



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

**What are the Effective Strategies Required
to Improve and Build Successful
Stakeholder Relationships on
Projects/Programmes in Dell?**

**An Investigation to discover the Relationship between Improved
Stakeholder Management and Project Success at Dell**

By

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Dissertation submitted to The Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick

In partial fulfilment of the requirement for The Degree of Master of Science in
Project Management

September 2013

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Word Count 12,700

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation, in whole or in part, has not been submitted to any University as an exercise for a degree. I further declare that, except where reference is made in the text, the contents are entirely my own work.

Nicola Kelly

September 2013

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
PRINCE2	Projects in Controlled Environments
PMBOK	Project Management Body of Knowledge
OPM3	Organisational Project Management Maturity Model
APM	Association for Project Management
IAPM	International Association of Project Management
ICB	International Competence Baseline
SRMM	Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity
PMM	Project Management Maturity
BRD	Business Requirements Document

Acknowledgements

With thanks to:

Joey Hickey, for his time, effort and interest in this research project.

Dan Aherne, for his supervision, guidance and feedback throughout the project.

All of the interview participants who gave their time, opinions and expertise to make this research possible.

Anthony, Adrian and Kieran, for your continued support over the last 5 years.

Abstract

Dell Limerick has commissioned the author to conduct research into the process of Stakeholder Management by benchmarking Stakeholder Management practices at Dell with industry Best Practice. Primary data has been gathered from industry professionals at Dell who are employed across a wide range of projects and programmes, to understand the current Stakeholder Management process. The literature is then reviewed to examine Best Practice in the area of Stakeholder management, in an effort improve processes in Dell. This study has identified gaps between the current process at Dell and industry Best Practice. This research concludes by presenting Dell with a comprehensive list of recommendations supported by industry best practice guidelines and standards.

Chapter 1 Executive Summary

It is widely acknowledged that Project Management is seen as delivering undertakings on time, on budget and within scope in an effort to achieve a successful project outcome (Morris and Geraldi, 2011). However, there are other elements that contribute to project success, and according to Bourne (2005), one of these elements is managing the relationships of all stakeholders involved in a project.

This research has been commissioned by Dell Limerick, in an effort to identify gaps in the current Stakeholder Management process and produce recommendations to address the issues identified. The methodology uses a case study approach by gathering primary data from interview participants from different levels and positions in Dell Figure 3 and secondary data from the use of Best Practice guidelines, to produce implementable recommendations to improve the Stakeholder Management process. The data gathered from Dell is analysed and evaluated against the research questions using the “Stakeholder Circle”, a theoretical model of Stakeholder Relationship Management as the primary framework (Bourne, 2005).

This research has identified gaps in the areas of Stakeholder analysis, continued analysis of the stakeholder community, the Lessons Learned process and the Project Management Maturity Level of the organisation. Further to this, the following recommendations have been made.

Recommendations:

1. Stakeholder mapping and visualisation tools are recommended in line with best practice guidelines to define and approach strategy.
2. The process of analysing stakeholders should be standardised and implemented as a singular methodology across all functions in an effort to build long term relationships and improve the chances of project success.
3. The project teams in Dell must build a relationship as a cross-functional team at the beginning of every project. The introduction of a facilitated workshop is recommended pre-kick off meeting, where the key stakeholders can understand each other’s perceptions and expectations.

4. Stakeholder analysis needs to be a continuous process throughout the project lifecycle to ensure the engagement and communication with the stakeholder community is kept up to date.
5. Put a formal structure in place to control and manage conflict on projects. The process should be implemented as a singular methodology across all functions in Dell.
6. Team members should be trained in all aspects of Conflict Management including the Conflict Management Process.
7. All key stakeholders must contribute to “Lessons Learned” as part a structured formal process that requires all key stakeholders to contribute and give feedback at the end of a project.
8. A “People Management” element should be integrated into the formal Stage Gate Review process.
9. The Stakeholder Management process should be analysed after each project as a formal part of the close out stage.
10. There should be more structure around the Training Protocol for project team members.

Special Recommendation:

These recommendations are presented from an In-company research project with Dell Limerick, in part fulfilment of a taught postgraduate Masters Programme in Project Management.

Best practice would recommend that research such as this is carried out as an embedded research program in which the researcher is involved in and observing the day to day running of projects in Dell so the student can have access more information, data and practical advice, to validate and support any recommendations made at the end of the research. This will also allow the research student to understand how best to implement the recommendations proposed. This is something Dell should strongly consider as a follow up activity to this research.

The successful implementation of the recommendations needs to be analysed based on the criteria of suitability, feasibility and acceptability (Asch and Bowman, 1989). As this is the case, an implementation plan has been included as part of this research. The implementation plan proposes the use of two pilot groups to implement the

recommendations, with two similar projects chosen as control groups. The implementation plan is time bound, when the projects will be reviewed after an agreed timeframe and a decision will be made at that point on whether to roll out or not. The implementation plan includes an exit strategy with the ability to kill the requirement if its operation does not add value to the existing Stakeholder Management process.

This research thesis reveals an understanding of the current Stakeholder Management process in Dell. The research has highlighted issues and gaps in the process, and provided recommendations on how to address them. As a consequence of this, the research has highlighted the need for further study into the management of relationships on projects and programmes in Dell in the future.

Chapter 2. Introduction

This research introduces the issues facing Dell Limerick regarding Stakeholder Relationship Management and outlines and examines industry best practices to identify and address gaps in the Stakeholder Management process. This research thesis also investigates how the Stakeholder Relationship Management process, can contribute to project success on Projects/Programmes at Dell.

The research continues with a comprehensive literature review of existing theories of Stakeholder Management, including theoretical models/frameworks and professional Project Management Standards, forming the foundation for Stakeholder Management best practice across industry.

The “Stakeholder Circle Model” forms a basis on which this research is carried out. The questions that form the semi-structured interviews, have been designed to draw relevant data from this and other models identified in the literature, forming a theoretical framework, testing the hypothesis and answering the research questions.

The primary data gathered from Dell Limerick is analysed and evaluated against the research questions using the “Stakeholder Circle” model of Project Stakeholder Relationship Management as the primary framework.

Finally, conclusions are drawn up and a list of recommendations are presented in relation to Stakeholder Management, in an effort to improve, build and develop long-term Stakeholder Relationships on Projects/Programmes at Dell in the future.

A possible outcome of this thesis involves developing a training module that can be rolled out to all Project Managers within Dell, with an opportunity for further research in benchmarking Dell against other companies in the industry.

2.1 The Organisation

Dell is a multinational computer technology corporation based in the US. The company is one of the largest technological corporations in the world and focuses on offering technology solutions to its customers. Client offerings include the design, development, manufacture, marketing, sales and support of a wide range of products and services. Dell continues to expand their client offerings and build their portfolio

with new acquisitions which allow Dell to offer complete solutions to customers and clients.

2.2 Importance of this Research

The Study of Stakeholder Relationship Management can contribute to the process of how Dell Analyse, Engage and Manage Stakeholders on a typical project and build relationships for future projects also. The study of Stakeholder Relationship Management at Dell Limerick completed in this research, has identified gaps in the stakeholder management process. Therefore, the recommendations presented in this research, address the question of how building and improving Stakeholder Relationships can contribute to Project Success at Dell, and highlights the need for continued research in the area of Stakeholder Relationship Management in projects/programmes.

2.3 Proposed Research Questions

“What are the Effective Strategies Required to Improve and Build Successful Stakeholder Relationships on Projects/Programmes in Dell?”

In light of the aforementioned overarching research question the following research sub-questions will be answered:

1. What are the gaps identified between Stakeholder Relationship Management Practices at Dell and Industry Best Practice?
2. Can Stakeholder Relationship Management influence project success at Dell?

Questions post-implementation at Dell:

1. Can the use of Stakeholder Relationship Management Frameworks and Methodologies, increase the effectiveness of Stakeholder Management Practices at Dell?
2. How willing and capable are the stakeholders on projects at Dell, to use and develop the proposed frameworks?

2.4 Research Objectives and Deliverables

1. Identify current stakeholder Relationship Management practices both in the literature and in Dell.
2. Present Recommendations towards a Best Practice approach to Stakeholder Relationship Management on Projects/Programmes in Dell.
3. The Recommendations will be integrated in to the existing Stakeholder Management Methodologies in Dell in order to develop a strategy for implementation and roll out to Project Managers across Dell.
4. There is scope for further follow-up research which will allow the researcher to conduct a more in-depth evaluation of stakeholder management practices on projects/programmes in Dell Limerick, and answer the questions posed post-implementation.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

In this chapter, Stakeholder Management is reviewed in the literature. The review begins with defining the stakeholder, the stakeholder management process and outlining existing stakeholder theories and methodologies. The chapter continues by discussing some of the stakeholder management methodologies that are practiced in industry at present, with reference to a wide range of professional project management competence standards, detailing best practice across many industries.

3.1 Who is a Stakeholder?

There are many definitions of a stakeholder in the literature. Freeman (1984) has identified stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives”. Other authors such as Clarkson (1994) have suggested that stakeholders are the voluntary and involuntary risk-bearers on a project. The relationship between Stakeholder Management and risk is discussed in further detail later in this chapter. Authors such as Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), have gone a step further having characterised stakeholders according to their legitimacy, power or urgency.

It is important at this point to make the distinction between the different types of stakeholders that need to be managed within any project setting.

- **Primary and Secondary Stakeholders**

Primary Stakeholders include any individuals or groups whose participation is required for the survival of the project (Clarkson, 1995).

Secondary stakeholders include those who are not directly involved and engaged in the project, but who have some influence in the project and may be affected by it (Clarkson, 1995).

- **Stakeholders and Influencers**

Some stakeholders may have more influence than others on a project but the stakeholder analysis process can help to identify the more salient stakeholders (Altonen et al, 2008).

- **Normative and Derivative Stakeholders**

Normative Stakeholders are defined as the stakeholders to whom the organisation has an obligation of stakeholder fairness (Gilmour, 2007).

Derivative Stakeholders are those who have the power to affect or influence normative stakeholders (Gilmour, 2007).

- **Institutional Stakeholders and Local Stakeholders**

Institutional Stakeholders are organised groups that represent a large number of interests but also have the technical expertise to be active participants in the project (Gilmour, 2007), whereas local stakeholders are defined as those who can have some input in the decision making process but do not have the resources or capacity to engage in the project to any real extent (Dunham et al, 2001).

Although different types of stakeholders have been defined throughout the literature, this research study will define the stakeholders within the context of the case study being carried out in Dell.

3.2 Stakeholder Management Theory and Methodologies

A seminal definition of a stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives” (Freeman 1984). According to PMBOK, (2008), stakeholders are defined as “individuals and organisations that are actively involved in the project or whose interest may be affected as a result of project execution or project completion”. However, the key issue is how to manage not only the stakeholders themselves, but the relationship between the project and its stakeholders (Aaltonen et al., 2008). Stakeholder management models share common elements such as stakeholder identification, engagement, and the need to balance the conflicting interests of the stakeholders and the organisation (Frooman, 1999). PMBOK (2008), describes the process of stakeholder management as “the systematic identification, analysis and planning of actions to communicate with and influence stakeholders”. There is much in the

literature that suggests best practice when managing project stakeholders. Some of these models and frameworks are discussed in this research in an effort to identify stakeholder management best practice currently in industry.

Figure 1 outlines some of the methodologies and frameworks for stakeholder management that have been developed over the years by seminal authors and Professional Standards in the field of Project Stakeholder Management.

A Summary of some of the Frameworks and Methodologies

Frameworks and Methodologies	Authors	Description
Stakeholder Identification, Assessment and Engagement Models	Walker (2003) Briner et al. (1996) Turner (2002) Cleland (1999) APM (2006) PMBOK (2013)	Identification and categorisation. Measure interest and influence. Predict Stakeholder Behaviour
Stakeholder Analysis “Stakeholder Mapping”	Mendelow (1991) OGC UK (2003)	Power V Interest Power V Impact
Categorising Stakeholders “Stakeholder Saliency “	Mitchell et al. (1997) Savage et al. (1991)	Stakeholders are categorised according to the 3 attributes: Power, Legitimacy and Urgency Categorised according to potential threat/co-operation
Ranking Stakeholders “Stakeholder expectations based on Key Performance Areas”	Cameron et al. (2010)	Ranked according to the needs and importance of the Stakeholders to others in the project
Long Term Relationship Building with Stakeholders “Stakeholder Circle”	Bourne and Walker (2005)	A continuous process throughout the project to engage, build and manage long-term relationships with stakeholders.

Agile Stakeholder Management “The Team Value Chain”	Thiry (2010)	An agile approach to stakeholder management with ongoing examination of benefits, value, requirements and expectations based on producing continual results
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Figure 1 Stakeholder Management Methodologies and Frameworks

3.2.1 Stakeholder Salience

Stakeholder theory attempts to answer the question of how stakeholders are prioritised and which require the most attention (Bourne 2005). The term “Salience” is used in the literature to understand how stakeholder demands should be managed (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997). According to Aaltonen et al. (2008), project stakeholders use different strategies to increase their salience on any given project. The Identification and Salience framework by Mitchell et al. (1997), identifies the stakeholders who possess any or all of the attributes of Power, Legitimacy and Urgency, and indicates whether they are more salient to organisations. In the Salience model, power is defined as “the ability of those who possess power to bring about outcomes they desire” (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1974). Power is seen as a resource that can be used by the stakeholder, and that power can be coercive or utilitarian in order to bring about the desired outcome (Etzioni, 1964). Legitimacy is the second attribute identified by Mitchell et al., (1997), which argues that the more legitimate the stakeholders’ claims are, the more likely they are to receive a positive response from management. According to Suchman (1995), Legitimacy is defined as “a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions”. The third attribute is the urgency of the stakeholder’s request which also increases their salience. Hence the salience framework identifies the more powerful stakeholders and the degree to which managers in organisations, give priority to competing stakeholders on a project (Aaltonen et al., 2008).

3.2.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Identifying stakeholders is a key part of stakeholder analysis (Newcombe, 1996). Stakeholder mapping techniques have been developed such as the power/interest matrix and the power/predictability matrix to determine how stakeholders interact

with the project organisation and more importantly, how they react to changes (Newcombe, 2003). These techniques map out the current positions of the stakeholders and although Cyert and March (1963) believed that the project organisation was a “shifting multi-goal coalition”, recent literature has shown that it is indeed a more emergent process with stakeholders power bases and the stakeholders themselves, shifting position over the lifecycle of the project (Rudolf and Peluchette, 1993). Stakeholders use their power on a project in many different ways and this can be either negative or positive (Newcombe, 2003). The author states that this technique is of great value to the Project Manger, offering a visual map of the power positions of the stakeholders helping the Project Manager to develop skills that allow him to be sensitive and responsive to stakeholder’s expectations (Newcombe, 2003).

Stakeholder mapping is used as part of the stakeholder engagement process according to the OGC best practice guidelines for managing programmes. As developed in the literature, the OGC guidelines describe the use of the power/interest matrix in order to prioritise the stakeholders and develop an effective communication and engagement strategy (OGC, 2010).

