**Exercise: Identifying stakeholders**

**Introduction**

Data analysis is the process of uncovering hidden patterns and valuable insights from large and complex data sets. Surrounded by data, with the volume of that data often a challenge, how can businesses make sense of it all? That's where data analysts come in. From small businesses to Fortune 500 companies, data analysis is essential to organizations.

Previously you learned that the role of a data analyst is to make sense of the data that organizations collect, turning it into insights that inform decisions. Early in the data analysis process, it is essential for data analysts to engage with stakeholders to understand the goal of the analysis and the data that is relevant to that goal. In this exercise, you'll use a high-level skill called stakeholder analysis to identify key business stakeholders through a case study. By the end of this exercise, you will be able to identify the key stakeholders and understand their perspectives to better guide your data analysis.

**Case study**



**Company**

Adventure Works is in the sports goods business. It is a large, multinational manufacturing company that produces and distributes bicycles and accessories to global markets. The company has established itself as a trusted brand. However, with the entry of new competitors, their market share has been threatened.

**Scenario**

The company has decided to take a new approach to maintain its position in the market. As a result, Renee, the marketing director at Adventure Works, has asked you to conduct a sales data analysis project. Renee is responsible for creating and implementing marketing campaigns.

The goal of the project is to use the insights gained from the analysis of sales data to drive new marketing campaigns and improve the company's market share. The project aims to identify customer preferences, buying patterns, and trends, which will be used to create targeted marketing campaigns that will appeal to the company's existing customer base, and attract new customers.

To achieve this, you need to identify the key people in the business who can provide valuable insights into the company's current sales and marketing strategies. You must interview company managers with different responsibilities and roles to gain a comprehensive understanding of the company's sales and marketing operations.

**Employees**

These are the executives available that you can consider for an interview:

* Ricci is the customer service manager. She is responsible for ensuring that customers are satisfied with the company's products and services.
* Igor is the finance manager. He oversees the company's financial operations.
* Jane is the IT manager. She manages the company's information technology department.
* Renee is the marketing director. She develops and executes marketing strategies that advertise and publicize the business's goods and services.
* Sam is the research and development manager. Sam manages the company's research and development department.
* Alex is the security operations manager. She manages the company's operations, including security and maintenance.
* Nia is the legal counsel. She manages the company's legal affairs.
* Kane is the sales manager. He oversees the sales team and ensures that they meet their sales targets.
* Hassan is the human resources manager. He manages the company's staffing and employment resources.

**Instructions**

Create a new Word document called *The role of the data analyst in identifying stakeholders.* Follow the steps below to complete the exercise.

**Step 1: Understand the context**

Read the case study carefully to understand the business context and the goals of the data analysis project. Take some notes to familiarize yourself with the personas mentioned in the case study, including their roles and responsibilities.

**Step 2: Identify the key stakeholders**

Identify and list the key stakeholders you think you should interview and the reason you selected them. Classify the stakeholders chosen by the level of influence and interest each might have in the sales data analysis project. Your list should be laid out as follows:

* The name of the key stakeholder and their role (for example: Ricci, customer service manager).
* Their level of influence (High, Medium, Low).
* The level of interest they have in the project (High, Medium, Low).
* The reason, or reasons, that you selected them.

**Tip:** For the last item above, be sure to write a few sentences about each selected stakeholder’s level of influence, level of interest, and explain your reason for selecting them.

**Step 3: Prepare interview questions**

Based on the stakeholders selected, write a list of 3 questions you will ask each individual. The questions should steer the data analysis toward achieving the project goals. This question list should include:

* Name of key stakeholder.
* Three questions to ask the stakeholder.

For example, the questions to ask can be something like:

| **Stakeholder name** | **Nia** |
| --- | --- |
| Sample question 1 | Can you provide any examples of successful targeted marketing campaigns? |
| Sample question 2 | How do you determine a marketing campaign's return on investment (ROI)? |
| Sample question 3 | What metrics do you use to measure ROI? |

**Conclusion**

By completing this exercise, you are better equipped to identify relevant stakeholders in a data analysis project and gained insight into why this is an important part of the data analysis process. In addition to selecting relevant stakeholders, you practiced developing questions that you can ask to steer data analysis toward meeting project goals. This exercise provides you with the knowledge needed to effectively identify and interview stakeholders.

