

# Ensuring Effective Stakeholder Engagement

A guide to help run, manage and evaluate  
stakeholder campaigns



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

# Welcome

This guide will support your engagement with stakeholders and equip you with some helpful tools and advice to develop effective stakeholder communications plans within your own teams.

# Contents

Take me to:

- Introduction
- Getting started
- Identification
- Putting together an engagement plan
- Implementation
- Evaluation

# An introduction to stakeholder engagement

**“A stakeholder is a group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objective.”** FREEMAN, 1984

Stakeholder engagement is about knowing who your stakeholders are, understanding them and knowing how best to involve them in your business.

Stakeholder engagement and management involves taking into consideration the different interests and values stakeholders have and addressing them throughout the project or campaign. Engaging the right people in the right way in your project can make a notable difference to its success and to the reputation of your department.

The benefits of ensuring a robust stakeholder management approach for your team or project are:

- Developing an understanding of stakeholders’ opinions,

concerns and best practice can help shape projects. Getting to them early makes it more likely that they will support you as they will feel they have inputted and been involved.

- Joint resources – using their expertise or working in collaboration could see more resource available for your activity.
- Consistent and clear communication should ensure that affected parties will understand the benefits and can be trusted voices or third party endorsers if needed.
- It helps raise the profile of the excellent work that government does and some of our key policy areas.

# An introduction to stakeholder engagement

- They can act as a bridge to other organisations – giving us access to their existing communication channels.
- They can assist in improving policy delivery and provide us with honest feedback.
- Specific activity and planning stakeholder campaigns is important, but effective stakeholder management has no real beginning and end – it should be an ongoing activity built into everyday work.

**Working with stakeholders isn't a one-off activity. It is an ongoing process. You need to keep your stakeholders involved and informed about what's going on.**

Stakeholder management must be a key part of any communications plan and this toolkit will help you and your teams put together effective plans.

# Getting started



This model is the beginning of any effective stakeholder campaign. The planning circle should be the starting point for developing your stakeholder engagement activity.

- 1 What do you want to achieve?
- 2 Which stakeholders are critical to your success?
- 3 How are you going to engage with them?
- 4 Implementation and channels
- 5 Evaluation — did you achieve your objectives?

# 1. What do you want to achieve?

**What role do stakeholders have in helping to achieve this policy/campaign objective?**

It is fundamentally important to ensure that before you start any stakeholder activity the overarching business or policy goal for your project or campaign is clear. The key questions are:

- What is the goal of this particular project or activity?
- How are you and your team going to achieve it?

**Consistent and clear communication should ensure that affected parties will understand the benefits and can be trusted voices or third party endorsers if**

These can then be applied to working with stakeholders.

- What role do stakeholders have in helping to achieve this policy/campaign objective?
- What are the benefits of engaging with stakeholders for this purpose?
- What are the risks of doing it wrong or not doing it at all?
- What level of support or resource will you need internally?
- How will you evaluate this activity?

## 2. Which stakeholders are critical to your success? The importance of identification

Before beginning any activity, you should work to understand the current landscape and those stakeholders that will be vital for you to engage with. Your campaign or project will be more effective if you do your research around who your key stakeholders are and what activity has taken place before.

### The key questions –

- Has anyone done any stakeholder activity around this campaign or policy area before?
- Are there any existing relationships already? Are there other departments or teams within BIS or elsewhere in Government that have been working with stakeholders in this area?
- Who will be interested in this policy area?
- Can you prioritise them? (See Boston Matrix on next page)
- What are the current views about your campaign and/or policy area?

- What do you know about their online activity and social channels?
- What motivates them?
- Who influences their opinions? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?

**PROCESS TIP:** It is useful to use your current list of stakeholders if you have one (though more may come to light during the process).

A team brainstorming session can be a useful process to ensure team buy-in and that you identify as many stakeholders as possible.



## 2. Which stakeholders are critical to your success? The importance of identification

The Boston Matrix is a key identification tool to help you identify and categorise stakeholders in a consistent and clear manner. It is useful to brainstorm key stakeholders and where they fit on the matrix with your team.