Professional Project Management standards such as PMBOK 5th Ed, have introduced a new knowledge area of Stakeholder Management (PMBOK, 2013). Stakeholder analysis is a technique recommended to systematically gather and analyse information to determine the interests, expectations, influence and saliency of each stakeholder (PMBOK, 2013).

The Association for Project Management (APM, 2006) agree that stakeholder management is a contributory factor in a successful project outcome and that understanding the relationship between the organisation and the stakeholders, can lead to project success (Bourne, 2005). The APM shares Newcombe’s theory that stakeholder management becomes more difficult when stakeholder’s positions of power, move throughout the project lifecycle, and propose continuous stakeholder analysis and reviews throughout the lifecycle of the project as a best practice guide (APM, 2006).

3.3 Stakeholder Relationship Theory

Project relationships include all the stakeholders (Frooman, 1999). Bourne refers to this as the stakeholder community in her theory of stakeholder relationship management in the “Stakeholder Circle” (Bourne, 2005). According to the author, managing relationships is one of the elements of project success. The relationship between the project organisation and its stakeholders contributes to project success (Leana and Rousseau, 2000). Many of the stakeholder models in the literature are based on the premise of firstly identifying stakeholders (Elliot, 2001, Svendsen et al. 2004, Thomsett 2002), and then managing these relationships in order to meet the needs and expectations of the project stakeholders (Savage et al., 1991). Managing these relationships can be difficult as managers in organisations have various degrees of engagement on projects (Freeman, 1984). Project Managers can often find that they have no real power outside the project stakeholders and therefore must learn to develop and build strong long-term relationships for the future by using influence as a strategy (Pinto, 1998).

The importance of stakeholder relationships has been well documented in the literature. Seminal works from Cooke-Davies and Christensen and Walker, have identified the critical importance of stakeholder engagement and alignment of their strategic goals and vision. (Cooke-Davies, 2000; Christensen and Walker, 2003). As the success factors and expectations for each stakeholder are different, Brinner et al, (1996), believes that in order to manage the stakeholders effectively, the project lifecycle and the performance of individuals must be managed also as a part of the stakeholder relationship management process (Briner et al (1996).

3.4 Organisational Maturity - Stakeholder Relationship and Project Management Maturity Models

The maturity level of an organisation is assessed through the achievement of a series of stages through which the organisation move through the levels of the maturity model striving to attain a higher level of maturity (Bourne, 2008). Many of the maturity models in the literature are found to be similar in developing the maturity, through a staged process.

Kerzner's model of project management maturity has five levels:

- Level 1- Management understand the importance of project management and the need to understand and incorporate project management processes.
- Level 2 – Common processes in place for projects.
- Level 3 – A Singular Methodology is followed throughout the organisation.
- Level 4 – Benchmarking is carried out periodically to assess organisational maturity level
- Level 5 – This is a continuous cycle where the organisation strives for continuous improvement.

Carnegie Mellon University, claim their capability maturity model can guide improvement across projects by following the five levels of CMMI maturity, which are described as:

- Level 1 – Initial
- Level 2 – Managed
- Level 3 – Defined
- Level 4 – Quantitatively managed
- Level 5 – Optimising

Achieving these levels of maturity will lead to improvements on projects, whilst providing guidelines of how to achieve each level (Bourne, 2008).

OPM 3 is the Organisation Project Management Maturity model published by the project management Institute (PMI OPM3, 2008), and is globally recognised as a best practice standard for developing and assessing the capability of organisations in project, programme and portfolio management, in an effort to understand where they can improve (PMI, 2003). Using this model can help Dell to understand their current level of Project Management Maturity by measuring their maturity against a comprehensive set of Best Practices so they can plan for improvement (PMI OPM3, 2008). The OPM provides guidelines for the organisation to achieve excellence in organisational project management and involves completing three interlocking elements:

- Stage 1 – Knowledge: Learn about Best Practice

- Stage 2 – Assessment: Evaluate the Organisations current capabilities and identify areas of improvement through self-assessment
- Stage 3 – Improvement: Use the results from the assessment to map out how to improve performance in the future

The continued improvement leads to best practice for organisations through the process improvement stages of:

- Standardise – acquire standard processes and monitor compliance
- Measure – the performance of the process
- Control – Develop, implement and audit the system
- Improve continuously – Identify problems and implement improvements (PMI OPM3, 2008)

SSRM is the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Model presented by Bourne, (2008), and describes the “readiness” or maturity of an organisation, to define a starting point for implementing improvements to the Stakeholder Management and Engagement process within projects (Bourne, 2008). This model provides a framework for building capability so organisations can progress through the levels to achieve a higher level of maturity by pro-actively managing Stakeholder Relationships (Bourne, 2008). The Five Levels of the Stakeholder Relationship Maturity Model are:

- Level 1 – Ad-hoc: Use of Some processes but not followed as a singular methodology.
- Level 2 – Procedural: Focus is on processes and Tools
- Level 3 – Relational: Focus is on Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- Level 4 – Integrated: Singular Methodology is repeatable and integrated across all projects and programmes
- Level 5 – Predictive: Health checks and predictive risk assessment.

3.5 Stakeholder Communication

The literature emphasises the continued need for communication to engage in effective stakeholder management and this is an important representation of the quality of these relationships (Lawerence, 2002). Rowley (1997), believes that the mechanisms of communication used by an organisation, is a measure of the

organisations attempt to connect and build long-term relationships with their stakeholders. The many different methods of communication now available including the introduction of many multi-media platforms will not be addressed in this thesis as much of this area is outside the scope for this body of research.

In the 4th edition of the PMI PMBOK, stakeholder communication is presented as a process and a technique, carried out as part of Project Communications Management (PMBOK, 2008). Methods of communication include interactive, push and pull communication, but the APM (2006) goes on further to incorporate a more behavioural approach to communication management. Developing and building long-term relationships with stakeholders is of particular benefit to Dell, where the stakeholders remain largely the same from a cross functional point of view. The APM (2006) standard includes a knowledge area on people and the profession, detailing more on the behavioural aspects of project management than the PMBOKS process based and task orientated approach to running a project. It includes sections on teamwork, leadership, conflict management and negotiation, all which require different forms of communication throughout the project. The PRINCE 2 standard describes the need for communication when defining the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (PRINCE 2, 2009). The six step procedure for stakeholder engagement defines how the project can engage with the stakeholders and this involves not only communicating continuously with the stakeholders throughout the project, but also defining the responsibilities for communication ie. the sender and recipients of the communication (PRINCE 2, 2009).

PMBOK, PRINCE2 and APM agree that stakeholder communication is required from the beginning of the project, when the business case is developed. Communication of the business case may lie with the sponsor or the project manager, so both must be able to communicate and convey this understanding to the project team and keep them updated throughout the project lifecycle, on a continuous basis (APM, 2006). In her research concerning the stakeholder relationship management model of the "Stakeholder Circle", Bourne has identified this continuous maintenance of the power structure between stakeholders as "active Communication" (Bourne and Walker, 2005). This can prevent the occurrence of conflict and once stakeholder influence is properly understood, it can not only

prevent project failure, but become a driver for project success (Bourne and Walker, 2005).

3.6 Project Success/Failure

Project success means different things to different people (Toor and Ogunlana, 2009). Different stakeholders have varying levels of interest and influence and so it is important to ensure the vision of project success is communicated to all (Bryde and Browne, 2005). According to Bourne and Walker (2005), because all the stakeholders have different definitions of project success, they all require different management. Not only is the definition of project success different, but the measurement of project success differs throughout the literature. Cooke-Davies (2002) states that, the measurement of project success depends on the objectives of the project and the project management success. Lim and Mohamed (1999) believe that project success should be measured on a macro level incorporating the business case, and on a micro level, which is concerned with measuring the triple constraints of time, cost and quality. As these differences are found to be widespread in the literature, there is no agreement on defined KPI's in an effort to measure project success across different industries (Chan et al., 2004). It is the opinion of Toor and Ogunlana, (2009), that frameworks for measuring performance should encompass quantitative and qualitative criteria, addressing project process and project performance, in order to meet the needs and future demands and expectations of stakeholders. Bourne and Walker, (2005) believe that stakeholder engagement is an effort to align their "mutual interests". To this end, Bourne and Walker, (2004), have presented a framework to manage stakeholder relationships incorporating the elements of stakeholder management, project life cycle management and the performance of the individuals on the project (Bourne and Walker, 2005). This multi faceted approach supports the findings in the literature above, where project success cannot be measured on one element only. Figure 2 illustrates the three elements of project success as stated by Bourne (2005), and how stakeholders play a central role in project success.

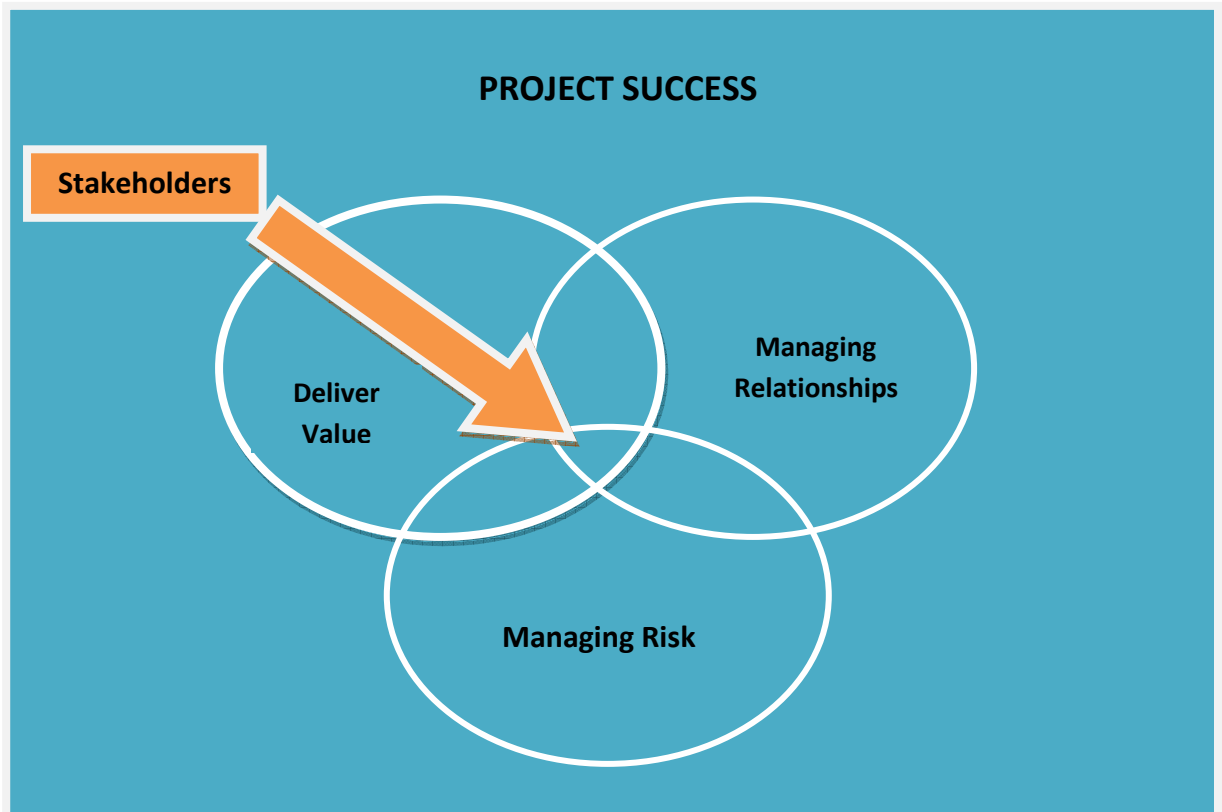


Figure 2 Three Elements of Project Success adapted from Bourne (2005)

3.7 Stakeholder Management and Risk Management

Risk can be both positive and negative presenting itself as an opportunity or a threat (PMI PMBOK, 2012). Managing the uncertainty of a project has a direct effect on achieving the expectations of stakeholders (Verhuz, 1999). If risks are not managed correctly, then stakeholders will be impacted and ultimately the project may fail (Bourne, 2008). The author points out that risk management is an important part of developing appropriate engagement strategies for Stakeholders (Bourne, 2008). This link is further supported by the APM BOK (2006), who includes the processes for stakeholder management and proactive risk management as part of planning the strategy. This link is further supported by PMI PMBOK, (2012), who describes the classification of stakeholders through the use of models such as the Power versus Influence Grid. This allows the project manager to evaluate the risks posed by each stakeholder with regard to their power and influence on the project. The OGC Prince 2(2009) Standard, further describes working with stakeholders through the stakeholder analysis process, to ascertain their level of power and influence which is viewed as an essential factor of project success.

The stakeholder management process is linked closely to risk management. According to Kwak and LaPlace (2005), a stakeholder's risk tolerance is influenced by the project objective and understanding the risk tolerance is important when developing an engagement strategy (Bourne, 2008).

3.8 Discretionary Effort and the Culture of the Organisation

Discretionary effort plays an important role in this research as the stakeholder relationships examined in this research thesis are internal, cross-functional employees of the organisation in Dell. The process of stakeholder management and engagement therefore, involves building relationships and improving processes for future projects.

Engagement is defined as “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organisation and how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment” (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). The authors identify two types of commitment: Rational and Emotional. Rational commitment lets employees believe that managers and teams are all in their self-interest and emotional commitment is the level of enjoyment and belief in their managers and teams (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). However, Woods and Coomber (2013) point out that even though an organisation can measure employee engagement, this does not mean that this will lead to productive useful action and behaviour. The authors state that employees can be highly engaged in the organisation and yet not do any more than what is expected of them through their defined roles and responsibilities. This requires something different; Discretionary Effort, going the extra mile for the team (Woods and Coomber, 2013).

“I am a member of the team and I rely on the team, I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion”. Mia Hamm.

Teams are an essential part of organisations and in Dell these teams are both co-located and global. Woods and Coomber (2012) have stated that “team Identification” is one of the main drivers for discretionary effort. It is described as a sense of belonging to the team, a cohesive unit that work together to pursue a common goal and the closer the team member identifies with the team, the more likely they are to go the extra mile (Woods and Coomber, 2012). However, team members can be part of a project team and a functional department team, which

leads to conflict and competition when trying to secure resources. Woods and Coomber (2012) believe that with the correct alignment of purpose, the team member can feel a strong part of both teams and perform well for both.

Understanding how the relationships work within these teams is important. According to Bourne (2008), Project Managers also need to understand how the culture of both the project and the organisation impact on these relationships, and how it can affect stakeholder perceptions and expectations.

3.9 Trust

“Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intention or behaviour of another”. (Rosseau et al., 1998).

