

PM WORLD TODAY – PM ADVISORY – AUGUST 2009

BEYOND CONVENTIONAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT  
*Developing PRIME Intelligence © on complex programmes*

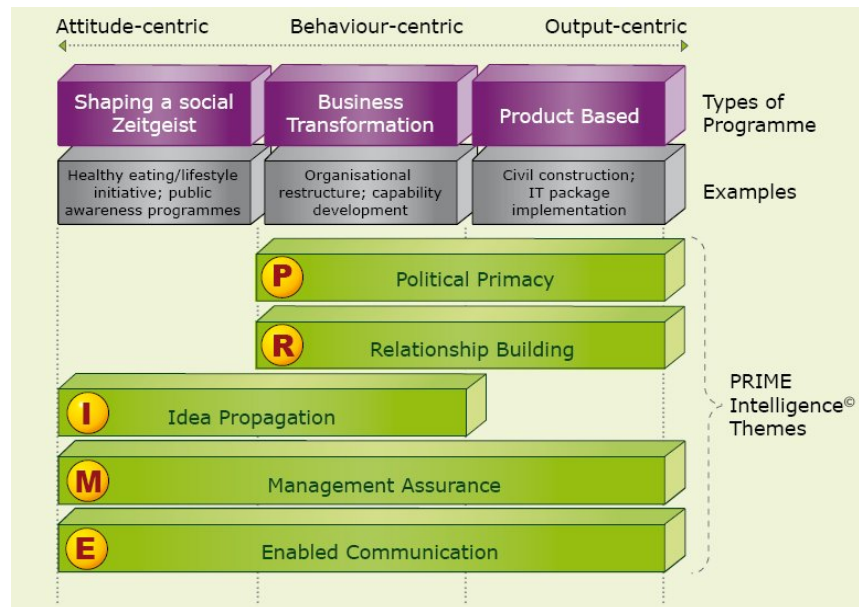
By **Dom Moorhouse**  
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**PRIME Intelligence © ‘top tips’ to get you started on enthusing a successful attitude across a programme team.**

Lack of effective engagement with stakeholders is a well acknowledged cause of programme failure and stakeholder management is increasingly, as such, recognised as a relevant discipline. There are many tools and techniques already available but they over emphasise a mechanistic, ‘left brain’ view of the world. What is really needed is something quite different. We call this PRIME Intelligence ©.

There is no intent, however, for this to be cleverer than it sounds. PRIME Intelligence © identifies five thematic viewpoints that have relevance contingent on the type of programme you are involved in (see diagram below). Familiarity and experience with these themes, and the ideas characterised within them, will enhance the chances of successful stakeholder engagement.