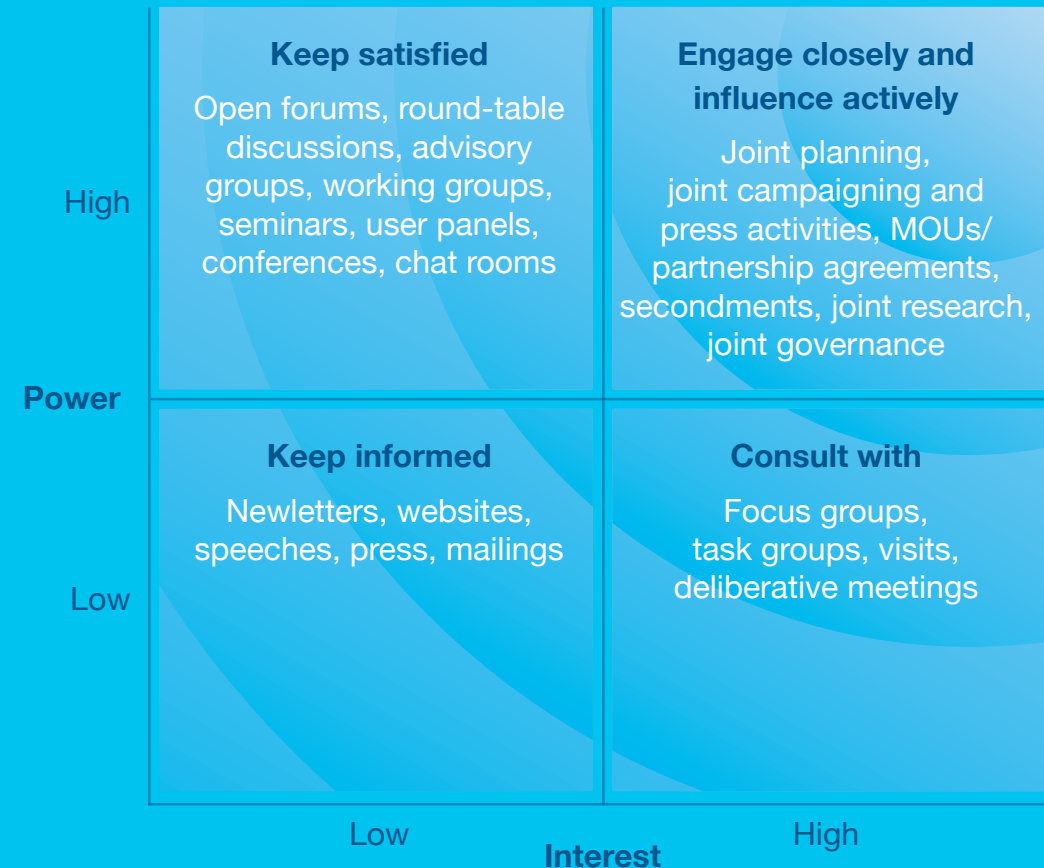
**For example:**

### High power/high interest

**Engage closely and influence actively** – these are the people who you must fully engage with. They may prove trusted advisors, key to developing policy and should be seen as partners whose opinion is considered valuable.

### High power/low interest

**Keep satisfied** – make sure there is awareness, understanding and support of your project among these stakeholders. Put in place enough engagement tactics to ensure that they are informed and satisfied, and that they are kept updated, but do not push or bore them with your messages.