Trust is an important part of benefitting from others’ knowledge and experience (IPMA ICB, 2006). According to the competence based professional standard, openness is an important competence, as relationships in a team are built on mutual respect, trust and reliability. Trust is identified as the most significant human dimension of project management to affect project success (Pinto et al., 2008). The level of human interaction that occurs both within organisations and within the project setting requires trust (Romahn and Hartman, 1999). In agreement with the IPMA ICB (2006), trust is a competence which is intrinsic within projects, and it has an important influence on project success (Brewer and Strahorn 2012). It is important to note however, that trust is not a behaviour and should not be confused with co-operation (Brewer and Strahorn, 2012). Pinto et al., (2008) points out that co-operation may be contractual in nature, as with typical internal project stakeholders who are supporting the project, but this does not automatically imply that trust exists (Kadefors, 2004). Trust is therefore an important part of building relationships between key stakeholders (Karlsen et al., 2008). Sheppard and Sherman, (1998), describe a relationship where one party is reliant on another, to achieve the project and organisational objectives. Karlsen et al., (2008) goes on to describe how stakeholders may develop low to high levels of trust depending on what is required on any particular project. Romahn and Hartman, (1999) have described how certain stakeholders must display trusting behaviour while other stakeholders need to display behaviour that is trustworthy; trust is a two way

process. Karlsen et al. (2008) has also identified how risks and uncertainties can challenge and adversely affect well functioning teamwork and project co-ordination. This view is supported by Rosenfeld et al., (1991), who state that potential benefits for stakeholders could be improved with improved stakeholder relationships.

Throughout the literature, trust is seen to play a pivotal role in both project relationships and project outcome. However, best practice standards such as PMI PMBOK although they mention trust as a desirable attribute, do not specify any processes or procedures on how trust should be initiated, developed and maintained throughout the project lifecycle and the author believes this could be regarded as a flaw (Brewer and Strahorn, 2012).

Project stakeholders can build, maintain and improve project relationships by incorporating trust between the stakeholders in an effort to improve project performance (Bourne, 2008). The author states that building and maintaining trusting relationships are long-term activities and these relationships often extend far beyond the lifecycle of any one project. According to Hartmann, (2002), this is a vital part of meeting stakeholder's expectations and reaching a successful project outcome.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 A Case Study Approach

“A Case Study is the most flexible of all research designs, allowing the researcher to retain the holistic characteristics of real-life events while investigating empirical events” (Yin, 1994).

This research will be conducted through qualitative research methods; the most appropriate method for researching a moderate number of participants, facilitating an analysis of the research questions (Naoum, 2007, p. 45). By utilising Dell Limerick in a case study approach, it is possible to investigate how Dell can improve and build stakeholder relationships within their projects/programmes, and examine the relationship between Stakeholder Management and Project Success. Using an inductive research approach, the researcher can determine general conclusions, logically derived from information gathered in the semi-structured interview process (Yin, 1994). The researcher will serve as the main instrument of data collection, gathering information from the direct experience of the interviewees (Jacobs, 2013). This method allows the researcher to establish some depth of perspective and analyse the data in an interpretive manner (Yin, 1994). The data gathered from the participants comes from real world situations through experiences on projects/programmes in Dell and analysis of the data collected is inductive. The inductive research method is open-ended and exploratory and involves developing generalisations from a limited number of observations and experiences, and this data will be collected through the semi-structured interview process.

The case study approach examines Stakeholder Management practices at Dell through an analysis of a group of interview participants working on typical projects in Dell (Naoum, 2007, p. 44). (See Figure 3). Through the use of a semi-structured interview process, the researcher has the opportunity to explore and probe the participants, to get as much information about the subject under examination as possible. The “Stakeholder Circle” Theoretical Stakeholder Relationship Model provides a framework through which to conduct the case study research by testing the data gathered against the model, and answering the research questions. The “Stakeholder Circle” therefore provides the theoretical foundation upon which the exploratory case study is based.

The case study research method is a holistic all encompassing method, including data collection, data analysis and also the experiences of the respondents in the interview process (Yin, 1994, Naoum, 2007). According to Jacobs (2013), there are issues to be addressed when carrying out a qualitative body of research and they are as follows:

Gaining Entry

This research has been commissioned by Dell Limerick, in an effort to examine the Stakeholder Management and Process that operates within projects/programmes at Dell. The primary contact for access to data and information is a Project/Programme Manager within the Supply Chain function who acts as a facilitator to gain entry to confidential data and information at Dell.

Contacting and Selecting Potential Research Participants

In order to access as much information and experience on projects as possible, participants have been selected from key functions within the project/programme structure at Dell, Figure 3. In gaining access to participants in key roles, the facilitator provided email addresses and contact numbers, set up meetings and interviews to gather the primary data required for this study. The participants are identified as those who can provide particular information about the topic being studied (Jacobs, 2013). Through this process, trust is established and any data accessed is considered strictly confidential and purely used for the benefit of this study.

Enhancing Validity and Reducing Bias

Although validity is one of the limitations of the qualitative research process (Yin, 1994), this study has addressed the issue by gathering data from as many sources as possible and developing a chain of evidence through which to analyse the primary data collected (Yin, 1994). The researcher has endeavoured to exclude, or at least minimise bias, by using a theoretical model in the design of the semi-structured interview questions and by structuring the questions to be informative rather than leading, which could highlight the preconceived biased opinion of the researcher. According to Jacobs (2013), the development of trust with the participants also helps to access more honest data and collect more detailed information to reduce bias and

enhance the validity of the study. According to Yin, (1994), there are three tests for validity and a reliability test:

Construct Validity

This research paper aims to gather primary data from key participants across many functions in Dell in an effort to capture the direct experience the participants have gained on projects/programmes. Interviewing as many cross functional project participants as possible, every effort is made to build up a chain of evidence that is common across the functions, so excluding the subjective label that is often applied to case study or other qualitative research methods (Yin, 1994).

Internal Validity

Internal validity is important during the data analysis phase of the research (Yin, 1994) where primary data will be examined for patterns in Stakeholder Management practices at Dell. These practices will also be examined against the “Stakeholder Circle” relationship model and industry Best Practice standards/methodologies, employing a tactic of pattern matching and explanation building (Schell, 1992).

External Validity

This criterion is the one considered to be a significant weakness of the case study research method (Schell, 1992). However, this research is based on information from projects/programmes of different sizes, values and timeframes, and represents the Stakeholder Management process that operates on projects in Dell in general. The scope of this study does not include multi-case studies but the Stakeholder Management process identified in Dell can be somewhat generalised from project to project although not across wider industry.

Reliability

For the purposes of this research, questions have been drawn from the theoretical model. During analysis, the answers can be tested using the model and Best Practice guidelines to make solid recommendations for the improvement and building of the Stakeholder Relationship Management process. All the interview participants have been asked the same questions and these responses were recorded and documented. According to Yin, (1994), this is an important process to follow to allow repetition

and re-evaluation of cases, and this will be a requirement for carrying out further study in the future.

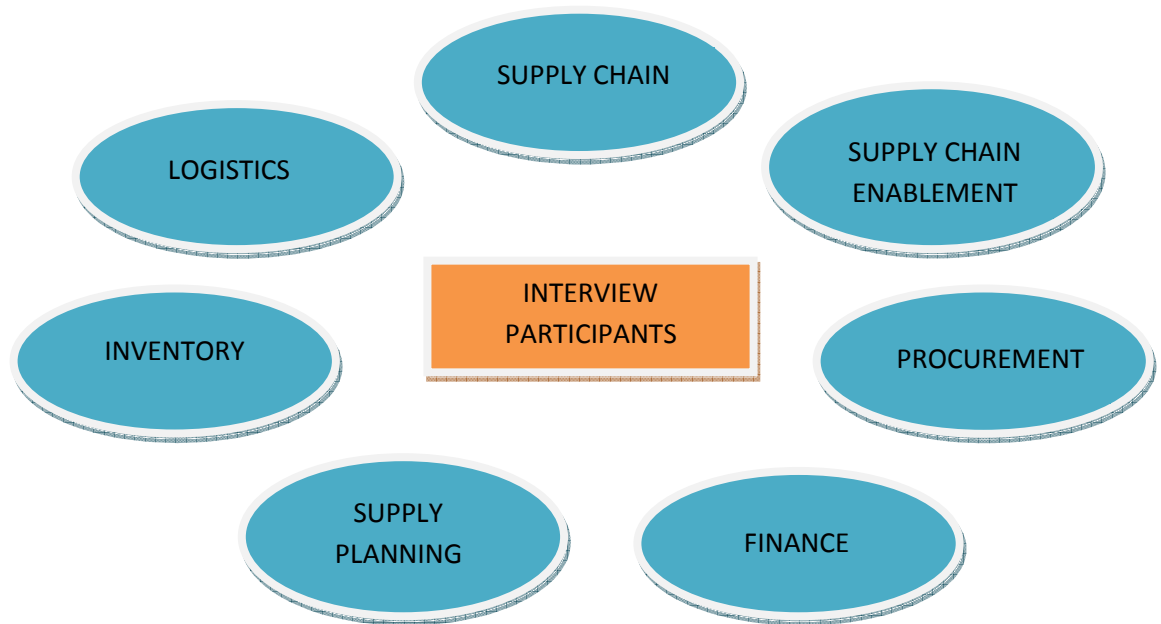


Figure 3 Cross-functional Interview Participants at Dell

Figure 3 illustrates the sources of primary data used in this research. To support the reliability of this study, a representative from a wide selection of functions across Dell has been interviewed, to gather the primary data required for this case study. The cross functional participants represent views from different levels in the organisation and different projects/programmes with participants having a long tenure in the organisation. This information has been gathered through a semi-structured interview process with each interview lasting approximately one hour. In this process, the participants have also been allowed to volunteer information and elaborate on the subject area of the questions posed, in an effort to triangulate and enhance validity by getting as many different views as possible (Lee and Lings, 2008). This is a necessary part of validating and supporting the reliability of such a case study (Schell, 1992)

For the purposes of this research study, the methodology will follow the four stages recommended by Yin (1994):

1. Design the Case Study

The case study is designed to extract information on the Stakeholder Engagement processes from the respondents in the interviews. This is done by asking questions where the answers can be tested through the application of a theoretical model, to identify gaps in Stakeholder Management best practices. The structure of the interview allows the researcher to probe and explore information given by the participants in order to achieve the most in-depth study allowable, given the study type limitations (See chapter 6, section 6.2). According to Yin (1994), the researcher must not only have designed good questions, but also be able to interpret the responses. The use of the theoretical model will enable the information gathered from the respondents and best practice guidelines, to identify the gaps in the Stakeholder Management Process.

2. Conduct the Case Study

Interviews are conducted with key players in the project/programme structure within Dell, offering a multi-perspective analysis, where the researcher gains the opinions of a stakeholder group, rather than of the individual representing the group (Tellis, 1997). The iterative process of data management will begin with identification of the key participants. This process will continue with the examination and classification of the data gathered in order to interpret the findings and present recommendations.

3. Analyse the Case Study evidence

The case study evidence and information gathered through the semi-structured interview process will be tested against the theoretical model, to look for gaps in the Stakeholder Management Processes at Dell. The development of a chain of evidence will endeavour to bring information together from multiple sources, to validate the chosen research method. This evidence will be collected, categorised and analysed before being interpreted, to produce recommendations to improve existing Stakeholder Management Methodologies at Dell.

4. Develop the Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

As part of this process, the information gained from the respondents in Dell is analysed. The process of stakeholder management will be examined through the use of the “Stakeholder Circle” relationship management model and compared to industry best practice in an effort to identify the gaps in the methodologies used. Conclusions will be drawn through this process and recommendations will be made. An implementation plan will also form part of the conclusions of this research, possibly allowing for a more in-depth study to implement the recommendations made here.

4.2 The Research Stance

This section considers the philosophy, epistemology and reasoning of the research (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The philosophy of this study examines the view of how the research is undertaken (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012, Burrell and Morgan, 1979). There are two prevailing views when carrying out research of this kind, positivism and interpretivism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). For the purposes of this case study, an interpretivist view is adopted when conducting this research. The paradigm of positivism is not an appropriate view to take for this study as it considers reality to be constant with an objective epistemology (Girod-Seville and Perret, 2001). The key thinking behind positivism is that the social world exists externally and can be measured using objective methods rather than being inferred subjectively through experiences, intuition and reflection (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Taking this view, the knowledge created by the researcher is objective and contextual and independent of the individual (Girod-Seville and Perret, 2001). However, interpretivism is a more suitable paradigm to use for this research study as the interpretive paradigm is “informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This view is about understanding how people make sense of the world, where reality is made up of interpretations which are constructed through the actor’s interactions, motivations and beliefs (Girod-Seville and Perret, 2001). This view comes from the idea that reality is not objective and exterior but is socially constructed, and it is the people in this reality and their experiences that give it meaning (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This research does not therefore begin with a theory, but tries to inductively develop a pattern of meanings throughout the research

process and then analyse and interpret the data, to produce recommendations for a best practice approach to Stakeholder Management.

The interview process for collecting primary data is a way to focus on what the participants both individually and collectively are thinking, and feeling, and relies on the participant's views of what is being studied. By targeting key participants from different levels across functions in Dell Figure 3, the researcher can understand and analyse the different experiences the participants have in projects/programmes in Dell, instead of taking a positivist approach by looking objectively for external causes to explain their behaviour.

4.3 Framework for Data Collection

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews (Primary Data)

Semi-structured interviews were carried out using a number of participants from key project roles within Dell Limerick. The choice of semi-structured interview questions allowed the participants to answer the questions posed to them and also allowed the interviewer to probe different areas and raise queries (Naoum, 2007, p. 57). Semi-structured interview questions begin by asking indirect questions to explore and elaborate on specific issues with the interviewee (Naoum, 2007, p. 56). The participants were chosen as key personnel on a typical project in Dell Limerick, and also represent future stakeholders, involved in projects going forward. The interviewees include a range of key players from a project/programme team at Dell Limerick and include the following:

1. Project Sponsor
2. Project Manager
3. Core Team Member
4. A selection of Stakeholders across the functions of:
 - Finance
 - Logistics
 - Procurement
 - Supply Planning
 - Inventory Control

On a typical project in Dell, one individual represents a particular function and that individual acts as a stakeholder on the project. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to yield information and knowledge from the respondents own experience on projects/programmes. The individuals are interviewed and asked semi-structured questions, allowing the interviewee to express the opinions of the stakeholder group they represent. The respondents are interviewed at an epistemological level to examine the tacit knowledge they have to contribute to the knowledge creating process as described by the seminal work of Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995). Participants are representative of different levels within the organisation. The SECI model described by Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995), explains how tacit knowledge at the epistemological level can grow through being shared throughout the organisation at an ontological level. This allows the researcher to understand and examine how the Stakeholder Management process works both cross functionally and at different levels of the organisation in Dell.

This research needs to have practical consequences (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008), and so aims to show the commercial advantages of conducting the research with the implementation of the recommendations produced in this study, to build and improve Stakeholder Relationships and contribute to project success at Dell.

4.3.2 Secondary Data

To identify the gaps between Stakeholder Management practices at Dell and Industry Best Practice, archival documents will be examined and critically appraised, to understand Best Practices in the Stakeholder Management process.