**PRIME Intelligence Themes**  
(and their relevance contingent on programme type)

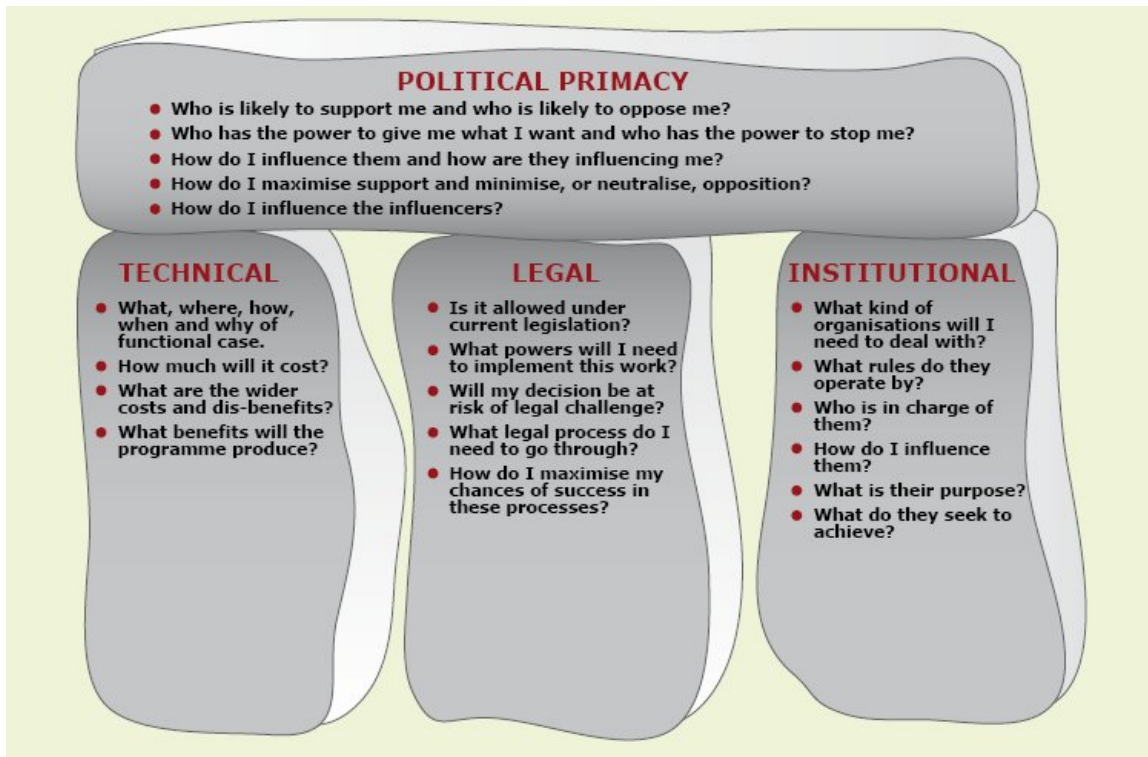


For the purposes of this article, we have identified 10 PRIME Intelligence © ‘top tips’ to get you started.

## Political Primacy

### Top Tip 1 - Develop your team’s ‘whole picture’ political understanding

Get your key programme team members together in a two-hour workshop. Using the ‘Pillars’ of technical, legal and institutional questions (see diagram below), facilitate a discussion in order to develop a team understanding of these aspects. Make a note as to who naturally contributes to this debate (remembering it is not expected to be everyone’s natural area of interest or leaning). Be explicit – ask who in your team feels comfortable operating in the ‘political’ arena.



### Top Tip 2 - Develop a ‘second order’ stakeholder map

Following on from the first session – but not immediately (this is tiring stuff!) – spend half a day with your key programme team members generating a ‘Second Order’ Stakeholder Map (i.e. one that seeks to map each stakeholder’s disposition, predictability and power) . Large A0 pieces of paper and Post-It™ notes are ideal for this exercise. If the majority of your stakeholders are internal, develop a social-

network diagram and take some time to talk through the implications of this picture to your programme.

## Relationship Building

### Top Tip 3 - Take some time out to 'know yourself'

With those programme team members you have identified as being interested, comfortable and capable in relation to stakeholder engagement – book another meeting. As a prelude, get each to undertake a personality inventory (Belbin etc) - these can now be typically done online for a reasonable charge. Bring the results together and discuss each other's differences and how this translates to optimal matching with key stakeholders (i.e. 'who gets on with who' and 'who lashes with who'). Use real examples to bring this conversation to life and seek candour in order to develop an optimal mapping of team members to key stakeholders. Finally discuss potential stakeholder engagement scenarios and how the different strengths of programme team members can be brought to bear.

### Top Tip 4 - Audit your programme's 'personality'

Assign someone the task of critically reviewing whether your programme has a clear brand presence and 'personality'. Do you have an easily communicable programme name, logo and strap line? Are the team consistent with their communications (from email signature blocks to document formats)? Have you agreed the 'rules of the road' that define the programme team's expected values and behaviours?

Develop and reinforce any missing elements of this presence. Do not seduce yourself into thinking this is all a cosmetic aside.

## Idea Propagation

### Top Tip 5 - Read Malcolm Gladwell's 'Tipping Point'

If the propagation of ideas is central to your challenge then order, distribute and read this book – or one similar - in order to stimulate your team's thinking around this aspect.

### Top Tip 6 - Develop the programme's key change story (for mantra-like repetition)

Challenge yourself as to whether you have a simple message that compels others to accept the case for change. Remember that the technical or economic case is insufficient – it needs to appeal to people in order to pass their emotional filter also. Continue to deconstruct it until you get to a readily accessible message.