## 2. Which stakeholders are critical to your success? The importance of identification

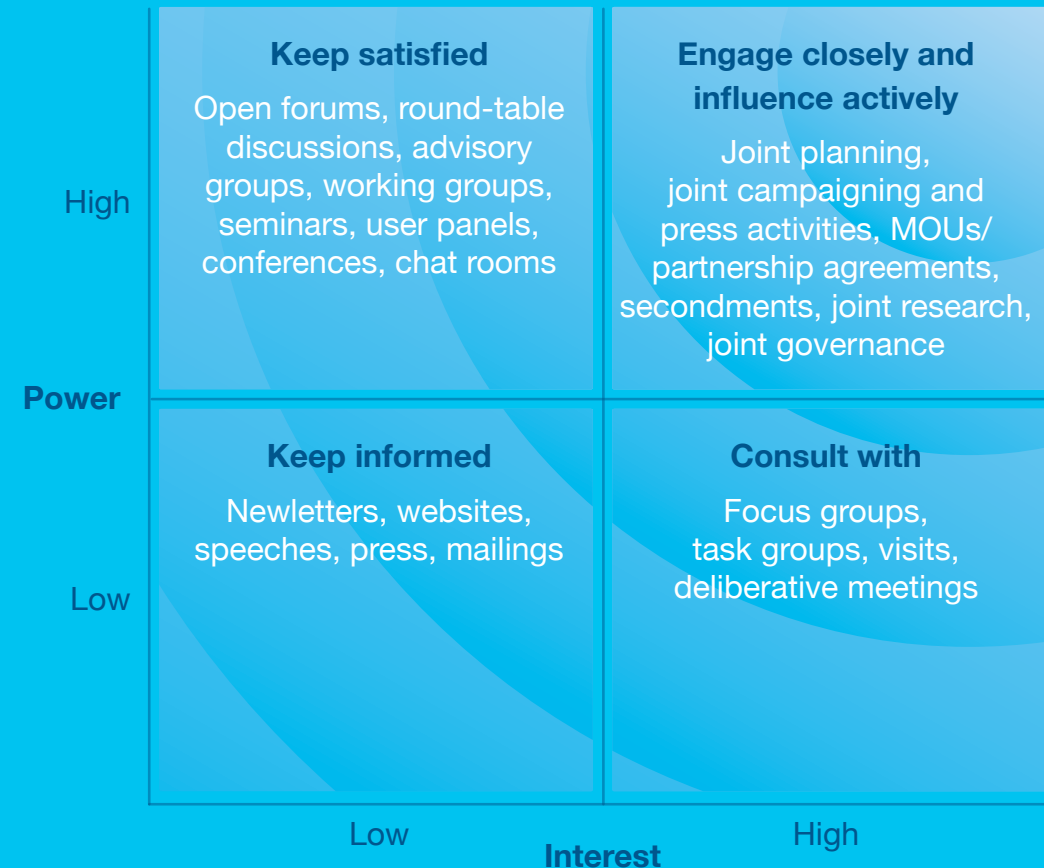
### Low power/high interest

Consult with – keep these stakeholders adequately informed and listen and engage – often these stakeholders are happy to take on finer details and can be a key sounding board. If you can involve them then they will act as ambassadors.

### Low power/low interest

Keep informed – these are the stakeholders you will need to spend the least amount of time on, although you should still keep them informed.

Once you have plotted your stakeholders you will be able to prioritise them and identify where and how you should concentrate your efforts.



# 3. How are you going to engage with them?

## Putting together an engagement plan

Once you have established your stakeholders' positions within the power and interest matrix, putting together an engagement plan will help you to define the level of relationship you wish to achieve and therefore what type of communication best suits your needs. This can range from face-to-face communication in meetings and workshops, through to updates through newsletters and e-bulletins.

You can use this [TEMPLATE](#) to help you develop a stakeholder plan.

A stakeholder plan will set out the type of relationship and related engagement that you need for each of your individual stakeholders. It will also encourage you to think about mutual areas of interest, as well as any areas where there is potential for disagreement.

