

# **Strategies for Acting Politically Worksheet: *Leverage Input from and Collaboration with Stakeholders***

Building on the work in “Leadership on the Line” by Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Population Level Result:** \_\_\_\_\_

When it comes to achieving population–level results, having strategies for acting politically is a key component of collaborative leadership. “Acting Politically” in this context does not point to the often negative associations with “acting politically.” In the case of collaborative leadership, acting politically means leveraging input and cooperation from all players who are related to your result. This approach acknowledges that all players have a point of view and can be a valuable part of the process, as long as you have a targeted and strategic approach to working with them.

But, figuring out how to do this takes some up-front work and analysis. By taking time to evaluate the key players that are related to your result and what their interests are, you can not only design strategies to engage them but also build-up, if you will, your ability to view their point of view objectively and gain the perspective and power that objectivity can bring.

With that in mind, the following worksheet provides questions to consider related to six groups or “stakeholders” that have an interest in your result. These groups are highlighted on the next page:



## Stakeholder Analysis: Gain Objectivity, Leverage, and Strategy

Now for the analysis: For each of the stakeholders listed above, answer the given questions about each. This exercise is designed to give you a chance to step up on the “balcony” and consider the viewpoint of each stakeholder and how best to leverage their input.

Write your answers under each question in the table. We’ve tried to leave plenty of room for you to explore a range of ideas – trust what comes to you! You can go back and edit your table later. Have fun!

|  |   |  |                                |   |   |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Y<br/>O<br/>U</b>                   | We know who you are!  | What is your main “want” for the work?               | What is your current reality?  | What resources do you bring to the work?                          | Name the Mental Models held by you:           |
| <b>A<br/>L<br/>L<br/>I<br/>E<br/>S</b> | Who are clearly or might be your allies?<br>List them here: | What is your allies’ main “want” for or in the work? | What is their current reality? | How can this group help you successfully implement your strategy? | Name the Mental Model(s) held by your allies. |

|  |   |  |                                |  |  |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>A<br/>D<br/>V<br/>E<br/>R<br/>S<br/>A<br/>R<br/>I<br/>E<br/>S</b> | Who are your adversaries?                                   | What do they stand to lose if the strategy succeeds? | What is their current reality? | How might you neutralize them or get them on your side?  | Name the Mental Model(s) held by your adversaries. |
| <b>D<br/>I<br/>S<br/>S<br/>E<br/>N<br/>T<br/>E<br/>R<br/>S</b>       | Who are the dissenters in and outside of your organization? | What's their main "want"?                            | What is their current reality? | <p>What ideas are they bringing forth that might be valuable for your strategy?</p> <p>How might you support their ideas to have a hearing?</p> <p>How can you protect them from being marginalized or silenced?</p> | Name the Mental Model(s) held by your dissenters.  |

|   |   |                        |   |  |   |
|---|---|------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>S<br/>R<br/><br/>A<br/>U<br/>T<br/>H<br/>O<br/>R<br/>I<br/>T<br/>I<br/>E<br/>S</b> | Who are the senior authorities important to your success? | What is their reality? | What messages are they giving about how the system perceives your strategy? | What might you say or do to gain and maintain their support as your strategy is being implemented? | Name the Mental Model(s) held by your senior authorities. |
|---|---|------------------------|---|--|---|

## Stakeholder Analysis: Supporting Casualties

In any body of work, there will be people or groups who do not benefit from changes implemented to meet results. We suggest doing a separate analysis of the “casualties” that may result from your work. This process, like the analysis above, can help build objectivity around this difficult component, which in turn, often builds commitment to action if one is more free from feelings like guilt or regret.

Use the following table to identify the people and groups who may lose something and how to support them in moving forward. Make these steps an integral part of your work.

|  |   |                      |  |   |   |
|--|---|----------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>C<br/>A<br/>S<br/>U<br/>A<br/>L<br/>T<br/>I<br/>E<br/>S</b> | Who might be the casualties in your strategy? | What will they lose? | Which casualties will need to leave the organization?  | What new skill would help them survive the change and thrive in the new organization? | Name the Mental Model(s) held by the casualties |
|  |   |                      | What will be the impact of them leaving the organization and how will you address this impact? | How might you help them acquire those skills?   |   |