EFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI PROGRAMMING

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'What I'm not going to cover'

- International alumni recruitment
- International alumni engagement
- The alumni lifecycle
- The importance of CRMs
- The 5 Is;
  Identify, Inform, Interest, Involve, Invest

'What I am going to cover'

- How to develop communication skills to involve and engage senior leadership to secure long-term support and other units to increase visibility and recognition of the international alumni activity at institutional level

- How to develop networking skills to enhance relationship building with external partners (other HEIs, companies etc.)

Let's imagine….

- ✓ Actions for successful international alumni activity
- ✓ Mapped synergies
- ✓ Identified internal institutional stakeholders
- ✓ Rethought and amended alumni strategy
- ✓ Now have Project International Alumni

Communicating your plan

- Who do you need to communicate/network with?
- Why do you need to communicate/network with them?
- What do you need to communicate?
- How will you communicate?
- How often?

Who do you need to communicate/network with?

- Stakeholder analysis
  - Identification
  - Prioritisation
  - Understanding
- Stakeholder map

Why do you need to communicate and network with them?

- They could **help** progress the alumni programming
- They could **hinder** the development of your alumni programming
- They could control **resource** for the alumni programming
- They could **inform** your plans for alumni programming

What is the best way to communicate?

- Tell
- Sell
- Consult
- Involve

Networking can only really happen when you consult and involve.

How will you communicate?

- Electronic
- Print
- Face to face
- 'Wallpaper'

- Informal channels

How often and what content?

- Timely

- Appropriate

- Relevant

- All these things are dependent on the medium you use and your stakeholder profile and how you prioritise them

Power/Interest Grid for Stakeholder Prioritisation
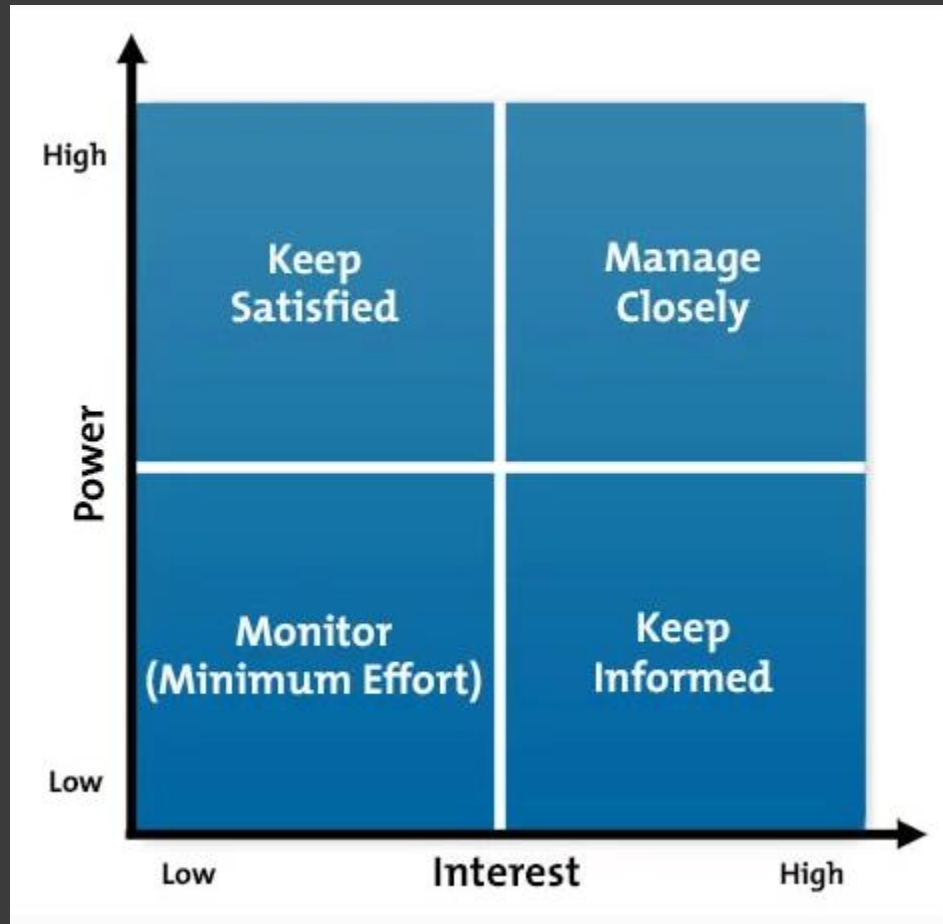
Progressive engagement

Manage engaged stakeholders (Deliver)

Communicate and Network (Inform and Retain)

Build Trust (Recruit)

Build Trust

- Develop structures that are valued by stakeholders
- Communicate examples of best practice
- Develop realistic objectives (start small)
- Deliver on promises

Build Trust (Recruit)

Build Trust with….

- Initial consultation meetings with senior colleagues
- Initial consultation meetings with internal colleagues
- Preliminary communications via email and telephone
- Send examples of best practice in the area of international alumni programming via email containing links to websites of other HEIs about their work

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Communicate and Network

- ◉ Continue to meet with senior leaders
- ◉ Show the benefit that international alumni programming has for the institution
- ◉ Identify a champion
- ◉ Set up an advisory group
- ◉ Create a working group
- ◉ Utilise network of HEI alumni staff

Communicate and Network (Inform and Retain)

Build Trust (Recruit)

Communicate and network using….

- Regular meetings with your chosen champion
- Scoping document produced for the strategic level advisory group
- Regular meetings with internal colleagues to create a list of joint objectives
- Inspirational language
- Varied and relevant communications depending on your audience
- Emails
- Meetings organised by the International Alumni Network

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Manage

- Manage the advisory and working groups
- Create an overall strategy at advisory group level
- Develop rolling operational plans at working group level
- Send regular comms
- Maintain meetings

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Manage using ....

- Regular meetings with your chosen champion
- Regular meetings with internal colleagues to create and manage your list of joint objectives
- Email messages about delivery of objectives and successes
- Varied and relevant communications depending on your audience
- Regular blog update
- Reports written for the strategic advisory group and operational working groups
- Internal online sharing platform, e.g. Slack
- Information in your physical space – 'wallpaper'
- Regularly updated web pages

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Benefits of effective communications and networking

- Better informed stakeholders, which leads to….
- Appreciation that your programming supports institutional objectives
- More likelihood that stakeholders will invest resource in your programming
- More likelihood that joint objectives will be delivered
- More likelihood that senior leaders will allow fellow staff to get involved in supporting your programming
- Wider knowledge of successes

Suggested Action Plan

- Define your project – International Alumni Engagement
- International Alumni Engagement Strategy Group
- Develop strategy
- International Alumni Working Group
- Operational plan (rolling)
- Supporting the institution's strategy
- Report regularly to the strategy group
- Regular meetings with influencers
- Communicate (electronic, print, face to face, wallpaper, informal)
- Repeat!

Take Home Messages

- Make sure your programming supports overall institutional objectives
- Find a senior leader champion for your work
- Make your communications timely, relevant and appropriate for your stakeholder audiences
- Network with those who will further your objectives at every opportunity
- Communicate your successes

Thank you and any questions?