



Your Journey to Engage Executive Stakeholders Playbook

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23 years in customer-facing roles: 6 Years in London and 14 years on planes



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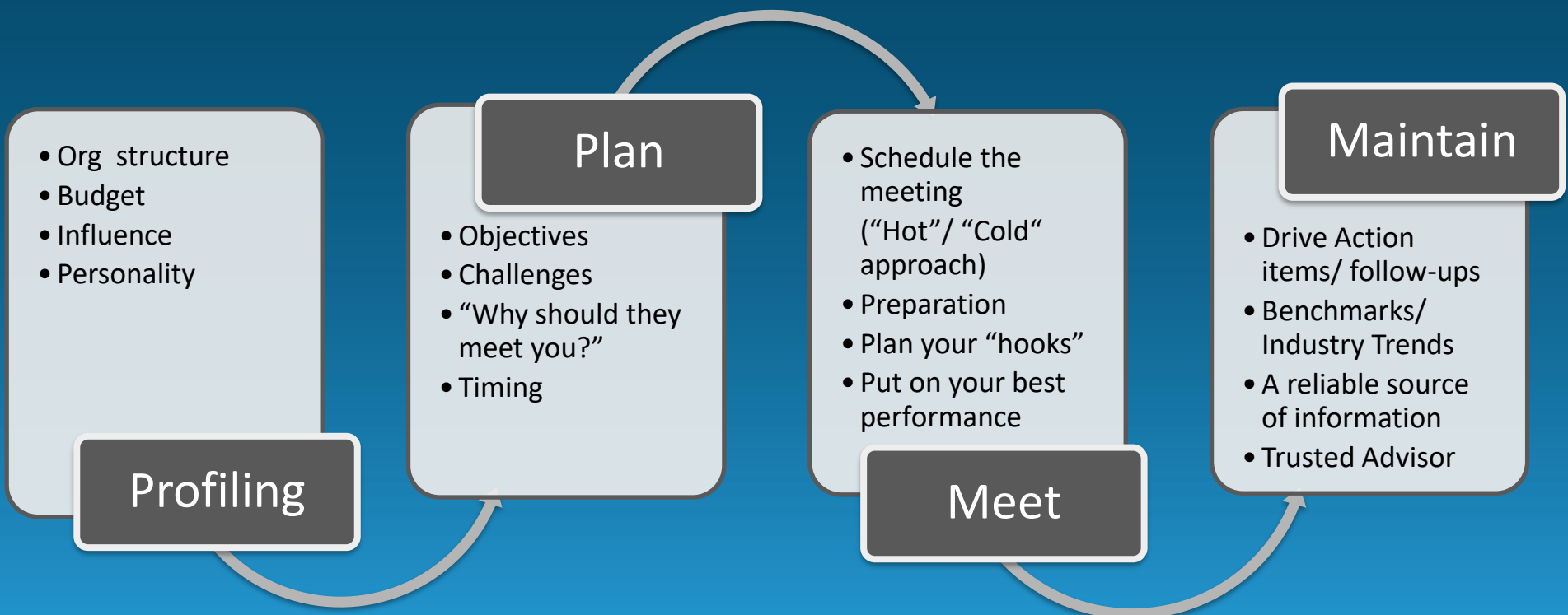


I love sports and Writing



First novel published in 2021
Second novel published in 2023

Building a relationship with Executive Stakeholders





Profiling Executive Stakeholders (1/4)

Assumptions:

- You already performed stakeholder mapping
- You did not have a prior engagement with the executive stakeholder

Org Structure	Budget	Influence	Personality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business Unit• C-level (Y/N)• Organizational “Mileage”• Time spent in current role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit / Team size• Benchmarks• Engagements with other vendors• “Your share of the pie”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder Part of Vendor selection process?• Business intelligence• Perceived level of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LinkedIn profile• “Digital footprint”• Input from other stakeholders



Profile the Executive Stakeholders (2/4)

- Learn the **organizational structure**
 - Which business unit does the executive stakeholder manage?
 - Seniority, C-Level (Y/N)?
 - Organizational experience (“mileage”)
 - How long have they been in their current position? Are they moving to a new role?
- **Budget**
 - Assess the org size/unit/ team size.
 - Use benchmarks about the budget based on your experience or consult other colleagues from your team.
 - What are the other commercial engagements the stakeholder sponsor? (Managed service contract with IBM is completely different from engagement with a small startup)
 - Estimate your “share of the pie.” What is the % of the budget spent on your engagement?



