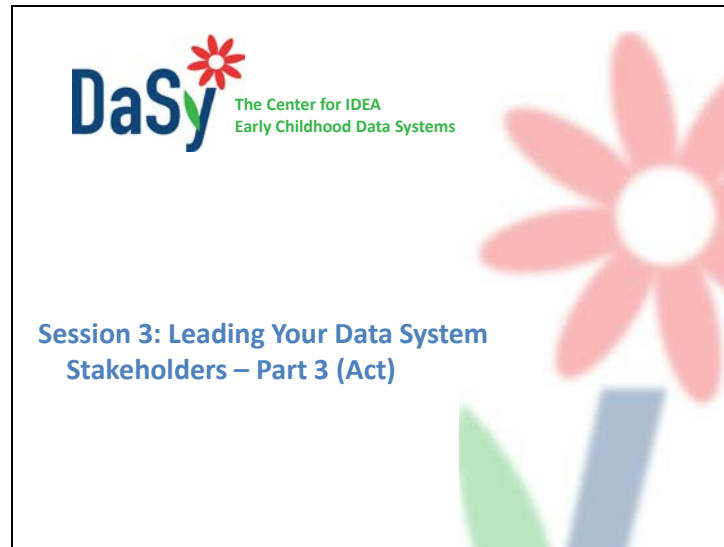


Slide 1



Welcome to Leading Your Data System Stakeholders – Part 3 - Act. This presentation gives you the information you need to lead stakeholders into action toward the goals you hope to achieve. The presentation concludes with a reminder of the importance of reflecting throughout the engagement process.

Leading Your Stakeholders

Stage 3: Act

In your role as a leader of stakeholders :

- Maximize opportunities for stakeholder input
- Implement stakeholder engagement activities that move the group forward toward accomplishing its goals
- Use group process techniques to promote a balance of influence among group members
- Build cooperation and trust in the stakeholder group
- Maintaining commitment of stakeholders

The logo for DaSy, featuring the text "DaSy" in a blue sans-serif font with a red asterisk-like symbol to the right.

Consistent and responsive leadership is essential in the Act stage of the stakeholder engagement process. During this stage, you lead active, collaborative stakeholders, either through a formal process or using informal methods of gathering input. Your stakeholders are informed and prepared for the work ahead. You actively support the process and focus on addressing stakeholders' information needs, balancing perspectives, and promoting equal participation among all stakeholders.


Let's take a more in depth look at what happens during the Act Stage.

Leading Your Stakeholders

by maximizing opportunities

Maximize opportunities for stakeholder input

- Use one or more methods for engaging with your stakeholders
(e.g., face-to-face meetings, conference calls, surveys, webinars)
- Consider formal and informal methods
- Align the request for input with the circumstances of the stakeholder
(e.g., for stakeholders who are unavailable to attend in person, consider other ways of obtaining input)
- Match the time commitment of stakeholder(s) with the level of interaction and methods available



Knowing your stakeholders and the work at hand allows you to tailor the requests that you make of each person. Using multiple methods of communication and meeting, and considering both the formal and informal ways to engage stakeholders, create more opportunities for stakeholder input than you get through meeting alone.

Remember, not all stakeholders need to be involved through an entire process. Stakeholders with specialized experience or knowledge may be asked to participate for a limited time or through less formal means.


As the leader, you are tasked with matching the resources and the knowledge of the stakeholders to provide you with the information and input you need. Today's world provides multiple technological options. Carefully consider using technology to gather input from your stakeholders.

Leading Your Stakeholders

by moving forward

Implement stakeholder engagement activities that move the group forward toward accomplishing its goals

- Seek feedback throughout the process
- Use effective group process techniques to ensure that everyone has opportunities to provide input
- Show the stakeholders how their feedback was used to support the goal



Continued buy-in is essential for stakeholders to see how their input is used to support the goal. This includes communicating changes and the rationale for all decisions. Always seek feedback and comments on the work and be transparent in your communication and process. When you follow a formal stakeholder engagement format, use effective group processes to ensure that each person has an opportunity to provide input. This includes variations on large group, small group, and roundtable discussions, and other methods for engaging people in long meetings.

Less formal stakeholder engagement processes may include group emails, small meetings, focus groups, and the use of web-based tools where people discuss, comment, exchange ideas, and provide input. This use of technology minimizes the need for everyone to meet face-to-face, requires less time, and results in equally valid feedback. Regardless of the ways in which you engage stakeholders, it helps for them to know that all their feedback was considered even if final decisions differ from their input.

Leading Your Stakeholders

by using group process techniques

Use group process techniques to promote a balance of influence among group members

- Observe patterns of communication, participation, and interaction
- Discuss the value of sharing relevant successes and challenges
- Exchange evidence-based resources
- Seek and listen to input and experiences shared from various perspectives



When meeting or talking with multiple stakeholders at one time, group process techniques balance the influence of any one member of a group. These techniques also establish the potential for everyone to contribute to achieving the group's objectives. Make sure you communicate the importance of working collaboratively in group situations to achieve determined goals and objectives. Take time to listen to your stakeholder partners and identify patterns and contexts of interactions among the group.


One way to facilitate group meetings effectively is to discuss the value of sharing both relevant successes and challenges. Establish a culture of exchanging evidence-based resources to inform the collaborative work. Seek and listen to the expertise and experience of your stakeholders. A commitment to listening carefully to each stakeholder's experiences, ideas, and concerns is essential to positive group interactions.

