

Identifying and prioritising your stakeholders — four exercises

The ability to identify and prioritise your key stakeholders is vital to the success of your stakeholder communications strategy. Within this section you will find four exercises to help you do this.

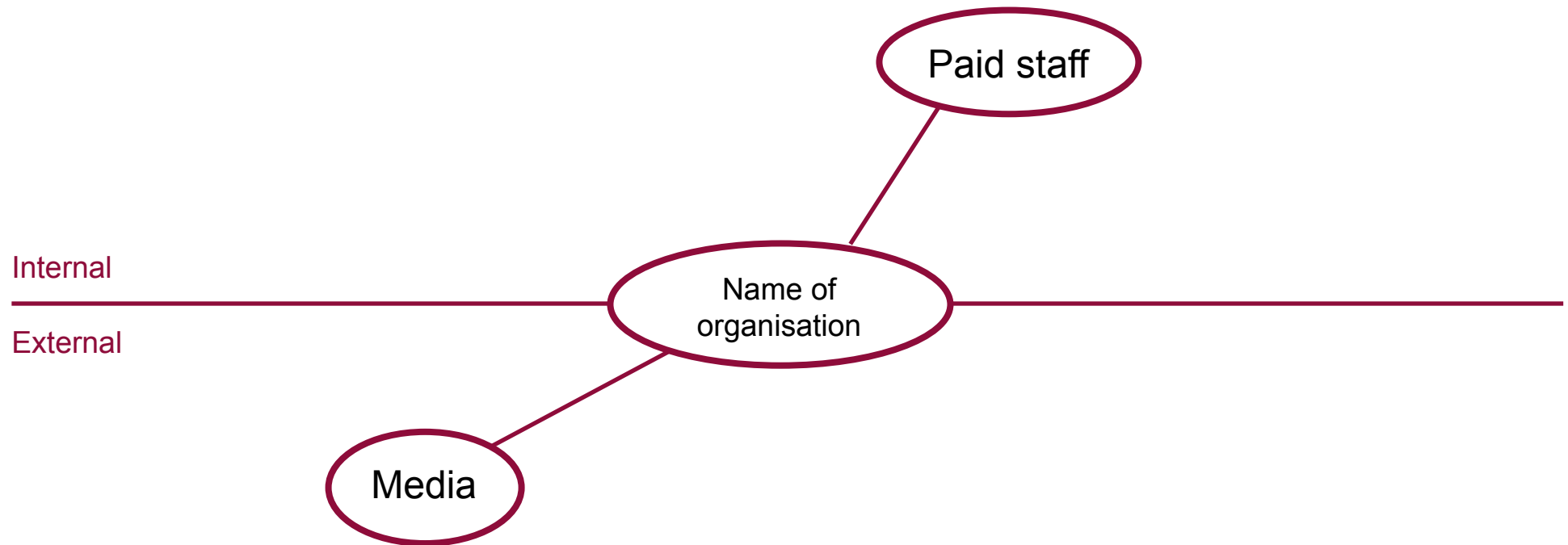
Without knowing who your stakeholders are, and understanding them, you have no foundation on which to build a communications strategy. It becomes impossible to identify the right messages to communicate to the right people at the right time and in the right way.

The exercises are easy to follow, and will give you the focus you need for your stakeholder communication strategy. Ideally you should complete them before moving on to the next section within this chapter.



Exercise one - Identifying your stakeholders

Spend time thinking about: the people and organisations that are affected by your work and who have power or influence over you organisation.