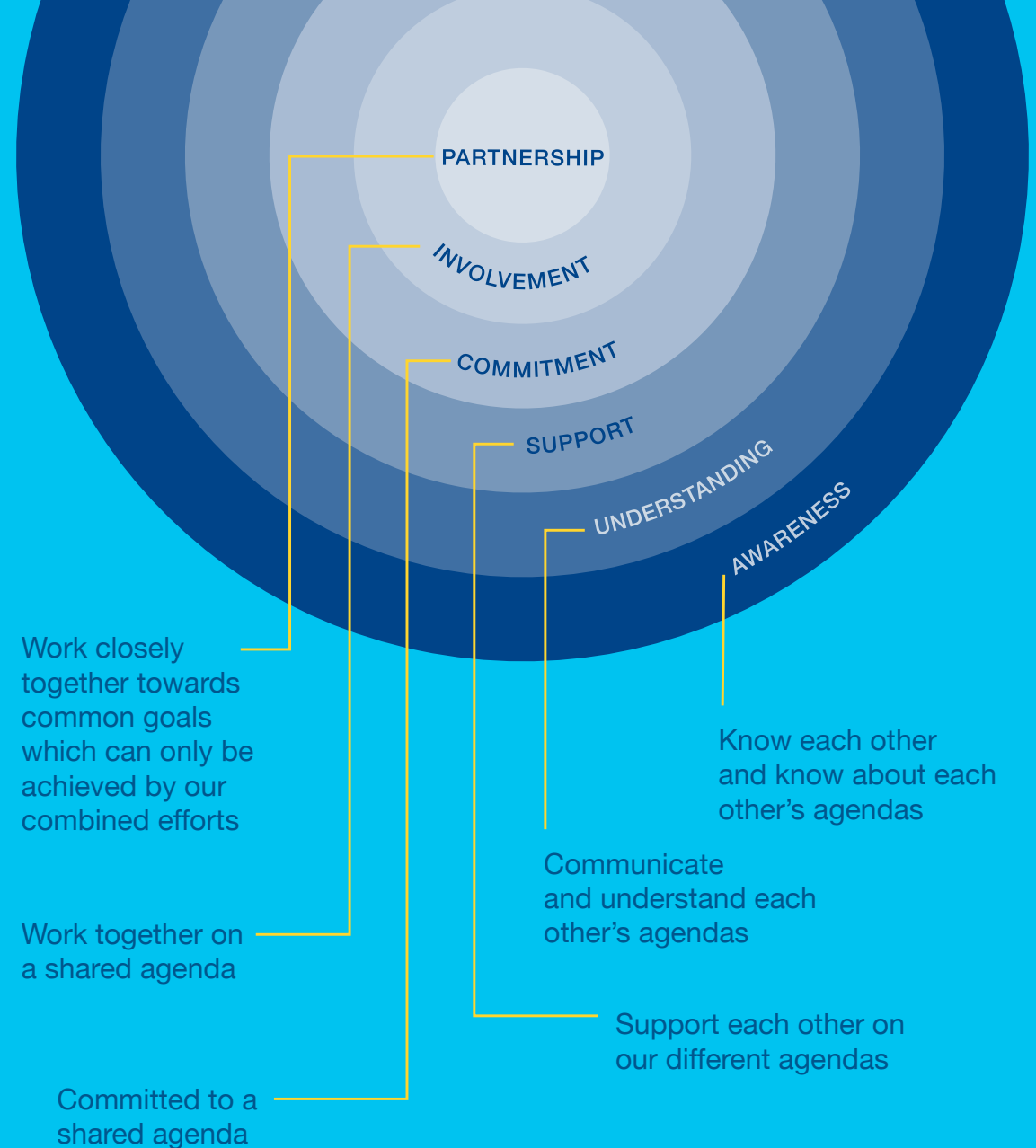
The key questions –

- Can you prioritise your stakeholders based on the mapping exercise? (Gold, silver, bronze, or by where they fall on the power and interest matrix?)
- With each tier, what type of relationship would you like? Is it just ensuring they are kept aware or do you want to work in partnership with these stakeholders?
- Is there current activity taking place with any of your stakeholders in other BIS teams?
- Do you already have an idea of key tactics/activity you would like to conduct?
- What channels both on and offline can you use?
- [TECHNIQUES FOR ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS](#) will give you some practical ideas for stakeholder activity.

### 3. How are you going to engage with them? Putting together an engagement plan

- What are the existing communications channels that can be used? (e.g. BIS social media channels)
- How are you using digital tools?
- What are the timeframes and budget implications?
- Do you need wider support?
- Exact details of an implementation plan will depend on policy and campaign activities – stakeholder engagement activity often takes place around new policy development, consultation, PR and marketing, and crisis communications.

#### STAKEHOLDER PLAN TEMPLATE



# Best practice

BUSINESS IS GREAT BRITAIN —

## Working with partners for the International Festival of Business

### What did we want to achieve?

The objective was to raise the profile of Business is GREAT Britain among an SME audience, and use partner channels to disseminate information to small and medium sized businesses. We specifically targeted brands that had a wider small business network - and offered them endorsement for Business is GREAT Britain through organisations that the SME community trusts.