Profile the Executive Stakeholders (3/4)

- **Influence**
 - Was the stakeholder part of the vendor selection process?
 - Business intelligence based on input from other stakeholders you know
 - Assess the perceived level of influence in the organization.
- **Personality**
 - LinkedIn profile
 - Search for “Digital Footprint” (interviews, publications, webinars, other references)
 - Seek feedback from other stakeholders or your network
- **Using AI -The tests I performed (ChatGPT, Bard) did not yield better results than free search when looking for a stakeholder profile/activities summary.**

Profile the Executive Stakeholders (4/4)

Your expected outcomes :

- Initial assessment of the stakeholders' organizational gravitas. (Their “power gauge”)
- Initial understanding of the executive's management style (for example, Entrepreneur vs. corporate style)





Planning

Plan to approach the Executive Stakeholders (1/6)

Business Objectives

- Revenue?
- Cost savings?
- Efficiency?
- Time-to-market?
- Regulation?
- Brand/reputation

Challenges

- External/Internal challenges?
- Market / Global changes, lack of resources, technology gap, time essence, internal politics, etc.

Why?

- Why should the stakeholder meet you?
- Can you solve/assist with one of the “top challenges”?

Timing

- Is there an urgency in your approach?
- Does the stakeholder “firefight” at the present?
- Optimal “window of opportunity”



Plan to approach the Executive Stakeholders (2/6)

- Stakeholder **objectives**
 - You should know “What will make the stakeholder successful in their organization?”
 - Examples:
 - Increase the business unit pipeline/deals/revenue
 - Cost savings and creating efficiencies
 - Comply with industry/local regulations
 - Time to market with new product/service
 - Strengthen the brand name
 - Improve employee affiliation with the organization



Plan to approach the Executive Stakeholders (3/6)

- Stakeholders' **challenges**
 - You should know, “What are the main factors potentially preventing the stakeholder from meeting the objectives?”
 - Examples:
 - Economic/Global/market trends and changes
 - Lack of resources/budget
 - Missing the “know-how”
 - Technology gap
 - Timeline restrictions
 - Internal politics



Plan to approach the Executive Stakeholders (4/6)

- **Why should the stakeholder meet you?”**
 - Can you help to meet their objectives?
 - Can you assist in overcoming one of the top challenges?
 - Can you assist in reducing risks?
 - Can you provide valuable information? Benchmarks?
 - Can you provide valuable advice?
 - Is the use case supported by your product/ solution mapped to one of the main work streams under the stakeholder’s responsibility



Plan to approach the Executive Stakeholders (5/6)

- **Timing is everything**
 - While your preparation is an essential step, the timing of your approach is as important in your journey to meet the stakeholder.
 - Is there an urgency to meet the stakeholder? In this case, you better get one of the other stakeholders/champions you know to help set up the meeting.
 - In case the stakeholder is “firefighting,” wait for a less stressful time to approach.
 - Take into consideration seasonality that affects customer’s business and public/private holidays
 - **Tip:** don’t schedule a meeting on the last day before the holiday or the first week after the holiday

Plan to approach the Executive Stakeholders (6/6)

Your expected outcomes :

- Good understanding of the priorities of the Stakeholder
- You can articulate why the stakeholder will accept a meeting with you.





Meeting

Meeting with the Executive Stakeholder (1/6)

Scheduling

- “HOT approach” via a stakeholder or a colleague from your own organization.
- “Cold approach”

Preparations

- Clear objectives
- Agenda and slides
- A successful outcome will be...

