



By the end of this session, learners should be able to evaluate barriers to effective stakeholder engagement and propose balanced, evidence-based solutions that improve collaboration and support successful OHSES governance.

# Learning Objectives

After completing this topic, learners will be able to:

- 1 Identify barriers to stakeholder engagement.
- 2 Evaluate the impact of competing stakeholder interests.
- 3 Apply conflict resolution and negotiation techniques.
- 4 Develop justified solutions to engagement challenges.

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## Introduction

Stakeholder engagement is essential for effective OHSES governance. However, organisations frequently encounter barriers that reduce collaboration, delay decision-making, or create resistance to change. Effective leaders recognise these barriers and develop practical strategies to overcome them.

# 1. Organisational Resistance, Competing Priorities and Cultural Barriers

Common barriers include:

Resistance to change

Budget constraints

Conflicting business  
priorities

Poor communication

Lack of leadership  
support

Cultural differences

Low employee trust

These barriers may reduce commitment to OHSES initiatives.

# 1. Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Approaches

Conflicts arise when stakeholders have different priorities.

## Effective approaches include:

- Active listening
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Evidence-based discussion
- Compromise where appropriate
- Focusing on shared organisational goals

## Negotiation Goal

Negotiation should aim for solutions that benefit both organisational performance and stakeholder interests.

# 1. Managing Divergent Stakeholder Interests

Examples include:

## Investors

Seeking lower costs.

## Employees

Requesting additional safety measures.

## Regulators

Demanding compliance.

## Customers

Expecting sustainable products.

Leaders should evaluate each perspective and make balanced decisions based on evidence and organisational values.



# 1. Developing Justified, Balanced Solutions

Effective solutions should be:

- Evidence-based
- Practical
- Cost-effective
- Legally compliant
- Fair to stakeholders
- Aligned with organisational strategy

## Example

Instead of replacing all equipment immediately, an organisation prioritises high-risk machinery while implementing interim engineering controls and enhanced inspections.



# Practical Example

A company introduces a new permit-to-work system. Employees initially resist because they believe it slows production.

Management provides training, explains incident data, simplifies the process, and incorporates employee feedback. Acceptance improves significantly.

# Critical Evaluation

Barriers to stakeholder engagement are often organisational and behavioural rather than technical. Successful organisations overcome resistance through communication, consultation, negotiation, and evidence-based decision-making. Balanced solutions protect organisational objectives while maintaining stakeholder trust and commitment.

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## Key Takeaways

Resistance to change is a common barrier.

Negotiation helps balance competing stakeholder interests.

Effective communication reduces conflict.

Solutions should be evidence-based and strategically aligned.



# Thank you