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Information Sheet

StakeholderTalk™

Web-based Stakeholder Engagement

StakeholderTalk™ is a new online product, developed to help organisations engage with their stakeholders more effectively. StakeholderTalk™ provides a range of tools that will help improve the effectiveness of any consultation process. **It enables organisations to communicate directly with stakeholders, deliver information and gather comment and opinion on important issues.**

Developed from a unique partnership between The Environment Council and IMS Consulting, StakeholderTalk supports the vital consultation processes that can transform modern decision-making.

No two consultations are the same, so StakeholderTalk provides a flexible, secure infrastructure that can be used to support a number of different aspects of the consultation process. Standard consultation tools can be further extended using customised solutions.

StakeholderTalk™- Helping You Consult with Stakeholders More Effectively

- is a powerful new, web-based engagement process designed to help organisations consult, debate and communicate more effectively.

-was developed in partnership with The Environment Council; the UK's longest-established and most highly respected experts on stakeholder engagement strategies.

-provides a toolbox of easy-to-use components designed to make stakeholder engagement, dialogue and consultation more meaningful and valuable.

-helps you engage with stakeholders at all levels.

Gathering the views and opinions of different groups of people or individuals can help to shape your decision-making. Stakeholder engagement and consultation, which is really a fancy phrase for "talking to people" is now an integral part of many sustainability projects. Whether you are bidding for a multi-million pound public sector project, or simply want to gather employee feedback on a recent initiative, StakeholderTalk provides the power and flexibility to enable you to deliver successful stakeholder dialogues.

A Web-based Solution to Stakeholder Consultation

StakeholderTalk provides all the tools, analysis and capability of traditional stakeholder dialogues, in an online format.

Using the web to engage and consult with your multiple stakeholder groups is complementary to traditional "round table" dialogues. It also provides numerous opportunities to engage which simply weren't practical or economical previously.

These include:

- Communicating with groups or individuals who are unable to meet face to face – possibly due to time constraints, physical location or cost of transport.
- Broad access to views – gather the opinions of hundreds of stakeholders, rather than just a few.
- Rapid consultation and results; ideal for time-limited projects.
- Employee surveys; with confidential results if required.

Using the tools available with StakeholderTalk, a complete consultation process can be developed. This will take your organisation all the way from the initial identification of the target stakeholders, right through to the analysis of results. You can choose from a range of formats and customisation levels, enabling each consultation to be tailored to suit the project. No programming is needed and you don't need to be a communications expert.

StakeholderTalk takes care of everything; and it's supported by a team of analysts and stakeholder engagement experts, should you need them.

In its standard form, StakeholderTalk consists of three levels of operation:

- ENGAGE
- CONSULT
- RESULT

These can be extended, adapted and customised if required, to suit your organisation's needs. Each level is supported by a number of online communication tools, including surveys, e-newsletters and document libraries that can be used to enhance communication with individuals, selected groups or the entire stakeholder community.

ENGAGE

All projects normally begin by identifying the individuals or groups who need to be consulted. These can range from a few employees, for an internal engagement project, right through to thousands of members of the public; for example as part of a strategic impact assessment. The StakeholderTalk team will work with you, helping you to establish: who you want to talk to, how to communicate and what information is to be delivered.

CONSULT

Once the stakeholder groups have been identified and contacted, consultation can commence. This will usually include some form of online survey, as well as collecting comments, observations and objections from the various participants.

RESULT

Depending upon the scope of the consultation, results and analysis will be presented as the conclusion to the project. Online survey results are provided in clear and easy to interpret format. If required, results can be made available dynamically; you can actually watch the responses to individual questions build up, providing valuable trends as the consultation process develops. Further actions and detailed analysis can also be supplied; using

StakeholderTalk's own team of researchers and analysts if required, to help you deliver meaningful and valuable outcomes.

For more complex consultations, customisation is available at each stage of the project.

Putting StakeholderTalk to Work

StakeholderTalk is a powerful communications platform that encourages online consultation and debate. It provides organisations with a comprehensive, robust and detailed means of developing engagement processes, while being extremely simple to use.

All consultation processes can be broadly defined as having three parts: *engage*, *consult* and *result*. These can be extended to include a fourth; *communicate* where there is a need or desire to deliver the findings of the consultation to an audience that extends beyond the original stakeholder groups. All four areas are supported extensively by StakeholderTalk.

At the Engagement phase, StakeholderTalk can be used to:

- **Build and manage a database** of stakeholder contacts
- **Communicate with stakeholders** via enewsletters and email requests
- **Develop a web-based community**, using dedicated microsites
- **Open up communications** between multi-stakeholder groups using forum, blogs and debating arenas

Once stakeholders have been identified and contacted, their active participation will be sought in the consultation process. This participation can be structured; such as through the use of an online questionnaire, or unstructured, through the use of blogs and other opinion-gathering tools.

Information, documentation and background data relating to the consultation can be made available on the web (securely, in password-protected areas if required) using the library tools in StakeholderTalk. These tools can be particularly valuable where groups are requested to review and comment on sections of a report.

The internet is now the natural place for dialogue and debate. Most people have access to it and are comfortable with web-based communication. There is often less resistance to online participation in surveys or blog posting than there is in more conventional, face to face debate. Many sectors of society are now comfortable with social networking sites as a means of sharing information. StakeholderTalk builds on these aspects of modern communication to provide an accessible, easy-to-use platform for stakeholder engagement.

At the heart of most consultation processes is an opinion-gathering phase. In StakeholderTalk, this frequently takes the form of an online questionnaire. These can be customised and tailored to target specific stakeholder groups or sub-groups. Participation can be confidential or public, moderated or open. Results can be displayed to all parties, or remain restricted. They can be viewed in real-time, with trending, or collated and displayed once a consultation is complete.

If your consultation process involves communicating information as a result of the project's findings, StakeholderTalk can help here as well. Dedicated web sites, microsites or online communications programmes utilising e-newsletters can be built around the consultation. All of the supporting communications tools and expertise to make your stakeholder engagement successful; and measurable; are available from the StakeholderTalk team.

StakeholderTalk™

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