Hooks

- Questions
- Best practices
- Benchmarks
- Industry/market insights
- Plan your action items

Performance

- Short and concise
- The stakeholder is in focus
- Quantitative data
- Next steps



Meeting with the Executive Stakeholder (2/6)

- **Scheduling:**
 - Plan a “Hot approach” via a champion/other stakeholder/executive from your organization
 - Your champion/stakeholder should attend the meeting with you.
 - Your contact person to the stakeholder should be able to explain “why the executive will accept a meeting with you.”
 - “Cold approach”
 - Reach out via email or LinkedIn
 - Short message
 - Address specific verified objectives/challenges
 - Offer your assistance
 - Request a short call/meeting



Meeting with the Executive Stakeholder (2/6)

- **Preparation:**
 - Clarify the objectives of the meeting before you prepare your notes and slides
 - Clarify to yourself what will be considered a successful outcome
 - The agenda should be simple to follow
 - Keep the number of slides to the minimum
 - Leverage quantitative data and prepare a “story” behind the numbers
 - Assuming other stakeholders join you, share with them your slides and ask for feedback to sharpen your message.



Meeting with the Executive Stakeholder (4/6)

- **“Plan your hooks”**
 - The questions you may ask:
 - Relate to the stakeholder’s objectives/challenges
 - Your questions should trigger interest and a subsequent request for more information
 - Make use of your unique industry knowledge and insights
 - Share best practices observed with other customers
 - The data you share should drive the stakeholder to:
 - A valuable conclusion or insight
 - Have a sufficient interest to further engage with you
 - Define the action items you will drive from the meeting



Meeting with the Executive Stakeholder (5/6)

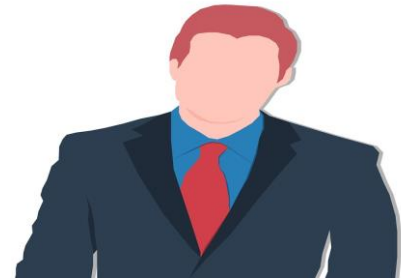
- **First impression matters**
 - Be ready to deliver your message in less time than you think you may have (there is a good chance your meeting will be shorter than scheduled).
 - For example, if you have 30 minutes meeting and assume you have 20 minutes for your slides, then plan to complete them in 15 minutes.
 - While you present, pay attention to the stakeholder's verbal/nonverbal communication
 - Assess the level of engagement based on the questions raised
 - Close the meeting with action items/next steps/agreement on a follow-up meeting



Meeting with the Executive Stakeholder (6/6)

Your expected outcomes:

- You deliver a top-notch meeting with the executive stakeholder
- You drive the next steps and action items related to the specific interests/objective/challenges of your stakeholder





Maintaining



Maintaining the relationship (1/2)

- The next meeting/engagement depends on the action items from the 1st meeting
- Meaningful action items include specific responses you provide to the executive's inquiries
- Share **additional** benchmarks/industry trends and demonstrate domain expertise
- Assess additional **challenges** the stakeholder is facing and whether you can provide your assistance
- If you can create positive momentum, challenge yourself to become a trusted advisor
 - Enable success and let them gradually trust your judgment and advice.
 - Provide information and recommendations aligned with the stakeholder's objectives.
 - If applicable, offer specific advice related to other domains such as technology, vendors, and industry "know-how."
- Invite the stakeholder to participate in EBRs if previously not joined.
- At a later stage (with a good relationship in place), drive the stakeholder to be your advocate



Maintaining the relationship (2/2)

Your expected outcomes:

- You maintain a direct line of communication with the stakeholder
- In a trusted advisor capacity – you may receive questions and requests from the executive stakeholder.
- You are comfortable inviting the executive stakeholder to EBR
- You can leverage the relationship to promote renewal, upsells, advocacy, and manage escalations directly with the stakeholder.



THANK YOU!



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