The literature review provided in this research, forms the basis for Stakeholder Relationship Management Best Practice in Industry currently. The Stakeholder Management theory and Professional Standards and Methodologies will contribute to benchmarking the Stakeholder Management and Engagement process that is currently in practice at Dell. The theoretical models described here in this literature review, play an important role in comparing practices at Dell with Industry Best Practice. Cited scholarly articles in the literature, Project Management Professional Standards, and Project Management and Stakeholder Management Methodologies

will contribute to the process of identifying gaps in the Stakeholder Management process in use and recommendations will be made. Project Management Standards such as PMI Project Management Body of Knowledge, Prince 2 Office of Government Commerce UK, Association for Project Management Body of Knowledge and ICB International Competence Baseline will also be consulted for Best Practice Guidelines. These standards provide a collection of knowledge areas that give industry guidance and represent best practice.

4.4 Theoretical Framework

A Theoretical model is a necessary and important component in testing a hypothesis and answering research questions. It is an important part of establishing the research boundaries and narrowing down the research to answer the overarching research question or hypothesis (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008). The Stakeholder Relationship Management Model “Stakeholder Circle”, will be used throughout this research, to identify gaps in the current stakeholder management practices in Dell, and to develop a framework for improved stakeholder relationship building on projects/programmes in the future.

4.4.1 The Stakeholder Circle Model

The literature has shown a strong link between project success and stakeholder expectations (Bourne and Walker, 2005). Project success is not only influenced by the perceptions of the stakeholders, but also ability of the Project Manager to manage these expectations and perceptions on a project (Bourne and Walker, 2008). The “Stakeholder Circle” model was developed, to help project managers identify the key stakeholders on a project throughout all phases of the project.

The “Stakeholder Circle Methodology” consists of five sections:

1. Identify Stakeholders
2. Prioritise Stakeholders
3. Visualise Stakeholders
4. Engage Stakeholders
5. Monitor Stakeholders (Bourne, 2005).

The “Stakeholder Circle” is presented as a visualisation tool to assist the process of stakeholder management for developing long-term relationships by targeting the right stakeholders at the right time (Bourne, 2005). The “Stakeholder circle” consists of concentric lines which indicate the distance of stakeholders from the project/project manager (Bourne, 2006). The circle is colour coded with solid colour shades indicating individual stakeholders and colour fading shades indicating a stakeholder group (Bourne, 2005). The size of the wedge for each stakeholder on the circle, indicates the influence that stakeholder has on the project at any given time throughout the project lifecycle (Bourne, 2006). The radial depth from the circumference to the centre, where the project lies, indicates the stakeholder’s level of power to kill the project (Bourne, 2006).

Direction of influence is also an important component of this model. Understanding the directions of influence supports the process of managing project relationships and identifying project stakeholders (Bourne, 2006). Projects are managed using the following components:

- **Forwards** – Anticipating and planning, Project Planning.
- **Backwards** – Developing and Maintaining Control Systems.
- **Upwards** – Developing and Maintaining Senior Management Relationships.
- **Downwards** – Managing the Team.
- **Inwards** – Seeking Feedback about Project Matters from Stakeholders, Reflection and Learning.
- **Sidewards** – Managing the Project Managers Peers/Functional Managers to encourage Collaboration rather than Competition.
- **Outwards** – Managing groups of Stakeholders, Customers, Users, who are external to the project.

Identifying the mutuality that exists between the project and the stakeholders, creates an understanding of the perceived expectations of the different stakeholders involved in the project (French and Granrose,1995). However, Stakeholders expectations may change, bringing with it a change in the direction of influence due to the dynamic nature of the project environment, and using a visualisation tool can facilitate the updating of the stakeholder community (Bourne, 2008).

According to Weaver and Bourne, (2002), the “Stakeholder Circle” model is based on the fact that a project can only exist with the informed consent of its stakeholder community. For this reason, the development of long-term relationships and effective stakeholder engagement strategies are an important aspect of this model. According to Bourne (2006), the “Stakeholder Circle” is visual method of identifying and managing the key stakeholders which are deemed essential, for project success, See Figure 4.

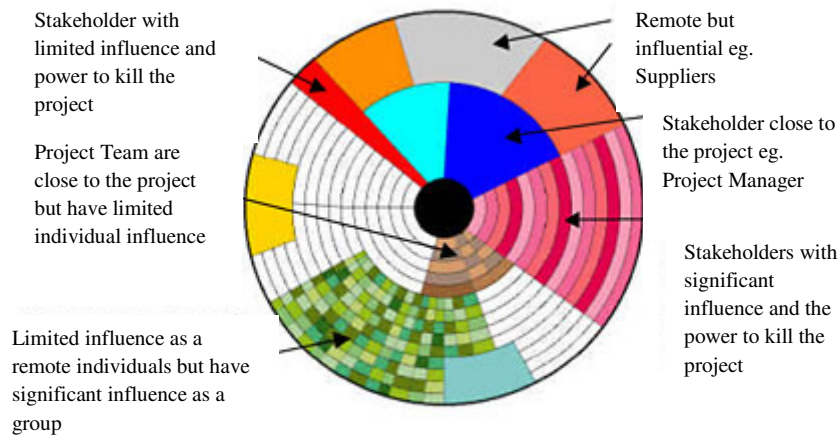


Figure 4 Stakeholder Circle (Bourne, 2005)

Chapter 5 Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The rationale for the semi-structured interviews has been covered previously, detailing how the answers to the questions would be tested against the theoretical model of Stakeholder Relationship Management “The Stakeholder Circle”, in an effort to make recommendations to address the gaps in the Stakeholder Management process at Dell. The model consists of five core parts:

1. Identification of Stakeholders
2. Prioritisation of Stakeholders
3. Visualise Stakeholders
4. Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
5. Maintaining Engagement (Monitor)

This chapter looks at the analysis of the data gathered from the cross functional semi-structured interviews carried out in Dell, and in drawing out the information from the interviews, identify the gaps that exist in the current process.

5.1 Stakeholder Analysis - Identification and Prioritisation

It is widely accepted in the literature and best practice guidelines that the identification of stakeholders is a key part of the stakeholder analysis process. According to the interview participants, this is a formal process that is carried out at the beginning of all projects in Dell. All of the participants are in agreement that this is a formal process and in general, it works well as an identification process. However, some of the participants have agreed that this process allows for the identification of too many stakeholders to get involved at the start of the project.

According to Bourne (2005), identification is the first part of the stakeholder management process. The Stakeholder Circle model describes the identification of stakeholders, where both individuals and groups are assessed to see how they are impacted by the project or how they can impact the project (Bourne, 2005). The output of this exercise will be a raw stakeholder list which will be further defined by examining the importance of each stakeholder (Bourne, 2005). All participants agree that Dell have a formal process in place for the identification of this initial

stakeholder list, but some participants have expressed concern about the engagement of all the stakeholders on this list at such an early stage in the project. Most of the participants agree that a formal process for categorising and prioritising stakeholders would be of benefit to projects in Dell.

According to the model (Bourne, 2005), stakeholders are prioritised with the consideration of three factors. They are: power, proximity and urgency. Stakeholders are rated according to their power on the project where a stakeholder of high power would have *the power to instruct change* and where a stakeholder with a low level of power *cannot instruct much change*. They are then rated according to their proximity to the project where high proximity is *Working on the project most of the time* and low proximity is *does not have direct involvement with the project processes*. Finally, urgency is rated at a high level where *immediate action is warranted regardless of other work commitments*, and at a low level of *little need for action outside communication*. This categorisation and prioritisation of stakeholders is further backed up by the best practice guidelines of the OGCs managing successful programmes, where stakeholder profiles are examined as part of a six step stakeholder engagement process. This process helps to gain an understanding of the interest, influence, importance, power and attitude of stakeholders to the project (OGC Prince 2, 2009). Through the interview process and comparison to best practice guidelines, the categorisation and prioritisation of stakeholders has been identified as a gap in the stakeholder management process at Dell. The initial part of the stakeholder analysis process at Dell has been described by the interview participants as *formal, good and works well*. However, there is no evidence of any categorisation or prioritisation of stakeholders as part of a formal process after the identification process. Prioritisation of stakeholders is a tacit process and is dependent on the experience and expert judgement of the project managers working on the project. According to the Stakeholder Circle model, this allows for bias in the categorising of stakeholders, and the lack of input in this process by the wider project team means time may be wasted engaging with stakeholders who are perceived by the project manager to have a higher influence and power level on the project. Participants working on a similar level agree that including categorisation and prioritisation of stakeholders in their current stakeholder management process, would be of benefit on projects in Dell. At a higher level, categorisation and

prioritisation also occurs in an informal manner and self levels into some order of influential stakeholders. Participants at a higher level agree that a more formal process would help to identify the level of power and influence of their stakeholders from the beginning of the project. The introduction of categorising and prioritising stakeholders according to their level of interest, power and influence is supported by PMI PMBOK, 2013. The systematic technique of gathering and analysing quantitative and qualitative information highlights how stakeholder's interests, expectations, influence and power should be taken into consideration, and how stakeholder relationships need to be influenced differently at different stages of a project (PMI PMBOK, 2013). The guidelines describe the use of tools such as Power/Interest grids, Power/Influence Grids, Influence/Impact grid and a salience model that classes the stakeholders according to their power (PMI PMBOK, 2013).

Figure 5 illustrates the structure and identification of a stakeholder group on a typical cross functional project at Dell.

5.1.1 Project Stakeholder Team Structure

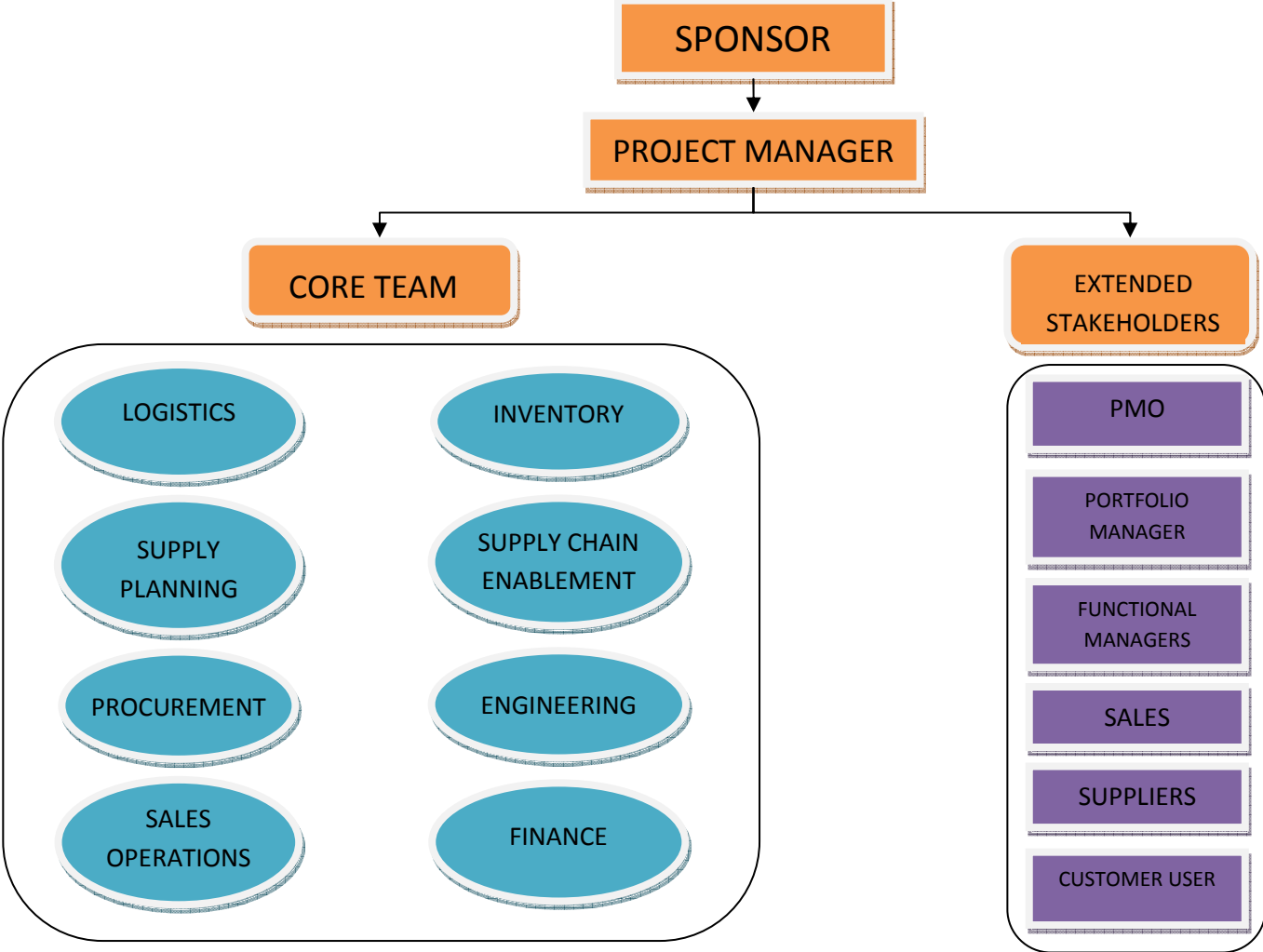


Figure 5 Temporary Project Structure on a typical project in Dell

5.2 Developing a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

5.2.1 Understanding “Mutuality”

Understanding the mutual needs of the stakeholders is an important component of the theoretical model used for this research. The author describes the importance of understanding what the stakeholders need from the project, and also what the project needs from the stakeholder (Bourne, 2005). This was identified in the participant interviews at Dell as an area for improvement. Some participants highlighted the fact that although requirements from each stakeholder must be met, there may also be other expectations specific to the function or group involved that are not met or addressed later in lessons learned. The Stakeholder Circle Methodology uses workshops to define the expectations of stakeholders, and this workshop can facilitate defining both the requirements of the stakeholder along with any expectations specific to the individual representative or function. While the participants are in agreement that there is a formal approach to determining the requirements of each stakeholder, there is no process for the project manager to set the expectations of the project with each stakeholder. Participants highlighted the need for one to one meetings with each stakeholder so that they know up front what their role is and what is expected from them allowing them some autonomy to drive the project. This is supported in the literature by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), who cite autonomy in project teams as an enabling condition required for knowledge creation. The authors state that autonomous teams like this create new knowledge for the benefit of the organisation (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The Stakeholder Circle methodology allows stakeholder engagement at the appropriate level and this promotes both individuals and groups to contribute knowledge to support the project team (Bourne, 2006). This is tacit knowledge that is transferred from the knowledge owner, allowing the organisation to benefit from the teams improved project relationship management (Bourne, 2006).

