

# Activity Guide: Change Stakeholder Playing Cards

Use this facilitation instruction guide along with the Change Stakeholder Playing Cards template to plan and conduct workshops that engage those people involved with change initiatives to better understand stakeholders and the importance of stakeholder management!

## Activity 1: What's In It for Them?

Tell the group how various stakeholders might be affected by change, and in turn, react to that change. Work together to create solutions.



## Activity 2: Story Telling

Practice telling stories about change! Use the stakeholder playing cards to give the story teller either a target audience or a cast of characters to include in their story.



## Activity 3: Role Plays

Involve participants to identify the stakeholders in your change initiative through role play.



## Activity 4: Consequences

An icebreaker for a session on change communication or stakeholder engagement.



ALL YOU NEED TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE™

The stakeholder playing cards are color coded with four different outline colors:

**Red outlined cards:**  
internal stakeholders

**Black outlined cards:**  
external stakeholders

**Blue outlined cards:**  
other stakeholders

**Green outlined cards:**  
may be either an internal or external stakeholder



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## Activity 1: What's In It for Them?

### Overview

Participants pick out cards at random and tell the rest of the group how this person might be affected by, and react to, the change. The group then works together to find solutions. The session should end with the groups feeding back on which stakeholders they found the most difficult, and their top strategies for dealing with them.

### Target Audience

Operational managers and others who have a need to have an understanding of a change initiative's stakeholders

### Suggested Timing

30 minutes to 3 hours

### Learning Objectives / Aims

An improved understanding of the different attitudes and perspectives of stakeholders and how to assist them to adopt the change.

### Activity Instructions

If playing with only operational managers, use the black outlined stakeholder cards (wider change stakeholders).

If the change team is included, use both colours of stakeholder cards, as it will help the team to think about how to best utilize the change sponsors and internal resources available to them.

### Preparation Needed

- One or more real or imaginary change scenarios
- Remove black outlined cards if all participants are non-change team members

### Additional Resources Needed

Flip charts or other resources to capture ideas such as notepads, post-it notes, laptops or tablets

### Facilitator Instructions (What to say)

Gather the participants into groups of 3-5 and give them a set of playing cards each (providing only red outlined cards to non-change team members).

Also provide participant groups with a flip chart (or other materials for recording ideas). You may wish all groups to tackle a single change topic (real and current or a scenario), or divide them up between them. You might wish to give each participant their own change scenario. In which case, they might keep the same scenario but draw multiple cards.

If using a real example you may or may not wish to encourage them to identify actual individuals who are either blockers or leaders and

look at tackling or harnessing the positivity of those individuals.

Adapt these remarks as appropriate:

*"We're going to use the stakeholder playing cards in front of you to help you gain an understanding of what different stakeholders may be involved or affected by a change, and how best to help them."*

*"Each of you in turn draws [a card / X cards] from the deck. Take a few minutes to work out how they will be affected by [the change example]. I want you to then give the rest of the group a quick summary of the stakeholder(s), their likely attitude and characteristics."*

*"As a group, you then need to come up with strategies for helping that stakeholder to adopt or cope with the change in the best way possible. Use the flipcharts provided to capture your ideas, so you can feed them back to the rest of us later."*

Depending on how imaginative some of the groups are, you may have to encourage and coach certain individuals to see the change through another's eyes.

After an appropriate period of time, bring the groups back together to feed back. This might be repeated several times as needed.

### Personal Reflections & Learning Check

Following feedback, bring the participant groups back together as a whole to consider the following:

- Which stakeholders were the easiest to understand? Which were the hardest, and why?
- What strategies were developed? Which of them had broad usage, and which had to be individually developed?
- How will I change my behaviour as a manager to better cope with change?
- How will this affect my managerial style, when managing staff through change?

### Wrap-up & Takeaways

Depending on whether this was a general learning session or specific to a current change initiative, you may or may not wish to write up and circulate the results.