Exercise two — Identifying the people that are stakeholders

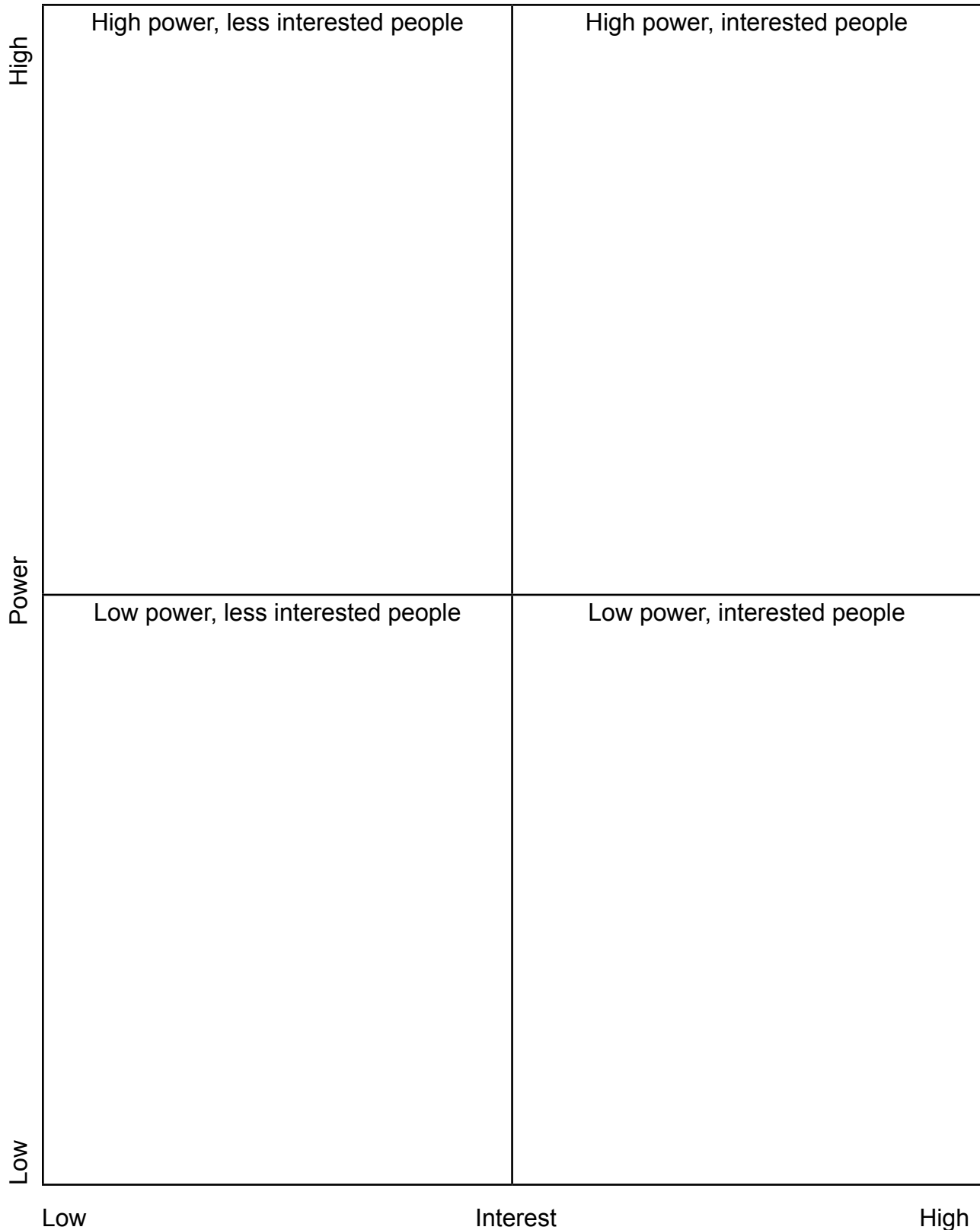
Now you have an idea of who your stakeholders are, you need to put a name to an organisation — as you can't communicate with an entire organisation!

Organisation	Stakeholder name(s)



Exercise three — Power and interest grid

Think about your stakeholders and what level of power and interest they have in your organisation. The grid will show you what level of involvement you will need to give them.



High power, interested people:

You should fully engage with these stakeholders — you should make sure that they are very satisfied with the communications you send them.

High power, less interested people:

You should make sure that these people feel satisfied with your communications. Don't communicate with them too much though otherwise your message may become boring.

Low power, interested people:

You should ensure that these people are adequately informed. They may be able to help you with the details of your project, suggesting a way of doing something that you haven't already thought of.

Low power, less interested people:

You should monitor these people, ensuring that you send updates about the project, but ensuring that you do not bore them with excessive communication.



Exercise four — Understanding who your stakeholders are

The easiest way to find out the views of your stakeholders is to ask them.

Stakeholders are often open about their views, and it's usually the first step in building a successful relationship with them. Below are five questions to start you off thinking about your organisation and its relationship with stakeholders.

1. What is their current opinion of your work?
2. What financial or emotional interest do they have in the outcome of your work?
3. What information do they want from you?
4. How do they want to receive information from you?
5. How often do they want to receive information from you?

Once you have this information, you can improve your stakeholder map that you completed in exercise three. You can then see which stakeholders are likely to support your work (advocates), which are neutral and those that do not support your work. The easiest way to do this is to colour code your stakeholders: Red for critics, Amber for neutral and Green for advocates.

Below is an example for you, on the next page you will find a grid for you to complete.

Power	High	High power, less interested people Mr Bloggs	High power, interested people Mr Smith
	Low	Low power, less interested people Mrs Jones	Low power, interested people
		Low	High
		Interest	

You can see here that Mr Bloggs needs a lot of persuading about your organisation, whereas Mr Smith needs managing closely to maintain the relationship. Mrs Jones' relationship needs maintaining at its current level.