5.3 Stakeholder Visualisation and Project Success

The theoretical model of Stakeholder Relationship Management used in this research, puts forward the idea of a visual tool to help highlight the projects key

stakeholders and to understand the level of influence a stakeholder possesses. The Stakeholder circle is one such tool that gives a graphical view of key stakeholders and their influence on the project and how they can impact on project success (Bourne, 2005). The categorisation process in this methodology, also plays a large role in developing the engagement strategy and communication plan for each stakeholder to ensure their requirements and expectations are met (Bourne, 2005). This visualisation tool allows stakeholders to be “easily identified at the right time in the project lifecycle and also provide the right level of engagement, communication and information for each key stakeholder” (Bourne, 2005). The level and timing of engagement on projects at Dell has been highlighted as an area for improvement according to the participants in this study. Some of the participants believe that the stakeholders are not engaged at the correct time in the project lifecycle and that the involvement of certain functions comes too late as the stakeholders may not have been identified in time. Although not unanimous, the majority of participants believed stakeholders were not involved at the right time, nor that the correct level of engagement was determined. This point was backed up by other participants who believed that the level and format of engagement was incorrect on some projects. Although some of the participants believed the engagement process to be working well with all stakeholders engaged from the beginning, gaps were highlighted in format and level of the engagement with stakeholders. All stakeholders are involved in calls, emails and weekly meetings. However, other participants have highlighted the issue of too much information being dispersed throughout the project lifecycle without continuous analysis of the stakeholders to assess their level of interest and influence at different stages of the project. The model supports the use of a visual tool to continuously analyse the stakeholders and assess their priority and influence which will determine the format and level of engagement required (Bourne, 2005). The idea of using visual tools is also supported by seminal authors in the field of stakeholder management, who have identified stakeholder mapping (Mendelow (1991), stakeholder salience (Mitchell et al., 1997) and stakeholder classification and monitoring (Turner, 2002) as key parts of stakeholder analysis which can impact on project success. This is backed up by participants who have expressed the need for a formal mode of categorising and prioritising stakeholders with continued analysis throughout projects, to identify the levels of influence and power that exist at different stages in the project. The participants believe that introducing this process

to the existing stakeholder methodology at Dell, would be of some benefit and would make the stakeholder engagement and communication process more efficient on projects. This process is supported by best practice guidelines such as PMI PMBOK (2013), OGC Prince 2 (2009) and Turner's Handbook of Project-based Management (2002).

5.4 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy – Maintaining Stakeholder Communities

According to the Stakeholder Management model used in this research, a stakeholder engagement strategy should be defined as part of the stakeholder management process, which includes all stakeholders with particular attention to the prioritised stakeholders (Bourne, 2005). Using the information gained from the previous stage of this methodology “identification and prioritisation of stakeholders”, a strategy is developed to communicate with the stakeholders at different levels and different times throughout the project lifecycle. One very important part of this process is to ensure the content of the message is in keeping with what has been defined as “what the stakeholder requires from the project” (Bourne, 2005). This point has been discussed to some extent in an earlier section of this analysis. However, further to this, the participants have highlighted the fact that although there may be many stakeholders identified and on board at the beginning of the project, without the process of categorising and prioritising stakeholders, engagement and communication of information is not effective. Participants highlighted that there may be a loss of interest from some stakeholders on the project as it moves through its lifecycle. There are too many stakeholders involved at every stage of the project and too much communication of information when it is not required. According to the model, (Bourne, 2005), continuous analysis through prioritisation and categorisation allows stakeholders to move from positions of high power, influence and interest to areas of lower power, influence and interest throughout the project lifecycle and this determines the level and format of engagement required at different times in the project. Some of the participants believe that this can make the process more efficient and according to the author, this process contributes to project success (Bourne, 2005). Participants described the engagement process of weekly meetings with the core team and portrayed a general feeling of good stakeholder engagement,

with a two tier system of formal and informal engagement described, including both team and one to one meetings. However, because of the lack of a singular methodology for prioritising and categorising stakeholders, participants said that one to one meetings did not happen with prioritised stakeholders on all projects and highlighted the fact that more one on one meetings are required with key stakeholders. In addition to the project status update which is distributed to all stakeholders, there is a need for a stakeholder engagement update to determine interested parties and determine which stakeholders may have moved position with regard to their views, opinions and roles. This process of continuous analysis is supported in the model and also best practice guidelines from PMI PMBOK (2013), APMBOK (2006), OGC Prince 2 (2009). At a higher level, the expectations of stakeholders are defined as requirements in the Business Requirements Document (BRD). Stakeholders are updated on a weekly basis and stakeholders that need to be engaged are flagged on a stakeholder register. Participants stated that once the requirements of the stakeholders are met, the project is considered a success from a stakeholder point of view. At the higher level considering the business case and within one particular function, stakeholder management is found to be a formal and repeatable process. This process is in line with a stage four Stakeholder Management Maturity level identified by Bourne (2005), However, this maturity was not seen across different levels of the organisation.

Many participants discussed the process by which project teams are gathered together for a project. Because of the temporary nature of projects, different subject matter experts are drawn in for each new project. However, although these are domain experts, they often have no knowledge of the project management discipline, and this leads to time wasting whilst getting the team members up to speed on the fundamentals of project management and the detail on how the project is going to be delivered. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) cite “requisite variety” as an enabling condition for knowledge creation within teams. Requisite variety means that the organisation or project team has the diversity to match the complexity and variety of its environment in order to be able to compete in that environment (Ashby, 1956). This can happen through the diverse skills and interests of team members sharing their knowledge. According to the stakeholder relationship management model, the element of managing “backwards” through the use of a lessons learned process, can

contribute to improving stakeholder knowledge and relationships for future projects (Bourne, 2005).

5.5 Organisational Readiness and Maturity – SRMM and PMM

The PMI OPM 3 standard of Organisational Project Maturity, has described organisation project management as “the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to organisational and project activities, to achieve the aims of the organisations through projects” (PMI OPM3, 2008). The standard goes on to define organisation project management maturity as the degree to which an organisation practices the type of project management described above (PMI OPM3, 2008). Bourne (2005), describes how maturity models are designed to improve the project management maturity levels of an organisation, by identifying a starting point for improvement (Bourne, 2008). The Stakeholder Relationship Management model proposed by Bourne (2008) highlights the idea of “organisational readiness”, where the organisation should be able to identify its current level of SRMM and implement improvements to its stakeholder relationship management processes and reach a higher level of maturity. When asked about the level of SRMM, participants in Dell were divided on their opinion of stakeholder relationship management maturity level of the organisation. The participant’s opinions ranged between levels one and four, with level four being reported from participants at a higher level in the organisation. When asked about the level of PMM, some participants were unsure of the level of project management maturity, but the general opinions lay between levels two and four. It was notable however, that some participants agreed that the level of Project Management Maturity was higher across certain functions, and this was also highlighted at the higher level of the organisation.

Standards that describe best practice such as the PMI OPM3, OCG P3M3, and models described in the literature such as SRMM (Bourne, 2005) help organisations to define their current level and implement the processes and practices needed to improve their levels of maturity. From the participant responses in Dell, it is clear that the maturity level differs across the organisation, where some functions show a higher level of maturity with regard to the processes and practices they follow. The standards and best practice guidelines described above support a self-assessment process to improve levels of PPM and SRMM, where Dell can bring all of the

functions to the same level with the implementation of repeatable processes and a singular methodology. Research on the value of project management by the PMI has supported the development of project management maturity, where it was found that organisations with more mature project management practices have better project performance (Ibbs and Reginato, 2002).

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

This research thesis has examined the Stakeholder Management process in cross-functional project teams at Dell. The team members are highly accomplished in their functional areas and bring a certain level of expertise to the project team. However, these teams are more difficult to manage as the team members are not aligned at any one functional level, and each team member has their own views, priorities and issues within the realm of the project. Cross-functional teams bring individuals together from right across the organisation to work together in the pursuance of a common goal on any given project. This is not an easy task as many different opinions require a special skill set in order to manage both the project and the relationships with the people on the project. Management is not the only skill needed to manage cross-functional projects like those in Dell, but also relationship building. The Project Manager needs to be able to gain the commitment of each function to build a strong team who will work toward achieving the goals set out for the project, and not just achieve for their own function. This also requires gaining commitment and support from the management of each function, to make achieving the goals and objectives set out for the project, a priority.

Analysis of the primary data gathered during semi-structured interviews has highlighted gaps in the Stakeholder Management Processes at Dell which have been discussed in detail above.

6.1 Limitations/Continuation of this Research

As part of this research, insights have been gained into Stakeholder Management practices through a case study approach, using semi-structured interviews with key project personnel across different functions on typical projects/programmes in Dell.

According to Yin (1994), there are six primary sources of evidence for case study research, although all of these sources of evidence are not always required to carry out an in-depth case study. These sources of evidence include:

1. Documentation
2. Archival Records
3. Interviews
4. Direct Observations

5. Participant Observation
6. Physical Artefacts

Although no one source has a distinct advantage over the other, they are strong sources of evidence when used together (Tellis, 1997). This research has been restricted to interviews and limited viewing of documentation. Although the methodology has been validated (see Chapter 4 section 4.1), direct observation would be recommended as a source of evidence gathering in the future, for a more in-depth analysis of Stakeholder Management Practices at Dell. This would be a unique mode of accessing documentation and archival records for a deeper analysis of best practices at Dell (Tellis, 1997). Accordingly, further follow-up research is proposed, to develop and implement the recommendations made as part of this study.

6.2 Conclusion

The analysis and discussion has identified a diverse set of issues, gaps and positive aspects. The feasibility of implementable recommendations requires the scope of the conclusions to be focussed. Therefore, the distilled conclusions are as follows:

- **Guidelines**

The literature has shown many best practice guidelines in the area of Stakeholder Management. These guidelines must be targeted in order to achieve the best advantage on projects in Dell.
- **Analysis follows Identification**

It is widely accepted in the literature that stakeholder identification is the first step in the Stakeholder analysis process. Although this is a formal process on projects in Dell, the analysis is not continued as part of any formal process in order to prioritise and categorise stakeholders. Best practice guidelines have highlighted the need for analysis after identification leading to a more effective engagement and communication strategy.
- **Continuous Analysis and Assessment**

Continuous analysis of the stakeholders has been shown in the literature to be an important part of the stakeholder engagement process. On projects in Dell stakeholders are identified and updated with suitable timely meetings as part of a formal process. However, the research showed that this is not effective for all stakeholders and industry best practice shows that further and continuous assessment of stakeholders with regard to interest, influence and power, would be of benefit in order to engage stakeholders more effectively.

- **Lessons Learned**

The lessons learned process is a formal part of the close out phase on projects in Dell. The research found that this process could be more effective if all the key stakeholders were engaged in the lessons learned process which is an important component in the theoretical model used in this study. Managing the “backwards” direction of influence, involves looking back at the project to gain implicit and explicit knowledge from the stakeholders in order to build appropriate control systems for learning on projects in the future. The research shows that co-operation on lessons learned appears to be contractual in nature, and the literature has shown how understanding and building project relationships increases discretionary effort, which would contribute to engagement in the lessons learned process to make it more effective.

- **Maturity Assessment of the Organisation**

It is widely acknowledged that best practice guidelines and standards in industry describe the project management maturity of an organisation as the degree to which it follows the best practice processes of project management. Maturity models are designed to define a level of maturity for an organisation so they can improve their processes and achieve a higher level of maturity. The research has found that there is currently little knowledge of a defined level of project management maturity or stakeholder relationship management maturity in the organisation. Cross functionally, the level of maturity was perceived to be different. However, it was notable, that a higher level of maturity was perceived in one particular function. This level was not consistent within the other functions involved in this research but

best practice highlighted in this research would suggest self assessment to define levels of maturity and implementation of improvement efforts.

Further to this conclusion, the following recommendations have been made.

6.3 Recommendations

1. The formal Stakeholder Analysis Process at Dell should be extended beyond identification of stakeholders, to incorporate categorising and prioritising of key stakeholders as part of the overall analysis process.

Stakeholder mapping and visualisation tools are recommended in line with best practice guidelines to define an approach strategy. See Figure 6 Example of a Stakeholder Power/Interest Grid

- Power v Interest Grid – Level of Authority v their concern for the project outcome.
- Power v Impact Grid – Level of Authority v the ability to effect changes on the project.
- Power v Influence – Level of Authority v the active involvement on the project.
- Salience models - Classifying stakeholders according to their Power, Urgency and Legitimacy.
- Visual tools such as the “Stakeholder Circle” model. See Figure 4 Stakeholder Circle (Bourne, 2005)

2. The process of analysing stakeholders should be standardised and implemented as a singular methodology across all functions in an effort to build long term relationships and improve the chances of project success.

The PMI OPM3 Self assessment in Project Management Maturity should be carried out as a starting point for an improvement programme to develop more mature project management practices. Dell should continue to improve processes to reach higher levels of Project Management Maturity. Also, Stakeholder Management Maturity self assessment should be carried out to

achieve higher levels of Stakeholder Management Maturity (SRMM, Bourne, 2006).

3. The project teams in Dell must build a relationship as a cross-functional team at the beginning of every project. The introduction of a facilitated workshop is recommended pre-kick off meeting, where the key stakeholders can understand each other's perceptions and expectations.

Building relationships is key to aligning the functions in the pursuance of the project goals and objectives. This process will help the team to get to know each other on a personal level before working together.

Although projects at Dell may include many of the same stakeholders, each project is unique and therefore team development should be addressed on every new project.

Teams need to achieve all the stages set out in the development model see Figure 7 Tuckman's Team Development Model stage One and Two and Figure 8 Tuckman's Model of Teeam Development Stage Three and Four in an effort to build team relationships, guide the team through tough performance stages, enable the team to grow, and deliver successful projects.

4. Stakeholder analysis needs to be a continuous process throughout the project lifecycle to ensure the engagement and communication with the stakeholder community is kept up to date.

Stakeholder mapping and visual tools (as discussed above) allow for a graphical view of the stakeholder community, highlighting where each stakeholder lies with regard to their influence, power and willingness to engage.

Updating the stakeholder community (Updating the list of Stakeholders) on a continuous basis throughout the project lifecycle, will help the Project Manager to plan stakeholder engagement and choose the right format of engagement with each stakeholder at every stage of the project, as their positions change throughout the project.

5. Put a formal structure in place to control and manage conflict on projects. The process should be implemented as a singular methodology across all functions in Dell.

Conflict causes delays on projects so identify the reasons for conflict and control it. The conflict management process see Figure 9 Conflict Management Process must be part of the formal governance structure in order to implement a singular methodology across all functions on projects in Dell.

6. Team members should be trained in all aspects of Conflict Management including the Conflict Management Process.

On-site training programmes in conjunction with external educational specialists and best practice guidelines should be provided for project team members to understand conflict issues, and follow a process to build and improve relationships among stakeholders. See Figure 9 in Appendix A for Conflict Management Process.

7. All key stakeholders must contribute to “Lessons Learned” as part a structured formal process that requires all key stakeholders to contribute and give feedback at the end of a project.

The lessons learned process needs to add value by integrating the lessons learned into future projects. All key stakeholders must participate in the lessons learned process as part of the formal close out stage of a project. Codifying the lessons learned in a knowledge repository or database is an important part of the process, but it only adds value if it is used.

Lessons learned should be brought forward to the beginning of new projects where a stakeholder meeting will allow a human exchange of lessons learned on the previous project, with an opportunity to clarify issues that may have caused problems previously. The lessons are also codified in a knowledge base as a reference for new project managers and team members.