You may wish to direct participants to further reading, internal or external courses on change management for operational managers or use this as part of [Change Activation Toolkit](#) modules including Conducting Stakeholder Analysis, Learning and Coaching as Change Enablers, Inspiring Action Not Despair or Four Common

## Responses to Change.

You may wish to use one of the 'Commitment to Change' postcards from a Change Activation Toolkit module to have people write up what they are going to do differently. They could take these cards away with them, or you could gather them in and post the cards back to the participants a month later, asking the participants to feedback on whether they are now working differently. This can be useful feedback both for evaluation and for future participants.

### *Hints / Tips*

Try to have a mixture of people in each group who have not worked together; they are more likely to learn from each other and come up with new ideas.

You could have participants come up with their own change scenarios, for example from their own experience, what they are currently facing or make it a bit of a competition between them to come up with the most fanciful scenarios.



## Activity 2: Story Telling

### Overview

The purpose of this game is to practice telling stories about changes from multiple perspectives. It uses the change stakeholder playing cards to give the story teller either a target audience or particular person's perspective.

### Target Audience

Change sponsors and change managers

### Suggested Timing

1-2 hours, possibly in two separate sessions and possibly longer if there are several participants.

### Learning Objectives / Aims

- Learn to view change from different peoples' perspectives
- Understand how to engage people through the use of effective organizational story telling
- Practice telling stories

### Activity Instructions

**Variant 1:** the cards select the audience. Use only the red outlined playing cards. The participants are given or select a change scenario and a red outlined card. The stakeholder on that card is the audience to which they need to tailor the story they are telling about the change initiative you have given them or they have chosen.

**Variant 2:** the cards select the cast of characters. Use both black outlined and red outlined cards. To ensure sufficient cards you might wish to use one deck between two people, as it will not matter that people around the table will have the same stakeholders.

Shuffle the cards. The participants are dealt 1 card each from the pack, until they have at least 5 cards each. At least one card must be black outlined. If they reach 5 cards without being dealt a black outlined, keep dealing to those who don't have a black outlined card until all of them do. It can be quite amusing for the rest of the group if someone ends up with a whole stack of cards!

### Preparation Needed

One or more real or imaginary change scenarios, unless you are letting them chose their own.

### Additional Resources Needed

- Flip charts, note pads or other methods of capturing ideas. Some participants may wish to draw illustrations for their story on the flip charts.
- You may wish to film the stories.

**Facilitator Instructions**  
(What to say)

Adapt these remarks as appropriate:

*"We're going to do an exercise on telling stories. Stories appeal to listeners in an emotional and visceral way, making them a powerful tool for change."*

**Variant 1:**

*"I'd like to invite each of you to pick a card. The stakeholder group on the card you pick will be the audience to whom you have to tailor your story; the stakeholder group you have to win over."*

*Those of you who get a stakeholder who is positive about the change might think you have an easy task – however you'll need to tailor your story so that your assigned stakeholder group can then use the same story to mobilize positive change behaviours among their colleagues."*

Distribute the cards.

**Variant 2:**

*"I'm going to deal out the cards one at a time to each of you, until you have a minimum of 5 cards, at least one of which is black outlined. These are going to be the participants in your stories, your cast of characters."*

Deal out the cards.

*"Now have a look at your cards. The story you will be telling needs to involve all of these stakeholders. You may choose one of them to be the audience."*

**Both variants:**

*"Now we're going to choose the scenarios you are telling your story about."*

Distribute the scenarios, either randomly or tailored outlined to each participant, or instruct them to think of a scenario from experience or imagination. Add in any other conditions they have to meet, such as weaving in certain objects, words or people.

*"You have [allotted time] to prepare to tell your story to the rest of the group. Feel free to make use of the flip charts and other materials provided."*

After the allotted time, ask them to tell their stories to the groups.

### Personal Reflections & Learning Check

Depending on the characters and experience in the group, you may or may not wish them to critique each other's work. You may wish to have them give each story marks out of ten and award a prize to the winner.

As a group, ask them to reflect on the following:

- Which story was the hardest to tell? Why?
- Which audience was the hardest?
- What techniques were used and how effective were they?

### Wrap-up & Takeaways

You may wish to direct participants to further reading, internal or external courses on change management for operational managers or use this as part of [Change Activation Toolkit](#) modules on communication.

