calendar, create occasions)

- Be ready to tell your story when the occasion is there
  - Have key messages ready
  - Spend some time elaborating them

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Map the informal network

Formal Network — Informal Network

https://gates.comm.virginia.edu/rlc3w/sna.htm
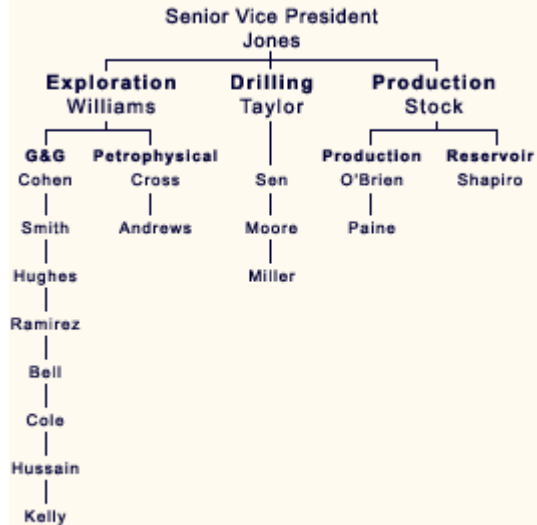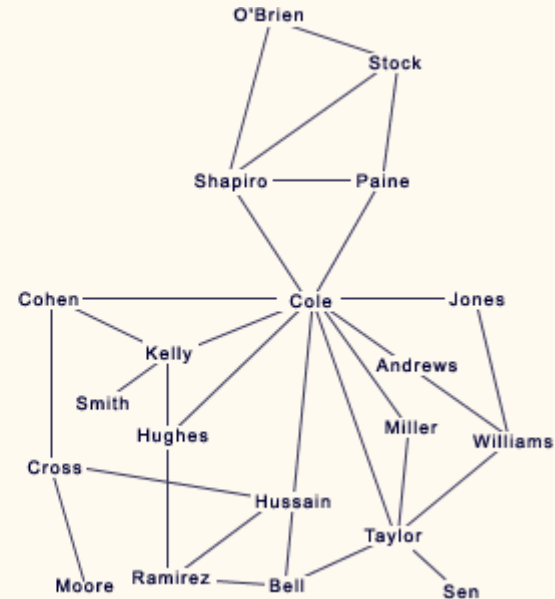
Your personal stakeholder challenge

Think of a project or goal you want(ed) to move forward where you encountered obstacles. What/who was the biggest challenge? Is there a specific category of stakeholders or situation that is hard to deal with?

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Groups breakout (20')

How do you gain approval from people who do not share the same enthusiasm for your undertaken? Collect ideas how you can approach them and share strategies that you can recommend from your own experience.

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"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."

Robert F. Kennedy

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Thank you!

Let's connect! For further information or continuation of today's discussion, send me an email or pm me on

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