

STARTING OUT



How do I understand which issues are important to our stakeholders?

➤ **Are you trying to address and report on all sustainability issues at once because you're not sure what your stakeholders expect? Stakeholder engagement can help.**

Many businesses are wary of stakeholder engagement as they believe it may not provide clear answers and creates a risk of difficult questions being asked. However; smart stakeholder engagement is focused, provides clear recommendations for sustainability strategy and delivers guidance on developing competitive advantage at the same time.

RESOURCES

Read our blog post 'Materiality mistakes and how to avoid them' available at www.imsplc.com

RESOURCES

View the walk-through infographic on the Handbook Resources page at www.imsplc.com

EXPERT OPINION



Nadia Provenza, sustainability consultant; engagement specialist

Stakeholder engagement and materiality have been a core part of IMS Consulting's business for many years. We refined the process and developed online methods, facilitation techniques, questioning styles, statistical analysis processes and project management steps that allow us to deliver clear and business-focused findings that stand up to scrutiny from sustainability frameworks and peer groups.

HELP ME SOLVE THIS PROBLEM

For a discussion on how stakeholder engagement can meet your objectives and provide clear strategic business guidance contact Nadia at nadia.provenza@imsplc.com or visit www.imsplc.com to find out more.



Whether a point-in-time materiality assessment, or an ongoing programme of stakeholder engagement, the key is to utilise best practice methods in planning and delivery:

- **Identify the objectives.** Be clear about why you're engaging, what you need to find out and how the findings will be disseminated back through the business for use.
- **Identify the stakeholders.** Don't fall for the rookie mistake of just asking your favourites. Map out the different stakeholder groups linked to your business and work through a process of identifying representatives from each.
- **Use the right methods.** Online consultation, face-to-face facilitated workshops, interviews, stakeholder panels – all can provide very effective results if planned properly.
- **Make it open and impartial.** Many businesses sabotage their own stakeholder engagement processes by asking leading questions or going on the defensive when stakeholders try to be honest. Question wisely.
- **Promote the findings.** Once you have analysed the results, look at ways to communicate the findings. By helping different internal audiences understand the results, you will maximise your chances of affecting real change off the back of them.

RESOURCES

Read the 'Materiality explained' white paper on the Handbook Resources page at www.imsplc.com