You may wish to use one of the 'Commitment to Change' postcards from a Change Activation Toolkit module to have people write up what they are going to do differently. They could take these cards away with them, or you could gather them in and post the cards back to the participants a month later, asking the participants to feedback on whether they are now working differently. This can be useful feedback both for evaluation and for future participants.

You may wish to send people copies of their stories, or the groups' stories, and you may want to use them in future courses (with permission).

### Hints / Tips

Use this as part of a board development exercise. For example, use the Change Activation Toolkit module 'Telling Stories' as the basis for the development session. At the end of the session have them select their cards as 'homework', and set aside time at the next board meeting for them to tell their colleague(s) their story.

Unless you or your participants have some experience as change story tellers, you may wish to use the video from the module Telling Stories to introduce this game.

Use this as part of an internal course on presentation skills.

Putting your participants under a time limit can add both urgency and fun. Giving participants suggested themes for their stories (such as Christmas stories, or the instruction to include particular odd words they must weave into their story or a bizarre object they must include) can add fun.



## Activity 3: Role Plays

### Overview

The purpose of this game is to involve participants to identify stakeholders of a change initiative through role play.

Participants will use the stakeholder playing cards to identify different roles to play.

### Target Audience

Change team members, managers

### Suggested Timing

1 to 2 hours

### Learning Objectives / Aims

Learn to view change from different people's perspectives

### Activity Instructions

You can run this with just red outlined cards, having the person playing the stakeholder choose a stakeholder card to play. Remove the positive stakeholders from the set.

Alternatively, have one person pick a red outlined card and the other a black outlined card, so both participants are playing a role; one as a stakeholder and the other as a change manager of some description. This increases participant's understanding of the other team members as well as the change initiative stakeholders.

### Preparation Needed

Sort the cards as required outlined, removing positive red outlined stakeholder cards. If only one person is playing a role, remove all the black outlined cards.

### Additional Resources Needed

None

### Facilitator Instructions (What to say)

Divide the participants into pairs and give each a set of playing cards. You may wish all groups to tackle a single change topic (which might be real and current), or divide them up between them. You might wish to give each participant their own change scenario, in which case they might keep the same scenario but draw multiple cards.

If using a real example you may or may not wish to encourage them to identify actual individuals who are either blockers or leaders and look at tackling or harnessing the positivity of those individuals.

Adapt these remarks as appropriate:



*"We're going to use the stakeholder playing cards in front of you to help you gain an understanding of what different stakeholders may be involved or affected by a change, and how best to help them.*

*"Each of you in turn draws [a card / X cards] from the deck. Take a few minutes to work out how they will be affected by [the change scenario or real initiative]. Your partner will play the role of a manager or change leader who needs to persuade the stakeholder to support the change. (Adapt this if you are having one person selecting red outlined cards and the other person selecting black outlined cards).*

*"The person playing the role of the stakeholder needs to get into character and talk and react to the other person as that stakeholder would.*

*"Your partner needs to come up with strategies for helping that stakeholder to adopt or cope with the change in the best way possible.*

*"Every [5-10] minutes I'll call 'change!' and you swap over and draw a new card."*

Depending on how imaginative some of the groups are, you may have to encourage and coach certain individuals to see the change through another's eyes.

After an appropriate period of time, bring the groups back together to debrief and offer feedback of how they found the activity. This might be repeated several times as needed.

### *Personal Reflections & Learning Check*

Following feedback, bring the groups back together as a whole to consider the following:

- Which stakeholders were the easiest to understand? Which were the hardest, and why?
- What strategies were developed? Which of them had broad usage, and which had to be individually developed?
- How will I change my behaviour as a change team member to better cope with change?
- How will this affect my managerial style, when helping through change?

### *Wrap-up & Takeaways*

You may wish to direct participants to further reading, internal or external courses on change management for operational managers or use this as part of [Change Activation Toolkit](#) modules such as 'Conducting Stakeholder Analysis', 'Learning and Coaching as Change Enablers', 'Inspiring Action Not Despair'

or 'Four Common Responses to Change'.

