



## **Looking at your stakeholders**

During our discussions on strategic planning we have had some great conversations around our Vision, Mission and Values or Beliefs Statements. We've looked at the Vision as the Why we do what we do, the mission as the what we do, and the belief statements as the how we do what we do. Now let's look at the 'who' our organizations impact more closely. Stakeholders represent different groups of people your organization reaches. Let's start with a definition of stakeholders.

**What is a stakeholder?** Here's what you told us...

- People we serve, look to us for service, impacted if we did not exist
- A person or party who is invested in our organization or affected by our organizations work
- Someone who derives a benefit from what we do, person interested in and/or supportive of our mission, vision and values.
- A group of people who are affected by what we do, benefit from our services
- Someone who is emotionally, personally and/or financially invested in your project.

Stakeholders are everyone who is:

- Interested
- Impacted
- Invested

And who has:

- Influence
- Information

**Who are your stakeholders?** Make a list of all of your stakeholders.

Some of the challenges will be:

- You have multiple programs, all with different stakeholders
- You have one program with multiple stakeholders
- Your program is universal so you like defining your stakeholders broadly
- You have only thought about your stakeholders as those who are impacted by your programs
- Thinking of your funders as stakeholders is a different perspective

Let me encourage you to be as specific as possible about your stakeholders .. go from the broad to the specific. Here's an example talked about in our session today ...

Our stakeholder –youth

Which youth? – at risk youth

At risk for what? – everything

What does everything mean? – homelessness, dropping out of school, crime, vandalism, violence or victims of violence

What's the age range of youth? – high school – ages 13 – 19 yrs – Male & Female? Yes

Where are the youth? – in the county of Wellington – All of Wellington County? No in the township of Puslinch.

So – who is your stakeholder?

Youth ages 13 – 19, living in the township of Puslinch who are at risk or may be exposed to the issues of homelessness, dropping out of school, crime, vandalism, violence or victims of violence.

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Looking at your stakeholders...

Earlier we said that stakeholders are everyone who is interested, impacted and invested in your organization and everyone who has influence and information or access to information your organization needs to be successful.

Try the same exercise of defining your stakeholders, this time thinking about a stakeholder that brings value to you. It helps if you do this exercise with a partner who will keep the questions coming and challenge you to be as specific as possible.

Our stakeholder – Funders

Who are the funders? – everyone in the community

Groups or individuals? – individuals

Who is currently funding you? – almost all of current individual funders are members of our organization

What's common about your members? – they all have an interest in youth

Do you know why they have an interest? – many have participated in our programs & services in the past

So – who is your stakeholder?

Individuals living in our community (township of Puslinch) who have an interest in our youth (ages 13 – 19) and have participated in our programs & services.

Could you define this stakeholder further .... ?

**Some hints:** If you have so many stakeholders you don't know where to start – pick one program area and start there. The Museums Bayhem group started with their school programs rather than starting from their broad stakeholder group as everyone who lives in the municipality of Bayhem.

**Something to think about -** There is a reciprocal relationship between you and your stakeholders. Keep thinking about this statement and we'll come back to it.

Defining your stakeholders as specifically as you can will help you identify what value your organization and your programs & services bring to your stakeholder.

**What value do you (your organization) bring to your stakeholder?** For each stakeholder you have defined determine what your value is to them.

A word about 'value' – we have chosen to use the word value because we want you to think more broadly about why your organization is important to this stakeholder. The dictionary definition says - A value is something that is considered to be of worth or importance.

Here's an example to help you get started ... I'm a big fan of charts to help you organize your thoughts ... again challenge yourselves to be specific... *(Just a note to say I've taken some author liberties in using the museums school program in the following examples – the museum itself may or may not see things the same way – but it's a great example to work with.)*

Looking at your stakeholders...

Stakeholder	Our organizations value to this stakeholder
Children ages 6 – 12 who visit the museum with their school to learn about the local history and meet the requirements of the Ontario school curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The museum builds an understanding and appreciation of local history.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides a fun learning environment</li> </ul>
Teachers in the public and separate school boards who are looking for interesting and unique ways to meet the curriculum needs of their students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The museum has an expertise in local history.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides an opportunity for a field trip outside of the classroom.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides displays and visits that enhance the school curriculum.</li> </ul>

**What value do your stakeholders bring to your organization?** Let's add one more column to our chart and look at what value each of our defined stakeholders have for us.

Stakeholder	Our organizations value to this stakeholder	This stakeholders value to our organization
Children ages 6 – 12 who visit the museum with their school to learn about the local history and meet the requirements of the Ontario school curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The museum builds an understanding and appreciation of local history.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides a fun learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revenue is generated through admission fees (that's the easy one) from school trips and if the children like the museum return visits with their families.</li> <li>▪ The children will be able to tell us what they like and help to make the museum a fun place to be.</li> <li>▪ Children will value the role of the museum in the community and participate in other events including fund raising events.</li> </ul>
Teachers in the public and separate school boards who are looking for interesting and unique ways to meet the curriculum needs of their students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The museum has an expertise in local history.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides an opportunity for a field trip outside of the classroom.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides displays and visits that enhance the school curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers will be promoters of the museum and the education value of the displays and tours, within their school and the community.</li> <li>▪ Teachers will provide feedback and information to the museum to enhance the quality of the school program.</li> <li>▪ Teachers could be volunteers or supporters of the museum.</li> </ul>

Looking at your stakeholders...