Remember that humans love stories that they can add their own meaning to and pass on – is there a powerful anecdote that captures the programme's reason for being?

Once you have it, lead by example, repeat it over and over and over.

### Management Assurance

#### Top Tip 7 - Ban the term sponsor and find a leader

Ban the term sponsor from all documentation and indeed corporate language – a 'sponsor' is the last thing a programme needs. Ask yourself whether you have a clear, senior business leader who accepts – unequivocally – ultimate responsibility for delivering the programme and who has the capacity and authority to deal with the inevitable 'blockers'. If the answer is no, have the moral courage and professional integrity to tenaciously pursue resolution of this aspect.

This is absolutely fundamental as all programme activity is completely nugatory if a committed and capable senior responsible owner is not in place.

#### Top Tip 8 - Track stakeholder receptiveness

This tip is especially relevant to large internal change programmes. Design and introduce a simple tool (e.g. 1-10 detractor-advocate model) that can be used to objectively measure collective sentiment through the programme's life. Use it at every intervention with stakeholders and seek their candour. Monitor the results at an aggregate level to avoid any programme team 'optimism bias' in the progression towards a 'tipping point'. Don't avoid the detractors – seek to really understand their issues; even if their positions don't change (it is unrealistic to expect this in all instances) the information they provide is of the utmost importance to the programme.

### Enabled Communication

#### Top Tip 9 - 'Pressure test' the Communications Plan

Do you have a communications plan? If no, the action is obvious. If yes, kick the tyres a little. Your communication resources are finite and inevitably not as plentiful as you would ideally like. In this context, ask yourself whether it is a focused plan – are you concentrating your finite resources on those stakeholders with high power and low predictability?

### Top Tip 10 - Use a variety of media

Don't just send an email! Think about a new way to get your message across as your message will be influenced by the media you choose. Be flexible. Try new things. Use video and audio. Set up a programme online website or blog. Send a postcard. Run lunch-time 'drop by' presentations. Call by at desks unannounced. Put in place suggestion-boxes or even install a 'Big Brother' video diary room to elicit comment (it has been done!). Communicate by walking around.

Experiment and keep on trying new ideas until you find out what works. Ask questions. Be open and always, always, always remember that communication is two-way - so get feedback!

For more information on how to manage your stakeholders visit [www.moorhouseconsulting.com](http://www.moorhouseconsulting.com) or contact Marketing Manager Paula Allerton at [paulaallerton@moorhouseconsulting.com](mailto:paulaallerton@moorhouseconsulting.com).

## About the Author:



Dom Moorhouse

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Management Company of the Year' Moorhouse Consulting Ltd, is a former Royal Marines Officer (serving an 8-year commission). Dom founded the company after previously working for Deloitte Consulting in their Programme Leadership practice. He has considerable experience of managing large-scale programmes within the Public and Services sectors - involving the enhancement of processes, operations and organisational structure at a corporate level. Whilst managing a £10m/annum, 50-person+ business now precludes full-time delivery roles, Dom remains active in directing and assuring many major client engagements. Recent examples include, working to the direct tasking of the BT CEO, the strategic mapping of BT's major programmes and PPM resources (as well as facilitation of a roadmap aimed at delivering a pan-organisation PPM methodology and SRO support infrastructure). At BT, Dom also defined and initially led the PACE Project that successfully produced a deep intranet-based resource for the execution of £multi million outsourcing programmes. Previous delivery roles have included the establishment of a strategic assurance capability to oversee a £12billion investment programme at Transport for London (TfL) and, prior to that, leadership of a one-year initiative aimed at improving the organisations PPM delivery capability. This latter initiative was widely recognised as a radical business change exercise (winner of the Office of Government Commerce's 2004 Team Award and the 2005 London Excellence Award - Results category). Dom has a first-class computing degree, an MBA and programme management accreditation (PMP, PRINCE2, MSP). He is a Chartered Director (Institute of Directors) and a Fellow of the Institute of Business Consulting, with Certified Management Consultant status, and a Fellow of the Association of Project Management.

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