Leading Your Stakeholders

by balancing influence

Use group process techniques to promote a balance of influence among group members

- Elicit feedback from less vocal stakeholders
- Connect with individuals
- Continue to be transparent in communication – sharing information gained through individual communication
- Use planned, consistent, and cooperative approaches to the work



When engaging people in less formal ways, pay attention to the balance of input that you get in the same way you would if you were in the same room together. Make an effort to elicit additional feedback from stakeholders who are less vocal and reiterate the importance of their input. It can be especially challenging to keep people engaged and feeling that their input is relevant when less formal mechanisms are used. Be prepared to connect with people individually through calls, emails, and meetings to get their individual input. Continue to be transparent in your communication, and be sure to think through how you will communicate to others what individuals share, and how you will incorporate and use feedback received through individual conversations, emails, or phone calls.

Be thoughtful and specific about communication from stakeholders that is received through less formal means. It might be helpful to consider how you will document and share the input, with whom and when, thinking about the principles of stakeholder engagement as you create a plan. Remember that plans don't have to be formal. But, careful, planned, consistent, transparent, and cooperative approaches benefit your overall work.

Leading Your Stakeholders

by building cooperation and trust

Build cooperation and trust in stakeholders

- Create an environment that supports open exchange of ideas
- Address areas of conflict
- Identify and attend to all stakeholders' needs
- Revisit the vision and purpose of the work





Promoting active stakeholder engagement requires you to focus on cooperation and trust among group members. As the leader of the work, your role is to create an atmosphere that supports the open exchange of ideas among stakeholders. Use effective facilitation techniques, and above all, listen to all perspectives, encouraging stakeholders to do the same. Emphasize that all ideas are welcome, and work through conflict respectfully as soon as possible. This creates the cooperation and trust needed in your stakeholder group.

You can also support cooperation and trust by identifying and attending to all stakeholders within the group. Think creatively about how you and stakeholders might work to address the needs within the group.

Revisit the vision and purpose of the work, both on your own and with your stakeholders, to continue to move forward toward the stated goals and objectives. This is particularly helpful in situations where cohesion and collaboration need to be strengthened between you and your stakeholders, as well as among stakeholders themselves.

Leading Your Stakeholders

by maintaining commitment

Maintain commitment of stakeholders


- Offer reminders about the importance of remaining committed
- Communicate the value and importance of stakeholder input and participation
- Show how you have incorporated stakeholder feedback in decision making
- Use appropriate methods (e.g. webinar, email update) for communicating decisions to stakeholders in a timely manner



Your data system work may span several months or even years. Consequently, you may be working with your stakeholders over an extended period of time. As the work progresses, stakeholders may need reminders of the importance of remaining committed to the cause. This includes highlighting the benefits gained from achieving the outcomes the group set out to achieve when they started the work.

It is important for you to articulate to stakeholders that their input is needed and valued. Continually, seek information from your stakeholders throughout the engagement process, and subsequently incorporate that feedback into your decision-making. This facilitates your own ability to serve as an effective leader of the initiative. As the leader, communicate with your stakeholders regularly enough that they understand the commitment and their role in the work, as well as the status of the work, so they are motivated to continue.

Leading Your Stakeholders Reflect

Systematically evaluate and monitor progress 

- Identify areas of needed improvement and strategies for addressing those areas in a timely and effective manner
- Periodically review and revise, as needed, the formal and informal methods used to:
 - gather stakeholder input
 - communicate decisions



When leading stakeholders, ongoing reflection is critical. Reflection is the vehicle for determining if the process is moving forward. The purpose of reflection is to identify areas of needed improvement and strategies for addressing those areas in a timely and effective manner. This keeps the work moving forward in a positive direction, rather than waiting until problems cause roadblocks and stall momentum. Use all methods at your disposal, formal and informal, to collect the information you need throughout all stages of stakeholder engagement. This is your opportunity to gather input from stakeholders to see what is and is not working for them. Explore questions about the amount and quality of the stakeholder engagement. Reflecting on what you learn helps identify whether your leadership effort needs improvement to promote more effective stakeholder engagement.

Putting It All Together

Rise to the challenge

- Plan ahead and prepare stakeholders to be actively engaged
- Clearly articulate expectations for stakeholder involvement
- Provide a variety of ways for stakeholders to contribute
- Value the unique experiences and expertise in the group
- Focus on cooperation and trust-based relationships
- Seek support from the DaSy Center, if needed



As you rise to the challenge of leading a stakeholder group, consider these key takeaway messages and actions for you to take as you become an effective leader.

- Plan ahead and invest time in preparing your stakeholders to be active contributors.
- Clearly articulate how you see stakeholders being involved. At all levels, people need to know what is expected of them.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for stakeholders to contribute. Look for creative ways for people to share their expertise and opinions, rather than relying only on a single approach like meetings, email, or surveys.
- Value the unique and varied experiences and expertise that each stakeholder brings to the group. How you get the information matters less than varied backgrounds and perspectives.
- Above all, ground your stakeholder engagement activities in cooperative, trust-based relationships. Even stakeholders who participate informally are more likely to support the work when they know that you approach the input process in a cooperative, trustworthy way.
- Please reach out to DaSy with any questions you have. Remember, we are here to support you and the work you do with your data system stakeholders.