**The Role of the Data Analyst in Identifying Stakeholders**

**Step 1: Understand the Context**

Adventure Works, a multinational sports goods manufacturer, aims to maintain market share amidst new competition. Renee's marketing director seeks a sales data analysis project to inform new marketing strategies. Key executives include Ricci (Customer Service Manager), Igor (Finance Manager), Jane (IT Manager), Sam (R&D Manager), Alex (Security Operations Manager), Nia (Legal Counsel), Kane (Sales Manager), and Hassan (HR Manager).

**Step 2: Identify the Key Stakeholders**

- Ricci, Customer Service Manager

  - Influence: Medium

  - Interest: High

  - Reason: Customer feedback can provide insights into product satisfaction and preferences.

- Kane, Sales Manager

  - Influence: High

  - Interest: High

  - Reason: Directly responsible for sales performance and achieving targets.

- Renee, Marketing Director

  - Influence: High

  - Interest: High

  - Reason: Initiator of the project, responsible for driving marketing strategies.

**Step 3: Prepare Interview Questions**

- Ricci

  - Can you highlight any trends or patterns in customer feedback related to product preferences?

  - How do customer satisfaction levels impact repeat purchases and brand loyalty?

  - In your opinion, what areas of improvement in product/service delivery could positively impact sales?

- Kane

  - What are the current sales trends, and which products/categories show the most promise?

  - How do you perceive the effectiveness of existing marketing strategies in driving sales?

  - Can you provide insights into customer demographics and purchasing behaviors that could influence marketing campaigns?

- Renee

  - What specific insights from sales data would most benefit crafting targeted marketing campaigns?

  - How do you envision integrating sales data analysis findings into existing marketing strategies?

  - What key performance indicators (KPIs) do you prioritize when evaluating the success of marketing campaigns?

**Conclusion**

Identifying critical stakeholders like Ricci, Kane, and Renee is crucial for effectively steering the sales data analysis project. Crafting pertinent questions for each stakeholder ensures alignment with project goals and facilitates gathering insights necessary for informing marketing strategies. This exercise underscores the significance of stakeholder engagement in driving successful data analysis projects.

**Exemplar: Identifying stakeholders**

**Introduction**

In the exercise *Identifying stakeholders*, you were tasked with identifying the key stakeholders to interview for the sales data analysis project.

More specifically, you were asked to:

* Identify and list the key stakeholders that you will interview as part of your data analysis project, their level of influence and/or their interest in the project, and the reason you selected them.
* Write a list of 3 questions that you will ask each stakeholder that could help direct the data analysis in achieving the project goals.

This reading presents one version of the expected outcome. Your answer may differ but still be correct.

**Step 1: Understand the context**

In the first part of the exercise, your task was to read the case study carefully to understand the context and goals. An example of an acceptable answer for this is:

The primary objective of the analysis is to analyze the sales data to drive new marketing campaigns and improve the company's market share. To do this effectively, a full understanding of the business context and the challenges the company faces is required. In addition, familiarity with the stakeholder’s role and duties is essential.

**Step 2: Identify the key stakeholders**

In this step, you were asked to identify and list the key stakeholders that you think should be interviewed and give the reason you selected them. Then you were asked to classify the chosen stakeholders by the level of influence and interest each might have in the sales data analysis project. 3 examples of the type of work that you could have submitted for this step of the exercise are presented below.

**Key stakeholder: Sales Manager - Kane**

* **Level of influence:** High—Kane's high level of influence comes from his role as Sales Manager and his responsibility to ensure that the sales team meets their targets. Kane's deep understanding of the company's sales processes and performance directly impacts the company's bottom line. As a result, Kane's involvement in the sales data analysis project is essential to ensure that the project aligns with the company's overall sales goals.
* **Level of interest:** High—Kane's high level of interest in the project comes from his responsibility to improve the sales team's performance. The insights gained from the sales data analysis will help Kane identify areas where the sales team can improve, allowing data-driven decisions that will enhance the sales process and increase the company's market share.
* **Reason for selection:** Directly involved in sales performance and understanding customer preferences. Kane plays a critical role in the success of the sales data analysis project and, as Sales Manager, is directly responsible for the company's sales performance. Kane's expertise in analyzing sales data, understanding customer preferences, and identifying trends make him an important asset.