8. A “People Management” element should be integrated into the formal Stage Gate Review process.

This process will assess if the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders have been met throughout the project as well as the requirements set out at the start of the project. Integrating people management reviews and more one to one meetings into the formal stage gate process will contribute to building long term relationships for projects in the future.

9. The Stakeholder Management process should be analysed after each project as a formal part of the close out stage.

All key stakeholders need to be involved in this process to draw out the true lessons learned on the project. This process has to be such that the lessons identified, can be integrated into the next project, and this is the value added. The process must be formal and structured in order to implement this as a singular methodology across all functions in Dell.

10. There should be more structure around the Training Protocol for project team members.

There should be continued investment in the Project Management Training for project team members. In particular, SMEs should be trained in the fundamentals of the discipline of Project Management, to improve efficiency and save time on projects.

Special Recommendation:

These recommendations are presented from an In-company research project with Dell limerick, in part fulfilment of a taught postgraduate Masters Programme in Project Management.

Best practice would recommend that research such as this is carried out as an embedded research program in which the researcher is involved in and observing the day to day running of projects in Dell so the student can have access more information, data and practical advice, to validate and support any recommendations

made at the end of the research. This will also allow the research student to understand how best to implement the recommendations proposed. This is something Dell should strongly consider as a follow up activity to this research.

Appendix A - Implementation Plan

It is proposed that the recommendations highlighted in this research thesis will be implemented by selecting two pilot groups to implement the proposals, and 2 similar projects chosen as a control group. The implementation plan will be time bound so the duration of the implementation will depend on project length or a one year duration, whichever is deemed to be most suitable. The results of each group will be prepared having chosen suitable success factors to measure upon. These success factors may include but are not limited to:

- Direct observation by researcher in both groups.
- A survey of participants in both groups
- Project data eg. Time over run, Cost over- run, Schedule Performance Index variation, Cost Performance Index Variation etc.

The projects will be reviewed after the agreed timeframe and a decision will be made on whether to roll out or not. However, the implementation plan must balance the elements of control and learning also. The implementation plan is presented as an organic document which should be updated and recalibrated, as more improvements become clear and changes need to be made. The document must be refined and discontinued if it does not add value to the process. The implementation plan will include an exit strategy with the ability to kill the requirement if its operation does not add value to the existing Stakeholder Management Process in Dell.

The successful implementation of the recommendations needs to be analysed based on the criteria of suitability, feasibility and acceptability (Asch and Bowman, 1989), according to standard practice in strategic management. Is the plan suitable: Does it solve the problem? Is the plan feasible: Could it be implemented? And finally, is the plan acceptable: Would people in the organisation accept it? If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the strategy will fail (Asch and Bowman, 1989).

The next section discusses the implementation of the recommendations using these criteria to assure implementation success.

- 1. The formal Stakeholder Analysis Process at Dell should be extended beyond identification of stakeholders, to incorporate categorising and**

prioritising of key stakeholders as part of the overall analysis process.

Extending the analysis process past the identification of stakeholders to include classifying and prioritising, can only be achieved in a formal manner with the use of stakeholder mapping techniques. See Figure 6 Example of a Stakeholder Power/Interest Grid (PMI PMBOK, 2012) and Figure 4 Stakeholder Circle (Bourne, 2005). This process is already done in an informal manner using experience and expert judgment of stakeholders but in order to standardise the process, it has to form a part of the formal stakeholder analysis process. The risk of increasing the documentation process within a project is noted, but the benefits of this process will outweigh the effort expended in drawing up such documentation. The stakeholder grids see Figure 6 Example of a Stakeholder Power/Interest Grid and other graphical views of the stakeholder community, feed into the communication and engagement plan. This process allows the stakeholders to have some input as to where they see themselves with a view to their expectations, perceptions and requirements. This process also helps the stakeholders to have their expectations and perceptions accurately presented to senior management.

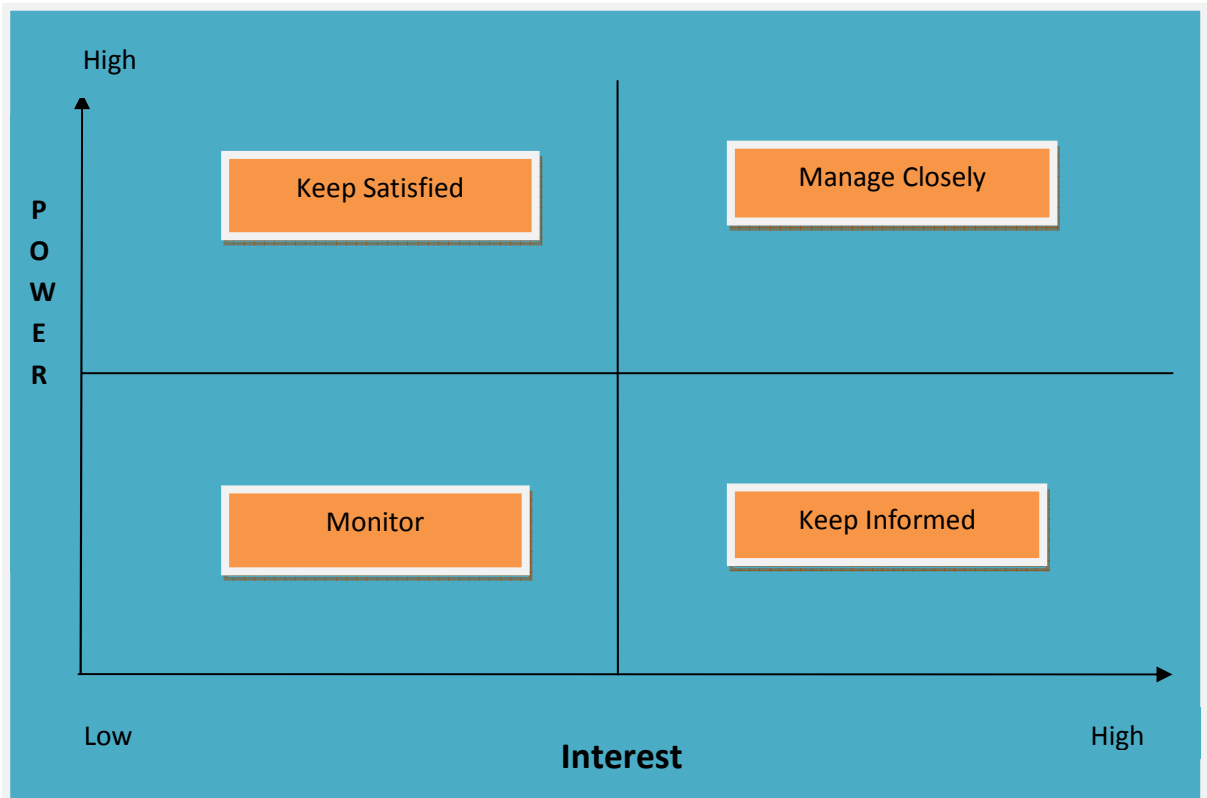


Figure 6 Example of a Stakeholder Power/Interest Grid

- 2. The process of analysing stakeholders should be standardised and implemented as a singular methodology across all functions in an effort to build long term relationships and improve the chances of project success.**

The use of a self-assessment tool such as the PMI OPM3 helps the organisation to improve their Project Management Maturity level at its own pace. This means the organisation decides which level they want to reach and when they want to reach it, implementing processes to improve the maturity level according to the particular organisation.

A PMI study has revealed that companies with more mature practices deliver projects on time and on budget and less mature companies miss their schedule targets by 40% and their cost targets by 20% (Ibbs and Reginato, 2002).

The study also found that Project Management Maturity is strongly correlated with more predictable Cost and Schedule performance. More mature companies have an SPI variation of 0.08 and a CPI variation of 0.11. This is in contrast with less mature companies who have corresponding values of 0.16 for both SPI and CPI. On a \$10m project, this translates to about \$1.6m cost variation (Ibbs and Reginato, 2002).

The study goes on to show how high levels of project management maturity can have an effect on direct costs, putting their costs in the 6-7 percent range, in comparison to low maturity companies who have an average of 11 percent (Ibbs and Reginato, 2002). The authors further explain how organisations with a low level of project management maturity can have an adverse affect on project success because of increased direct costs and missed market opportunities (Ibbs and Reginato, 2002).

Dell must understand their current maturity level in order to achieve the benefits of the high level maturity organisations shown above.

- 3. The project teams in Dell must build a relationship as a cross-functional team at the beginning of every project. The introduction of a facilitated workshop is recommended pre-kick off meeting,**

where the key stakeholders can understand each other's perceptions and expectations.

This process requires buy-in from stakeholder groups, their management and senior management. This recommendation requires a significant change to the stakeholder management process in Dell therefore the following supporting evidence shows why such a change is required.

The introduction of a facilitated workshop pre kick-off meeting, would allow the first two stages of Team Development to be achieved according to Tuckman's model of Team Development:

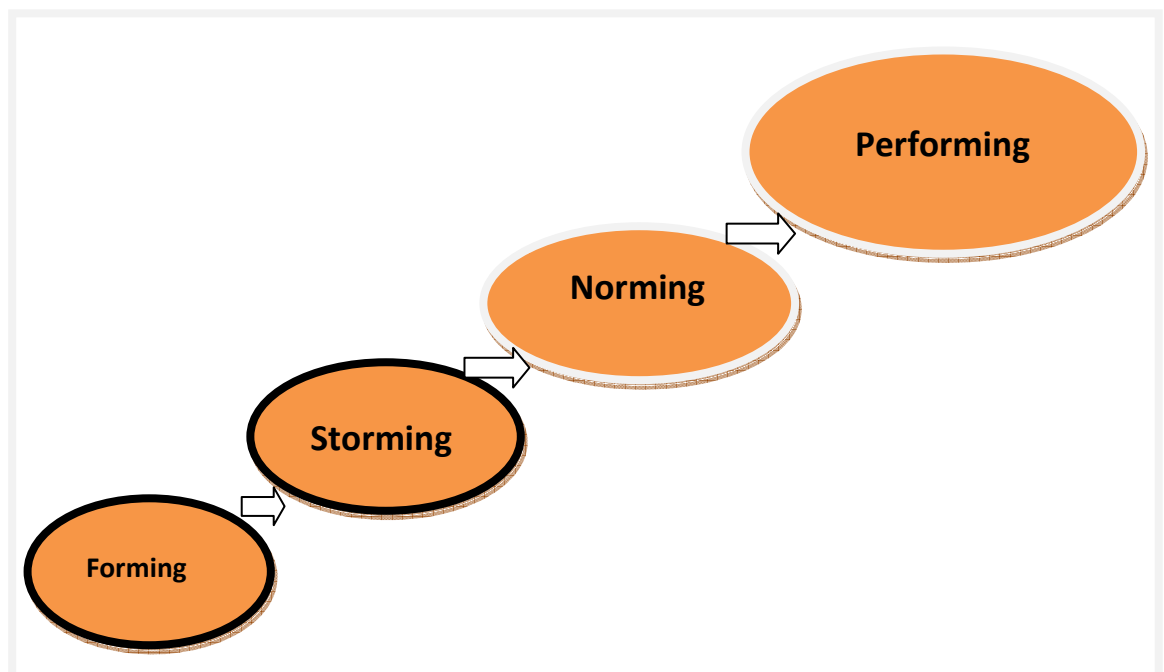


Figure 7 Tuckman's Team Development Model stage One and Two

Forming –

- Define Objectives of the project.
- Understand personal expectations and level of interest throughout the project.
- Assess stakeholder's resources and commitment to the project.
- The setting up of a governance structure to identify stakeholders and define their roles and responsibilities.

Storming –

- All stakeholders are involved in discussions to identify key stakeholders.
- Prioritise Stakeholders according to their influence and power. Categorise into different tiers or levels of stakeholders, according to their interest and influence at different stages in the project lifecycle. This process will help to develop an effective stakeholder engagement strategy.
- Define the requirements of each stakeholder and assess the level of resources needed for the project.
- The workshop will facilitate the communication of the stakeholder's expectations and requirements but also what is expected from each stakeholder on the project, so the following stages of team development can be achieved:

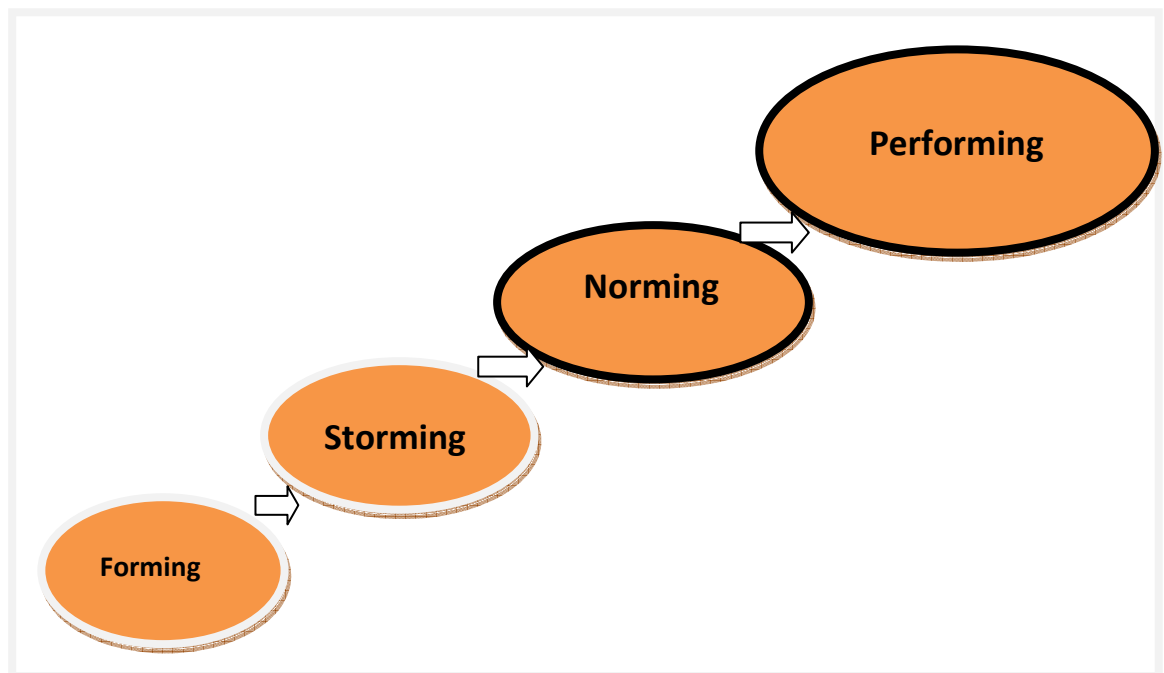


Figure 8 Tuckman's Model of Teeam Development Stage Three and Four

Norming –

- PM facilitates and directs the team. Stakeholders from all functions need to be strong in commitment.
- Open forums, group meetings and one to one meetings create openness where stakeholders can share information, give feedback and build relationships.

Performing –

- Stakeholders from all functions are strategically aware of the goals of the project. They all work together and are aligned as one unit supporting the project.