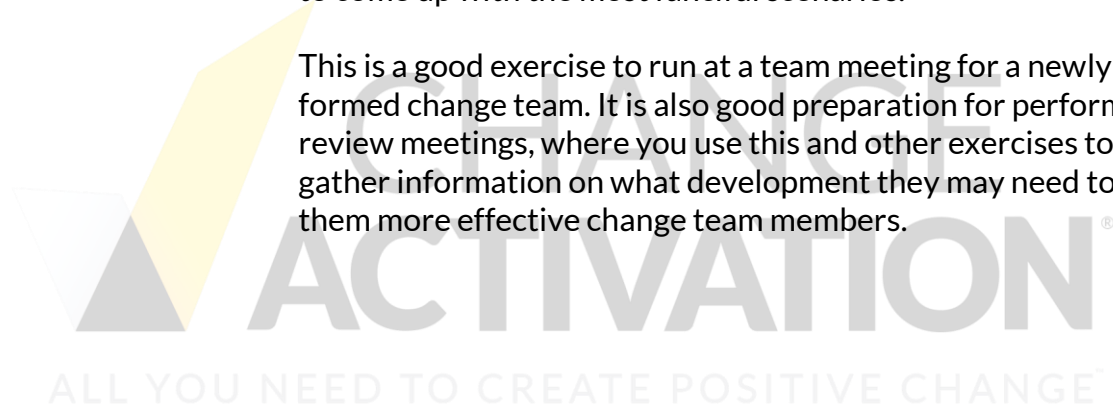
You may wish to use one of the 'Commitment to Change' postcards from a Change Activation Toolkit module to have people write up what they are going to do differently. They could take these cards away with them, or you could gather them in and post the cards back to the participants a month later, asking the participants to feedback on whether they are now working differently. This can be useful feedback both for evaluation and for future participants.

### Hints / Tips

Try to have a mixture of people in each group who have not worked together; they are more likely to learn from each other and come up with new ideas.

You could have participants come up with their own change scenarios, for example from their own experience, what they are currently facing or make it a bit of a competition between them to come up with the most fanciful scenarios.

This is a good exercise to run at a team meeting for a newly formed change team. It is also good preparation for performance review meetings, where you use this and other exercises to gather information on what development they may need to make them more effective change team members.



## Activity 4: Consequences

Overview	This is a fun and light-hearted activity and can be used as an icebreaker for a workshop on change communication or stakeholder engagement.
Target Audience	Anyone
Suggested Timing	20 minutes
Learning Objectives / Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As an icebreaker</li><li>• To increase participant familiarity with variety of different stakeholders and stakeholder groups that change initiatives involve</li></ul>
Activity Instructions	<p>Play the game of consequences (following the facilitator instructions below), using several decks of stakeholder cards shuffled together.</p> <p>The cards drawn from the pack are the protagonists in the story.</p>
Preparation Needed	Print out sufficient Consequences activity handout sheets so there is one for each participant for however many rounds you intend to run.
Additional Resources Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enough decks of the stakeholder playing cards so that each participant can draw two cards</li><li>• A Consequences activity handout sheet for each participant</li></ul>
Facilitator Instructions (What to say)	<p>Distribute a consequences sheet to each participant.</p> <p>Adapt these remarks as appropriate, demonstrating with a consequences sheet as you go:</p> <p><i>“We’re going to play the old game ‘consequences’, For those of you who haven’t done this before, here’s how it’s done.</i></p> <p><i>“Each of you will draw a stakeholder card. Make up a name for that person and write that and the stakeholder group in the first line. Then fold the paper over backwards and pass it to the next person.</i></p> <p><i>“The next person draws another card and fills in the next line of the</i></p>

*story. They then fold the paper back again, and pass it to the next person.*

*“Without needing to draw any more cards, you keep filling in a line of the story and passing it on to your neighbour, until it is complete.*

*“When all the sheets are complete, pass it to the next person and we will take it in turns to read out the stories we’ve created. Let your imagination run wild!”*

*Personal Reflections & Learning Check*

None

*Wrap-up & Takeaways*

People may wish to take these away to use at team meetings.

*Hints / Tips*

Save the funniest to use as examples next time you play the game, perhaps reading them out when you’ve demonstrated how to play.

Use this game as an ice breaker for [Change Activation Toolkit](#) modules on communication or stakeholders, or for other courses or events.

For more information on the original game ‘Consequences’, see [the Wikipedia article](#).

