

Guidelines on recruiting stakeholders for interviews

How many?

Interview as many people as you feel is necessary for you to build up a clear picture of an organization with respect to the project at hand. Sometimes this can be as few as three or four interviewees or as many as twelve or more interviews.

Who to recruit

Stakeholders can range from management leadership from various departments to on-the-ground employees. Who is ultimately regarded as a stakeholder by your immediate client can be guided by:

- relative influence within the organization
- those who are directly or indirectly causing site updates to occur most frequently
- those who produce and manage content

Because you may be interviewing a representative sampling from across an enterprise, you may wish to consider philosophically where you stand as a consultant: are you constructing a reflection of the current organization for user benefit or do you view your role as more of an organizational change agent?

The most important stakeholder interviews you will conduct are the early informal discussions you have with your immediate client. As you talk about whom to schedule as stakeholders, try to extract details that give you a sense of what each stakeholder does on a day-to-day basis.

Prioritizing

When time or budget requires prioritizing my stakeholders, try to figure out what kind of weight various people pull within the organization. It is important to not limit your interviews to the most senior-level people. It's also helpful to recruit influential lower-level employees. Often, the front-line professionals who do the work—instead of manage it—have their fingers on the pulse of what is really happening.

Within the construct of the company, gauge who has the most influence:

- Which of your stakeholders interacts with the most departments?
- Who serves as a touch point with the most people of varying levels of seniority?
- Who do coworkers admire and listen to?