After the workshop, the kick-off meeting will be more structured with stakeholders already identified, classified and prioritised, in order to ensure the correct level and format of engagement in managing stakeholder's expectations.

4. Stakeholder analysis needs to be a continuous process throughout the project lifecycle to ensure the engagement and communication with the stakeholder community is kept up to date.

The current stakeholder analysis process in Dell is formal with regard to its identification process. Using stakeholder mapping techniques to plot the positions of stakeholders is an important component in the stakeholder communication and engagement plan. The stakeholder mapping can happen as part of the workshop at the beginning of the project before the kick-off meeting and this will give stakeholders a chance to have some input as to where they see themselves given their perceptions and expectations. This process can be continued later in the project lifecycle with one to one meetings to update the stakeholder community and build and improve relationships.

5. Put a formal structure in place to control and manage conflict on projects. The process should be implemented as a singular methodology across all functions in Dell.

The Conflict Management process recommended here has been introduced as a structure to control conflict on projects and ensure that each function deals with conflict on projects in the same way. In an effort to reduce the introduction of new processes and increased documentation, any existing conflict management process may be adapted or improved using elements from the process described below.

The proposed process for conflict management:

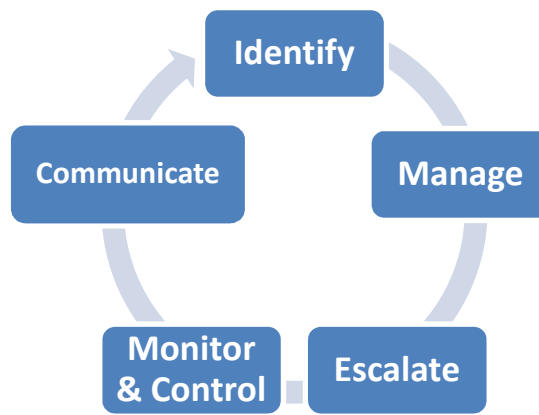


Figure 9 Conflict Management Process

Identify

At the beginning of each project, identify the reasons for conflict ie. Stakeholders with interdependent tasks, confusion over goals and roles, implementing change, search for alternatives etc. Consult lessons learned on previous projects and meet with stakeholders who have worked on similar projects to identify possible reasons for conflict and avoid delays to the project.

Manage

Conflict occurs naturally in a team and can be positive as well as negative in the search for alternatives. One to one meetings can encourage openness which helps to resolve conflict, resulting in better working relationships (PMI, PMBOK, 2013)

Escalate

The relative importance, intensity and time pressure of the conflict will decide at what level the conflict needs to be escalated to senior management for resolution. This part of the process will address delays due to conflict.

Monitor and Control

Utilise project management principles, tools and techniques to resolve conflict. Build relationships with the team members to understand the reasons for the conflict. This process will help the project manager to control it.

Communicate

At the beginning of each project, stakeholders from previous similar projects should be consulted for a lessons learned on project conflict issues, in an effort to avoid running into the same difficulties again.

6. Team members should be trained in all aspects of Conflict Management including the Conflict Management Process.

On-site training programmes in conjunction with external educational specialists and best practice guidelines can provide the conflict management training required for project team members. Opportunities may also be available for staff to learn on projects with practical experience and application of the learnings. See Figure 9 in Appendix A for Conflict Management Process. This proposal is acceptable as Dell already run on-site training programmes for staff and are affiliated with the Centre for Project Management at the University of Limerick.

7. All key stakeholders must contribute to “Lessons Learned” as part a structured formal process that requires all key stakeholders to contribute and give feedback at the end of a project.

The Lessons Learned process is a key element of the project close out phase. This process requires a tighter structure where attendance of all key stakeholders is a compulsory part of project closeout. Time constraints are an issue for stakeholders especially once the project is completed and if there is no formal requirement for each stakeholder to return to the lessons learned process then they will move on to the next project with limited or without any participation at all.

Once key stakeholders are made aware of this compulsory requirement at the beginning of a project, the time for this meeting can be scheduled at the start. Participation from all key stakeholders adds value to the process and in time stakeholders will come to see the benefits and value of this process and how it can contribute to projects in the future.

8. A “People Management” element should be integrated into the formal Stage Gate Review process.

Integrating people management reviews into the formal stage gate process will contribute to building long term relationships for projects in the future. Stakeholders

are currently reviewed to understand if their requirements have been met so this process could be extended to include people management reviews, in an effort to understand the wider expectations and perceptions of stakeholders at a relationship building level. Time constraints are an issue for project team members, so include this review in the review for requirements. This process can be rolled out as a singular methodology across functions, only if it is included as a formal requirement at project stage gates.

9. The Stakeholder Management process should be analysed after each project as a formal part of the close out stage.

Stakeholders are currently reviewed to ensure that all of their requirements have been met on the project. Without introducing a new process and bringing more documentation to the close out phase, the stakeholder management process could be analysed at this meeting with the stakeholders. The information from this analysis could feed into the lessons learned process to improve the stakeholder management plan for future projects.

10. There should be more structure around the Training Protocol for project team members.

Dell supports an ethos of continual learning with continued investment in Project Management training both on-site and externally. As this is the case, SMEs selected from across the functions of the organisation should be trained in the area of Project Management. This would complement their contribution on projects with an understanding of the fundamentals of project management and reducing the need for project managers to bring the SMEs up to speed with the fundamentals of the day to day running of the project.

Recommendations	Project Lifecycle				
	Initiation	Planning	Execution	Monitoring & Controlling	Close Out
Team Development Work Shop	Yes				
Continuous Analysis of Stakeholders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conflict Management Process	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
People Management Reviews	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Analysis of the Stakeholder Management Process					Yes
Participation in Lessons Learned	Yes				Yes
Continued Project Management Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 10 Timeline of recommendations in the Project Lifecycle

Appendix B - Interviews

Interview 1

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

At the very beginning all projects go through the process of AGOP where a stakeholder brings their idea or proposal to this forum which would have representatives from different work groups. This process is pre-kick off and provides a description of projects on the road map in the future. This process can be difficult on a global scale and does not work as well across regions and this is down to lack of communication.

Once the project is given the go ahead by the steering committee, stakeholders are invited to a kick off meeting and the stakeholder management process is formal at this stage. The PM is identified and the core team is identified and for a typical project, the stakeholders meet on a weekly basis and this is adequate.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

Communication between stakeholders is the number one priority and although personal attributes are also important, this aspect would not have a serious impact on the project. Trust has not been an issue in sharing information. The lines of communication from global core teams must be strong so the stakeholders from each global function can communicate the information successfully to eg. Europe (from China). This can be due to a high turnover of PMs, where the lines of communication can break down. The more experienced the PM the more successful the project.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

Stakeholders need to be engaged at the right time in the project lifecycle. A formal process for timely engagement would help.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

Generally yes but there are some exceptions and it depends on the Stakeholder and where they are in the process. If a stakeholder is at the end of a process, they may not be engaged until very late and this is a problem. The earlier a group are involved in the process the better. A formal process could help for all projects as some of the smaller projects may not go through the AGOP process and involvement of certain functions can be late.

- **What is the typical Documentation produced in the Stakeholder Management Process at Dell?**

The formal identification process begins with a series of twenty questions to look at how the project is going to affect each stakeholder, to understand if these groups are stakeholders in the project. It details the project scope, background, impact, how it will affect each group and a list of proposed stakeholders. Then a power point deck will be put together detailing stakeholders on the project.

Analysing the stakeholders is done, but this is carried out in an informal manner. It is human nature to identify the more important stakeholders who have a bigger say in the project and tend to them more. This informal process relies on the experience of the project managers so it would be helpful to have a more formal process in place for all project managers to follow on any given project.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

Traditionally, stakeholder groups are represented by an individual from the start and a tracking document is used to update the communication between the Project team

and other stakeholders. This individual is only a representative of the group and therefore if they cannot attend project meetings, another individual can represent the group or function in question. Communication back to the particular group or function is the responsibility of the representative. This is a formal process and works well on projects in Dell.

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

Each group/function representative has their own list of requirements of what they want to happen. The Project Manager takes a list of requirements from each of the groups requirements until the scope can be defined, and each stakeholder gets what they want. The project manager is reliant on the representatives to state their requirements as some of the requirements may be very technical. The Project Manager's job is to facilitate the project at a high level where the stakeholder's state their requirements, how this will affect them and what they need to get the project completed successfully. The PM will align the requirements of the stakeholders through a two tier process both formal and informal, in order to deliver the project successfully. This informal "Water cooler" interaction works well in a co-located setting but doesn't work well for global/virtual projects where the project team have to rely on communicating their requirements through a formal process.

- **How do you currently assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on a project at Dell?**

It may be different across the wider organisation, but stakeholder analysis is conducted informally and is dependent on the experience of the Project Manager assigned to the project.

- **How do you avoid Bias in the selection and assessment of key Stakeholders on a typical project in Dell?**

Key Stakeholders are formally identified at the beginning of the project. It is human nature to identify the more important stakeholders who have a bigger say in the project and tend to them more. This informal process relies on the experience of the project managers, so it would be helpful to have a more formal process in place for all project managers to follow on any given project.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes
- b) Stage 2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools
- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- c) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- d) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

Yes. Dell are perhaps somewhere around level 2. Stakeholder Relationship Management is more of a learned experience at Dell. The process of stakeholder relationship management is structured but there is no formal process as it is more of a learned process, although there may be some formal processes in place throughout different groups in the company. The Stakeholder identification process is formal at a local level, but the stakeholder engagement process on bigger projects can see issues being escalated to senior management level to be resolved. This can depend on the size of the project and if there are a lot of people on a large project, these issues have the power to modify, delay or halt a project. The project team try to deal with these issues on smaller projects between themselves, and this is generally successful.

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder's needs at the end of a project for "Lessons Learned" on future projects?**

A "Lessons learned" document is developed so the stakeholders can look at what went on the project and what lessons could be learned for the future. This is not a

box ticking exercise and lessons can be technical or managerial and about the stakeholders experience.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?**

Dell is open to implementing recommendations and organisational readiness would be good although resistance is inevitable. Different cultures react differently to change, and this may not be as easy on a global level. Stakeholders are very proactive in a co-located structure and stakeholders are naturally curious so it is in their own self interest to find out this information for the project to run smoothly.

- **According to the Kerzner level of Project Management, where so you see Dell:**
 - Level 1 – Common Language, understand the need for PM knowledge
 - Level 2 – Common Processes
 - Level 3 – A Singular Methodology
 - Level 4 – Benchmarking
 - Level 5 – Continuous Improvement of Processes

Not Known.

Interview 2

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

Kick off the project with a meeting. Core team members are identified at that meeting. Each function has a representation of the core team. A governance structure is set out to set up core team meetings, stakeholder reviews and executive reviews. This is a formal stakeholder management process carried out on projects in the Supply Chain function.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

The most important thing is two-way Communication between Stakeholders. Core team and project manager communicating issues to stakeholders and steering group, and those stakeholders communicating back whether the team are on the right path or if changes need to be made. The level of maturity of the PM is an important factor in communication between stakeholders.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

It could be more formal and consistent across different functions. In Supply chain, there is a consistent methodology that is followed but this is not consistent throughout other functions and this would be an area for improvement.

- **Do the project team increase and share their knowledge through the act of building team relationships through negotiating for agreement on the relative importance of each stakeholder? (PM ONLY)**

This is not done formally. The process of identification of stakeholders is formal but the process of analysing and categorising stakeholders is not a formal process and

this would be helpful. The experience of Project Managers allows this to happen in an informal manner but the turnover of project managers on different projects can affect this. A more formal process could be helpful but needs some flexibility also.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

We try to identify the key stakeholders from the start. Stakeholders are informed and engaged the whole way through the project until they become involved.

- **What is the typical Documentation produced in the Stakeholder Management Process at Dell?**

The Stakeholder questionnaire allows for identification of the right stakeholders and to ensure that nothing is missing from a scope perspective. This should give the requirements of each stakeholder group.

The project charter is a 3 page document for what the project “is” and “Is not”. Use this documentation to align stakeholders. The stakeholder questionnaire feeds into this document and in addition, a two/three slide power point presents how the stakeholders are aligned.

A governance plan states how the project manager will communicate with the core team. A four stage methodology of Define, Plan, Develop/Execute and Launch/Close out.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

The core team have a weekly meeting and minutes are issued to the stakeholders and their management.

The minutes include: who attended the meeting, who is responsible for the actions, issue of supporting material. This gives an update to all stakeholders every week.

From a programme management point of view, a list of projects is updated to executives in a short presentation every two to four weeks, just to highlight issues or areas where help is required. This process happens locally and globally.

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

The engagement strategy involves one to one meetings with key stakeholders. These meetings are formal and informal and are done in order to understand the expectations of the key stakeholders.

- **How do you currently assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on a project at Dell?**

This is not done in a formal manner. The project manager does it in his head but sometimes looks at roles and responsibilities to see who makes the decision and who is an influencer on the project. It would be helpful if this was a formal process and measuring the influence of stakeholders could be a useful tool.

- **How do you avoid Bias in the selection and assessment of key Stakeholders on a typical project in Dell?**

It is about what is in the best interest of the customer. Any issues are brought to the steering committee, who will align key influential stakeholders.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes

- b) Stage2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools
- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- c) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- d) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

Yes it does. Dell would be between Stage 3 and Stage 4. Some of the higher stages happen at a higher level – The Business Case and the methodology is repeatable across certain functions. PMO may be able to confirm which stage the organisation is at.

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder’s needs at the end of a project for “Lessons Learned” on future projects?**

As part of the four phases, the team are agreeing and locking in the key performance indicators and these must be achieved at each review stage. KPI’s are what the project set out to deliver and if these are not met recommendations are made and further decisions will be made to go forward.

Lessons learned are carried out after each project and stored in a repository. Realistically, it is easier to talk to the PM’s involved in the project to get the information.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?**

It would support the introduction of enhancement of the stakeholder management process once the benefits could be understood.

- **According to the Kerzner level of Project Management, where so you see Dell:**
- Level 1 – Common Language, understand the need for PM knowledge
- Level 2 – Common Processes
- Level 3 – A Singular Methodology
- Level 4 – Benchmarking
- Level 5 – Continuous Improvement of Processes

To be confirmed

Interview 3

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

There are a few different approaches at different levels. There is a problem with the omission of key internal stakeholders. Key stakeholders are left out at the beginning and this leads to time wasting and delays on the project. PM's engage stakeholders from the start and take feedback as to any other stakeholders that are required, but at a higher level, there are gaps in the stakeholder identification process. Late engagement of stakeholders is a problem.

Stakeholder identification is a formal process but the analysis of stakeholders is informal. This is important because if projects are extended, then those key stakeholders should be engaged also to gain knowledge from the initial part of the project. A formal documented stakeholder engagement process would be helpful here. On a large project, a facilitator would be helpful to engage all the stakeholders from the start both, formally and informally, and then decide who needs what level of engagement through the project lifecycle.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

It's a huge contribution. This is seen on projects where you are dealing with the same people all the time and those who were identified as needed on follow up projects, were not engaged.