Billed as the largest global concentration of business events during 2014, the 50-day International Festival of Business attracted more than 75,000 business delegates from 88 countries to 424 events at 139 venues in Liverpool.

### Which stakeholders were critical?

The GREAT team put together a long list of businesses with appeal to our target audience. Using the Boston Matrix we worked out a list of most influential that we would like to work with.

# Best practice

BUSINESS IS GREAT BRITAIN —

## Working with partners for the International Festival of Business

### How were we going to engage with them?

We put together an introductory proposal and appointed a stakeholder manager who was appointed to set up meetings and work collaboratively in arranging joint activity.

### Implementation

We worked in collaboration with businesses to create co-funded joint activity. By taking a non-prescriptive approach, we were able to tailor our activity to what was achievable with each specific stakeholder.

### Our achievements

- A headline partnership with Trinity Mirror and BT to run the 'GREAT Face of the Festival' competition
- A sponsored Business is GREAT eight-page supplement with Virgin Trains
- The 'GREAT' stand in the International Festival for Business exhibition Hub
- We were able to share savings across all activity
- An ongoing relationship with BT which has led to further communications work
- Over two million people would have seen the GREAT advertising on the media wall.

# Best practice

BUSINESS IS GREAT BRITAIN —

# Working with partners for the International Festival of Business

## BT BACKS QUEST FOR THE BEST

by TONY McDONOUGH  
Business Reporter  
@tonymc39

THE search is on to find the most innovative and exciting small and medium-sized businesses in the North West – with the winner scooping a prize package worth more than £30,000.

The **Business is GREAT** campaign and BT have teamed up to launch the GREAT Face of the Festival competition, which coincides with Liverpool's International Festival for Business (IFB) 2014.

BT is a lead partner of IFB which starts next week and will see thousands of businesses from around the world descend on the city over 30 days.

By entering the competition businesses will be in with the chance of winning an exclusive prize package which will include their business being advertised on the Liverpool Lime Street digital wall and featured in their local media, along with free broadband for a year courtesy of BT Business.

The winner will also receive a package of support from UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), one of the Government departments currently supporting the **Business is GREAT Britain** campaign with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The only requirements for entering are that all businesses must be from the North West and must have ac-

cessed Government support to help them grow or export. To enter, all eligible businesses must state why they deserve to be named as the "GREAT" face of the North West business community.

Five finalists will be featured in their local media and also be invited to an exclusive reception during IFB.

Suzi Williams, BT group marketing and brand director, said: "Being from the region myself, I know how smart entrepreneurs and innovative businesses are at the heart of the North West."

"That's why BT is excited to support the **Business is GREAT** campaign as it celebrates all the fantastic entrepreneurial talent out there."

"Passionate people with guts, flair and innovation are what make business great."

"And we want to help those people be the best they can be. A marketing and communications package from **Business is GREAT** and BT will give the winner the opportunity to take their business to the next level."

The **Business is GREAT** campaign aims to celebrate and inspire small businesses and is run by BIS and UKTI.

It provides relevant advice and information for small and medium-sized enterprises looking to grow, hire, export, lead and access finance.

To enter, log onto [www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/face](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/face)



INSPIRING: Suzi Williams of BT

**Briggs Automotive named 'Face of the Festival'**

Simon Malia  
04 JUL 2014 | INDUSTRIALS

Liverpool-based Briggs Automotive Company (BAC) has this week been named the winner in the Business is GREAT campaign's GREAT Face of the Festival competition. In association with BT.

The competition, which sought to find the most innovative and exciting small- and medium-sized businesses in the North West, ties into the International Festival for Business, which runs until the end of July.

BAC is the manufacturer of Mono, the world's first road-legal single-seat supercar. Brothers Ian and Neil Briggs wanted to create a new, niche supercar with an ultra-lightweight design philosophy.

BAC now exports to over 11 countries across four continents, with dealer agreements throughout the world. Up to 60 jobs are expected to be created at BAC over the next five years and over 100 in the supply chain.

By entering the competition, businesses were in with the chance of winning an exclusive prize package worth over £30,000.