**Key stakeholder: Marketing Director - Renee**

* **Level of influence:** High—Renee's high level of influence comes from her role as Marketing Director, where her responsibility is to drive marketing campaigns that boost the company's sales. Renee's insights into the effectiveness of existing marketing campaigns, customer preferences, and trends will help create a targeted analysis that can inform future marketing strategies.
* **Level of interest:** High—Renee's high level of interest in the project is rooted in her responsibility to improve the company's market share and attract new customers. The sales data analysis will help her identify trends and customer preferences, allowing her to make data-driven decisions to create more effective marketing campaigns that resonate with the target audience.
* **Reason for selection:** Directly involved in creating and implementing marketing campaigns. Renee is a key stakeholder in the sales data analysis project because she creates and implements marketing campaigns that promote the company's products and services. Renee's extensive experience in marketing, deep understanding of the company's marketing strategy, and ability to identify areas for improvement make her a vital source for the project.

**Key stakeholder: Customer Service Manager - Ricci**

* **Level of influence:** Medium—Ricci's medium level of influence is due to her role in customer service, which, while not directly responsible for sales or marketing, plays a crucial role in retaining existing customers and maintaining the company's reputation. Ricci's insights into customer satisfaction can help the data analyst understand the factors that impact the company's sales and inform recommendations for improving the customer experience.
* **Level of interest:** High—Ricci's high level of interest in the project comes from her responsibility to ensure that customers are satisfied with the company's products and services. The sales data analysis will help her identify trends and areas of improvement, allowing Ricci to make data-driven decisions to enhance customer satisfaction and contribute to the company's overall sales and market share.
* **Reason for selection:** Directly involved in customer satisfaction and feedback, Ricci is an important stakeholder in the sales data analysis project because of her role in ensuring customer satisfaction. Ricci’s understanding of customer complaints, feedback, and preferences can provide valuable insights into areas where the company can improve its products and services. These insights can help the data analyst identify growth opportunities and inform future sales and marketing strategies.

**Step 3: Prepare interview questions**

Based on the stakeholders selected, you needed to write a list of 3 questions you would prepare to ask each stakeholder. The questions should steer the data analysis toward achieving the project goals. Below are some examples of questions you could create for this part of the exercise.

**Renee (Marketing Director)**

* Can you provide an overview of the current marketing strategy and how it has evolved over the years?
* How do you measure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, and what key performance indicators (KPIs) do you track?
* What have been the most successful marketing campaigns in the past, and what factors contributed to their success?
* Are there any marketing campaigns or strategies that have underperformed or not met expectations? If so, what were the challenges and learnings from those experiences?
* How do you segment the target audience for marketing campaigns, and what are the key demographics and preferences of our customers?

**Kane (Sales Manager)**

* Can you describe the current sales strategy and how it has evolved over time to address changing market dynamics?
* What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) that you use to track the sales team's performance, and how do you ensure that targets are met?
* How do you identify trends in customer buying patterns, preferences, and behaviors that impact on the company's sales performance?
* What have been the most significant challenges the sales team has faced, and how have you addressed those challenges?
* What types of data and insights would be most valuable to you for improving the sales team's performance and meeting sales targets?

**Ricci (Customer Service Manager)**

* How do you measure customer satisfaction, and what key performance indicators (KPIs) do you track to ensure that customers are happy with the company's products and services?
* What are the most common customer complaints or feedback that you receive, and how have they informed changes in the company's products or services?
* Can you provide any examples of how customer feedback has directly impacted the company's sales or marketing strategies?
* How do you segment customers in terms of their preferences and needs, and what are the key demographics and preferences of our customer base?
* What types of data and insights would be most valuable to you for improving customer satisfaction and maintaining a strong relationship with the company's customer base?

**Conclusion**

You should now have a better understanding of identifying stakeholders to gather relevant insights. By understanding the high-level skill of stakeholder analysis, you can more effectively navigate complex business environments. Preparing targeted interview questions allows you to gather specific information that is actionable and aligned with a project’s goals. Stakeholder analysis can help you gather valuable insights that can inform your data analysis, leading to relevant insights that can be used by businesses to make strategic decisions.