Dell are still departmentalised but when something is about to happen, there should be a relationship there for when information is required between the functions. Teams complete their work and set out their key deliverables and don't always consider dependencies from other teams.

The relationship part of this is huge.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

Network building as the project kicks off. Get all stakeholders around the table at the start and build a bond. Identify them and engage them from the start.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

No, they are involved at the right time, it happens too late. The best approach is to involve a facilitator/project manager to engage everyone from the start, and determine the correct level of engagement required.

- **What is the typical Documentation produced in the Stakeholder Management Process at Dell?**

There is an identification process with a presentation of the names and roles of stakeholders. There is no analysis of influence or power of stakeholders on the project, but this would be a help when deciding who the key stakeholders are, and who just need to be kept informed.

This needs to be a formal process to save time.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

All the stakeholders are identified at the start of the project but they do not all have the same level of interest throughout the project. Stakeholders are still involved in meetings although they may not contribute and certain functions have to give all the input. This is not effective .

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

Stakeholders look at the value it is adding to the organisation for the end goal, not for each of the functions. A dependencies register is sometimes used and this is a formal document that lists the dependencies and benefits for the external stakeholders and they can agree or disagree to this. This made them aware of the benefits of their input into the project.

This is not a formal process across functions.

Process maps are used on projects in Dell, but this is not across the organisation. The process maps show a step by step work stream, and this is how projects are supposed to work in Dell.

- **How do you currently assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on a project at Dell?**

We don't assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on projects at Dell. This would be a good benefit to a project.

- **How do you avoid Bias in the selection and assessment of key Stakeholders on a typical project in Dell?**

We don't analyse the stakeholders to identify the key contributors and influencers. There may be many team members on a call, but there is only input from a small amount. A process to analyse, categorise, prioritise stakeholders would help to identify the key stakeholders.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes
- b) Stage2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools
- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits

- c) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- d) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

Level One. An ad-hoc practice, that sets out the stakeholders for the project and just add to them as the project goes on.

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder’s needs at the end of a project for “Lessons Learned” on future projects?**

There is not a good job done on Lessons learned on projects in Dell. Core team members have their own deliverables along with the project team deliverable. The core teams are asked for their own deliverables at the start of the project but this is not addressed by going back around in a lessons learned approach. The key requirements are met but core team deliverables have not been met. A register may allow for the core teams own deliverables to be reviewed and updated every month or so throughout the project.

The lessons learned review must involve all key stakeholders identified from the start and this must be made part of the close out phase. All the stakeholders should have the opportunity to give input and receive feedback.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?**

I genuinely think Dell would be very open to introducing a new approach with fresh new thinking.

- **According to the Kerzner level of Project Management, where so you see Dell:**
 - Level 1 – Common Language, understand the need for PM knowledge
 - Level 2 – Common Processes
 - Level 3 – A Singular Methodology
 - Level 4 – Benchmarking

- Level 5 – Continuous Improvement of Processes

I think Dell try to have a singular methodology so somewhere between level two and level three.

Interview 4

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

Projects are vetted first for finance scoping before they go for review. Project goes through AGOP and once the project is approved and goes into the phase review process (PRP), core team meetings are attended every week.

The process works very well as finance give a lot of direction to the team and there is a good relationship.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

It's of the utmost importance to have a good relationship. One on one meetings are a very important part of this relationship and co-location is a big advantage. This is more difficult globally.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

The Stakeholder management process works well, the structure is good. The stakeholder management process involves core team meetings, steering review, executive steering review, the formality and structure works well. The stakeholder management process is good at the start but it's the engagement, management and involvement after the project starts that can be difficult. Some stakeholders do not attend executive Steering Review, and some that do, don't listen and so may not be interested. As the project moves ahead, you still have to ensure stakeholder interest and that it is still the right project for them.

The stakeholder management process could benefit at a higher level by trying to engage the people with the influence a bit more.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

Yes they are. Some projects will require attending all the meetings and some will just require the representative member to be kept informed. All stakeholders will sign up at the start but a review should be done on all the stakeholders at this time to ensure their level of involvement is right for them, and that review is not done at present.

- **What is the typical Documentation produced in the Stakeholder Management Process at Dell?**

A slide presentation at the beginning of a project with details of the stakeholders identified for the project.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

There are too many updates and too many emails and PM's need to understand the level of engagement that is required and who needs to know what. Updates to every stakeholder on every aspect of the project, is not required. It is not efficient or effective to give all this information to all of the stakeholders all the way through the project.

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

There is a weekly meeting within the function and this is fed through to the core team. All managers required from each function are identified and get a chance to say whether they need to be involved or if they just want to be kept updated and this is effective.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes
- b) Stage 2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools
- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- c) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- d) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

Stage two

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder's needs at the end of a project for "Lessons Learned" on future projects?**

Stakeholders are brought back to do a lessons learned, both good and bad. This information is put on a share point for others to gain the experience when kicking off a new project.

The lessons learned is carried out with the core team to gain their knowledge and experience from the project.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?**

I would be very open to any form of improvement to the stakeholder management process and this would probably be the general consensus from the supporting functions of each project.

- **According to the Kerzner level of Project Management, where so you see Dell:**
- Level 1 – Common Language, understand the need for PM knowledge
- Level 2 – Common Processes
- Level 3 – A Singular Methodology
- Level 4 – Benchmarking
- Level 5 – Continuous Improvement of Processes

Level two. Within the Supply Chain, it is very well structured and the level may be higher for example level 3 but approaches are different across the organisation.

Interview 5

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

The project lead is identified. Stakeholders are identified and the project team is created. A governance process is put in place. A steering review cadence and sponsor review cadence is held where the managers of the core team are brought together to share the status of the programme. Agree the project team and share this with everybody involved to make sure that everyone is aligned as other functions may not have been included but need to be involved. Input is taken and changes are made at this point.

The core team once a week, sponsor review can be fortnightly or monthly depending on the project. These are fixed meetings that happen throughout the project lifecycle.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

Dell projects are all cross functional so there is a real need to pull them all together to spot dependencies and risks on projects. Project team members are 10 – 30% working on the project and then have day to day operations of their own. We try to ensure the resources from these functions we reach out to the functions and the managers. This needs to be set out up front so that the stakeholders are participating throughout the project. We engage at each level to try to get the support for the project. If there is a problem with any of the key functions on the critical path, this can affect the outcome of the project.

Once the project starts and the stakeholders are identified, the focus is on the project deliverables. Key stakeholders will be engaged in a one to one meeting but this discipline is not there across all projects. An assumption is made that once they sign up to the project that they can support it but it is only when a lag is spotted, that the stakeholder is engaged.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

There is a phase review process used in Dell and meeting the checklist at the end of each phase could include regular reviews with key stakeholders. This would be a formal part of the process so once this is done, we can move on the next phase. This could be a part of the checklist around the people management side and this would be worthwhile.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

This depends on the project. The longer the project drags on, the more people drop off so try to keep the project concise to keep the stakeholder participation.

Sometimes a 1.5 hour meeting and a function may only require 10 minutes of participation but they need to be involved because of dependencies in the project that may impact them. Each function is silo'd in that each function looks after their own part but they need to be aware of the dependencies outside of their function. The co-ordination between functions helps with anything falling between the stools.

Too much engagement can be as bad as too little engagement. A "two in the box" approach works well where one PM looks after co-ordination and communication with stakeholders and one PM looked after the business side of the project. This helped with time efficiency on a project in the past. One disadvantage could be confusion as to who is actually leading the project with two Project Managers from two different functions, but it worked well. But in Dell there is not the luxury of having a facilitator to build relationships on projects in such a fast paced environment.

Once the core team are identified, each team member should have a one to one meeting so that they know up front what their role is and what is expected from them

on this project. The team should deliver the project more so than the PM. The PM has to pull the functions together and drive the project at present but the team should be instructed and given guidance at the start in order to drive the project.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

Project status is distributed out to all the stakeholders through weekly and fortnightly meetings with the different stakeholders. It would be good to update the stakeholder engagement process and look at the level of interest and participation . Hold a project core team review to see what has changed with the stakeholders and what needs to be added. There would certainly be merit in this as it is all about delivering through the team.

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

In terms of engagement, there are the weekly and fortnightly meetings.

Each core team member should be involved in offline one to one discussions and this is not done in a lot of projects. There should be more time spent on developing the people to develop the programme. This is the best way to get the engagement and this is not done enough currently on projects at dell.

- **How do you currently assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on a project at Dell?**

This is done informally through experience.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes
- b) Stage 2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools
- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- c) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- d) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

Stage 2 – 3. From a project structure discipline, the control is good, but not at that level for stakeholder management.

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder's needs at the end of a project for "Lessons Learned" on future projects?**

There is a lessons learned session at the end where the key learnings are documented for similar projects in the future. This is a condition that has to be met on a project so it works well. Lessons learned should allow for more than just requirements and the project itself but also the stakeholders expectations and perceptions around the people side, with regard to engagement.

Subject matter experts are brought together for a project but they are not up to speed with the project management discipline. Each function should identify two to three team members who could be trained up in the discipline of project management because when a core team is drawn together, the team members are not up to speed with the fundamentals of project management. Each function in Dell should identify the core team members that could be trained up in the discipline of project management and could be put forward for all future projects. This would be really worthwhile.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in**

Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?

Yes, it would be very much supported because there are gaps in the process today. Changes must be stipulated as a condition to get it fully implemented and sustained.

- **According to the Kerzner level of Project Management, where so you see Dell:**
- Level 1 – Common Language, understand the need for PM knowledge
- Level 2 – Common Processes
- Level 3 – A Singular Methodology
- Level 4 – Benchmarking
- Level 5 – Continuous Improvement of Processes

Level 3, yes, a standard template or methodology would be followed across the globe.

Interview 6

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

The identification process is good. Initial meetings let each function state their requirements and expectations. The timing is good for engaging stakeholders at the start of the project. Functions are there to support the project but the functions are not always co-ordinated/co-ordinating well with each other on projects.

Once the stakeholders are identified, the dispersion of information between stakeholders is not co-ordinated well enough. There is too much communication and too much information for stakeholders who just want to be informed and the right stakeholders are not always engaged at the right time.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

Stakeholders need to develop their softer skills and talk to each other around the table. Functions are there to support the project so more one to one meetings would help to develop the relationships for the future.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

There are too many stakeholders engaged at the start of a project. Categorising and prioritising the stakeholders to identify the key stakeholders would make the stakeholder management process more efficient and save time.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

No. The identification process of stakeholders on a project is good and works well, but the timing of stakeholder engagement is wrong throughout the project lifecycle.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

There is no formal stakeholder analysis after identification of the stakeholders on a project. Team members are kept updated with regular meetings, but there can be a loss of interest from some stakeholders so maybe a continuous analysis process could help.

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

Weekly meetings are held with the core team. There are often too many stakeholders and there is too much communication of information when it is not required. It would be helpful to have a process to categorise the stakeholders and give them the appropriate level of information when it is required.

- **How do you currently assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on a project at Dell?**

This is not done formally, but it does happen informally, using judgement and experience. A formal process could help.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes
- b) Stage2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools

- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- d) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- e) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

Dell are somewhere between Stage one and two.

There needs to be more communication using the softer skills through one to one meetings, where smaller stakeholders can have their point of view and communicate their own expectations.

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder’s needs at the end of a project for “Lessons Learned” on future projects?**

A lessons learned session is done after each project. All stakeholders don’t always attend lessons learned for input and feedback. The process could be better by using a facilitator rather than the PM in order to get the true lessons learned from each project, and ensure that all functions have representation.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?**

The organisation would be very open to new ideas.

- **According to the Kerzner level of Project Management, where so you see Dell:**
- Level 1 – Common Language, understand the need for PM knowledge
- Level 2 – Common Processes
- Level 3 – A Singular Methodology
- Level 4 – Benchmarking
- Level 5 – Continuous Improvement of Processes

Level 3.

Interview 7

- **What is the current Stakeholder Management Process in Dell and do you feel it is effective on your projects?**

The Stakeholder process is formal and effective. Formal documentation is updated continuously during the lifecycle of projects/programmes.

- **How do you think that successful Stakeholder Management and Relationship Building contributes to Project Success at Dell?**

Successful stakeholder management does contribute to project success. It is not just about the formal processes but also about the leadership of the people on the project.

- **How do you think the Stakeholder Process at Dell could be improved on your projects?**

On some of the bigger projects there are too many stakeholders identified at the start. This has an impact on the decision making process and is an area for improvement.

- **Do you involve the right stakeholders at the right time in the project lifecycle or is the process of stakeholder engagement more ad-hoc in projects at Dell?**

Yes the stakeholders are involved at the right time in the project lifecycle. The business requirements document (BRD) is completed at the beginning of a project where the stakeholder's requirements are documented and considered within the scope of the project. This ensures that the stakeholders are engaged when needed.

- **What is the typical Documentation produced in the Stakeholder Management Process at Dell?**

There is formal Documentation for the identification of stakeholders on a project – Discuss with PM: *the stakeholder questionnaire, project charter, stakeholder*

identification slide deck and governance plan for communication with the stakeholders.

- **How do you maintain the currency of the stakeholder community involved in dynamic ever changing projects at Dell?**

The stakeholders are updated on a weekly basis. Stakeholders are flagged on the stakeholder register.

- **In what way do you develop your engagement strategy, communication plan or both, in an effort to meet and understand the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in projects at Dell?**

The expectations of the stakeholders are defined as requirements in the BRD at the beginning of the project. Once these requirements are met, then the project is a success from a stakeholder perspective.

- **How do you currently assess, prioritise or measure the influence of key stakeholders on a project at Dell?**

This is currently done in an informal manner. Depending on the size of the project, and which stakeholders require what, the prioritisation and measure of influence somehow happens by itself and self levels into some order of influential stakeholders.

However, it would help to assess the level of influence of stakeholders in a more formal way.

- **How do you avoid Bias in the selection and assessment of key Stakeholders on a typical project in Dell?**

Assessing the measure of influence and prioritisation is an informal process that happens by itself and a more formal process could help.

- **Do you think the Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level of the Organisation has an effect on the Stakeholder Management process at Dell?**

How do you see Dell:

- a) Stage 1 Ad-hoc: Some use of Processes
- b) Stage2 Procedural: Focus = Processes, Tools
- c) Stage 3 Rational: Focus = Stakeholders and Mutual Benefits
- c) Stage 4 Integrated: Methodology Repeatable
- d) Stage 5 Predictive: Health Checks, other predictive assessments

The Stakeholder Relationship Management Maturity Level is around Level 4.

- **How do you check you have met the key stakeholder’s needs at the end of a project for “Lessons Learned” on future projects?**

There is a formal process for checking the requirements of each stakeholder set out in the BRD. Once these are met, the expectations of the stakeholder are met.

- **How open are you to the introduction of a new Stakeholder Management Process to build and maintain stakeholder relationships on projects in Dell? Would the project culture and the culture of the organisation support this?**

The stakeholder management process is continually evolving at Dell and the organisation would be open to new ideas.

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