This is the reciprocal relationship we have with our stakeholders. We bring value to them and they bring value to us. That value can be very diverse – from being participants to being volunteers, donors, evaluators, people with influence – they are supporters of your mission, vision and values. Building relationships will be fundamental to your success. Understanding these relationships and what value they bring to your organization will be a huge benefit to you in attracting resources. Not to mention better programming too.

*What new understanding have you developed after looking at your stakeholders?*

When we were completing this exercise some benefits you saw were:

- Your really started to have a clearer picture of your 'audience'
- When you look at your marketing/promotional strategies and the audience you were trying to reach you realized they were your stakeholders.
- Defining your stakeholders and their values started to challenge those assumptions you have within your organizations about the who and what they want and need.
- Examining the value of your current stakeholders brings new thoughts about who your stakeholders are ... and who they could be ...
- The needs of our stakeholders are constantly changing – we should be looking at that more often.
- The 'environment' we operate in as an organization is also constantly changing – we should be looking at that more often
- In the long run having more clearly defined stakeholders will help with better programming to meet your mandate/mission/vision.
- There is an opportunity for your staff and board to be involved in how your strategic directions look like in the community and align the 'plan' with what our stakeholders 'value'.
- More analysis creates more focus
- By looking at our stakeholders we can see our mission and vision as dynamic and living

I'm hoping a couple of things will happen as a result of your completing this exercise:

- You see yourself as an organization of impact. After all you are not in the fundraising business – you're in the impact business. You impact people. You change (save, transform, inspire) lives.
- You see your relationships with your stakeholders as reciprocal. While you provide them with programs and services – they provide you with things you value (sometimes they're the resources you're looking for). You need each other.
- The relationships you discover will help you build the relationships you need - to deliver excellent programming and to attract the resources you need - to have the greatest amount of impact.

***A next step from here? Checking to see if you have it right.*** Have you asked your stakeholders what's important to them?

In the Rural Development Officer program, FRL's approach has been to be as participatory as we could be with our stakeholders. We had an opportunity to ask you (our RDO's) what was important to you? Some of the things you told us included:

- Develop skills and increase knowledge in philanthropy and fund development.
- Provide opportunities to network and talk to other organizations like us.
- Provide opportunities to network and talk to other organizations we normally wouldn't talk too.
- Help us develop long term plans for sustainability.
- Help us choose good fund development strategies and even innovative strategies.

Looking at your stakeholders...

- Develop a program that transfers the skills of the RDO to the organization and even to other community groups.

This was a great opportunity for FRL because when we talk about the value of our organization to you the RDO we can talk about what you told us was important and do our best to meet those needs. It also changed where we allocated some of our resources. It also changed some of our assumptions about you as organizations and what we thought you needed.

***What are the strategies of your organization that meets the values defined by you and your stakeholders?*** What activities does your organization do to meet your stakeholder's values? For those of you who attended the afternoon session – this is the homework we suggested to help you take today's session a little further.

Looking at your stakeholders...

Stakeholders	Our organizations value to this stakeholder	This stakeholders value to our organization	The activities(strategies) we do to meet the values we have identified
Children ages 6 – 12 who visit the museum with their school to learn about the local history and meet the requirements of the Ontario school curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The museum builds an understanding and appreciation of local history.</li> <li>▪ The museum provides a fun learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revenue is generated through admission fees (that's the easy one) from school trips and if the children like the museum return visits with their families.</li> <li>▪ The children will be able to tell us what they like and help to make the museum a fun place to be.</li> <li>▪ Children will value the role of the museum in the community and participate in other events including fund raising events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a museum building.</li> <li>▪ Create displays.</li> <li>▪ Recruit, train volunteers to conduct school tours.</li> <li>▪ Develop activities that address the curriculum needs of each grade.</li> <li>▪ Collect fees.</li> </ul>

*What are you noticing?*

Here are some things you might be seeing:

- If you are like most organizations:
  - You are doing activities that are not aligning with any of the values you have identified.
  - You have gaps. You've identified values that you are not currently engaging in any activities to address them.
- There are choices to be made. And it's looking like you need to do some more work.
  - You know the reasons why gaps are existing between the values and activities.
  - On the other hand you don't know why and you'll need to find out some more information.
  - Your mission, vision, values plays a role in aligning your activities with your stakeholder values.

- There are questions to ask.
  - In our museum example one of our stakeholder values is to provide a fun learning environment. We should be asking – which activity ensures we are meeting this need of our stakeholder? Is it a need we can or want to meet? If we do and we're not – what can we do?
- There is an opportunity to be creative and innovative in looking at your current activities and the role they play in meeting your stakeholder and your organizations defined values!

***A next step from here:*** Add another column and list the activities you should or could be doing. Can you see things you could start doing and see some things you can stop doing?

Looking at your stakeholders...

***Why is all of this important to fund development?***

Impact drives resources. If you're like many organizations you have this reversed. The resources you have are driving the extent of your impact. Your impact needs to be front and centre, not your programs & services. Your stakeholders need to be front and centre not your organization. Before an organization can go out and raise money, it needs to have a very clear understanding of the relationship between your stakeholder values and your activities. Another way of looking at it is being able to make a connection between what you do (your activities) and the impact it has on your stakeholders (meeting their needs). People don't give you money so you can pay the rent, or the salary of the ED or buy you a new computer, they give you money because you create impact for your stakeholders. How does buying a new computer create value for your stakeholder and for the organization? If you are the person making the ask for the resources you want to be able to answer that question from an impact point of view.

By looking at the stakeholder and organizational values first we can better assess the activities we have chosen are focused on the things that matter most. We can also see where the resources may come from, what we can support with the resources we have, and what we need new resources to support.

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