This included their business being advertised on the Liverpool Lime Street digital wall and featured in the Liverpool Echo, along with free broadband for a year courtesy of BT Business. In addition, the winner will also be receiving a package of support from UK Trade and Investment (UKTI).

The car itself has won numerous awards, including being named Top Gear's 'The Stig's Car of the Year', and now the company has been named one of the most innovative and inspiring small businesses in the North West.

Neil Briggs, BAC's managing director said: "We're delighted to have won the GREAT Face of the Festival and to receive the fantastic prize. We've already done the advertising shoot and can't wait to see it up on the big Liverpool screens."

# 4. Implementation

At this stage you know who your key stakeholders are and have tiered them based on influence. You also have an engagement plan in place and are ready to start talking to stakeholders. Engage with the highest tier/most important first – your plan will dictate the level of activity for each tier.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION:

- Set the vision – why are they being contacted, what are you communicating and how does it relate to them?  
(BIS Goals and Story)
- Clearly articulate what you are suggesting or how you want to work with them. This could be through an invite to an event, a proposal on joint working, or asking for their feedback or support on policy change.
- Always remember: what is in it for them as an individual or business? A tailored approach will always result in a greater level of engagement.

- Sometimes it may take a few attempts to engage and sometimes there might be a ‘no’ or ‘I don’t want to receive information’. If that is the case respect their decision and focus on other key stakeholders.
- Report and update internally – keep everyone abreast and record a detailed account of all activity for evaluation purposes.
- Know your stakeholders’ preferred medium of communications. Sometimes, it may be more effective to build, for example, online relationships first.

**Once engaged – the onus is then on you to keep them that way! Do not get what you want and move on. Relationships can need proactive management to deliver value.**



# 4. Implementation

## Relationship management

**Government organisations already maintain relationships with most stakeholder groups. But not all these relationships are proactively managed or sufficiently two way to deliver value**  
– Barker, Lynton

Robust relationship management is crucial to the success of your stakeholder engagement programme, particularly as often specific team members will be dealing with different stakeholder contacts. One area where a really effective campaign can fall down is if the relationships are not maintained.

Recommendations for effective relationship management:

- Ensure there is a maintained tiered database or contact sheet for all stakeholders involved in the project.
- Nominate a relationship lead and a primary contact. The relationship lead will have overall responsibility for stakeholder activity and will be a senior policy or public affairs manager. The primary contact will be responsible for relationship building (there may be several different primary contacts dependent on the number of stakeholders).
- Ensure stakeholder management is a regular agenda point on policy/progress and update reporting.

- Have a process to highlight good and bad practice and nip any conflict in the bud quickly.
- Stakeholder engagement is a constant, proactive part of our processes, not something you can just do from time to time when you feel like it. Some stakeholders will probably need to be more actively involved than others. But remember, you won't be able to engage with everyone all the time.
- Monitor online conversations. For example, create and use Twitter lists and Netvibes dashboards.

**Plan enough time for effective stakeholder engagement.**

**One size doesn't fit all.**

**You need to employ a variety of techniques to understand the range of stakeholder views.**

# 5. Did you set out to achieve what you wanted to achieve?

## The importance of evaluating activity

The majority of projects within BIS have clear timelines for activity. With stakeholder management, it is vital to evaluate your activity at the end of a project and at regular intervals for longer or more complex campaigns.

Through evaluation we can ensure we are meeting our objectives and targets and engaging with the right stakeholders. It is also an excellent opportunity to play back success and take on board key learnings.

Top questions –

- Can we demonstrate that we have met the objectives?
- What metrics can we use – number of stakeholders?  
Social media activity? Media coverage?  
Qualitative and quantitative data?
- What are the outputs and out-takes?

- Can we get feedback from our stakeholders?
- What has worked well and what have we learned for future activity?
- What is the best way to present our evaluation and who needs to see it?

# 5. Did you set out to achieve what you wanted to achieve? The importance of evaluating activity

The partnership ladder is an excellent evaluation tool to:

- Assess relationships
- Demonstrate relationship development
- Project the future
- Demonstrate the impact of events
- Show the effect of interventions
- Provide underpinning evidence

