Learning Outcomes

- Compare and contrast different type of stakeholders in business reports

When writing any professional document, it is important to identify the potential stakeholders. A **stakeholder** is anyone who will be affected by the contents of what you write. How you choose to word your document—or even the choice to write the document—can become an ethical matter for stakeholders. It is crucial to consider your main objectives before writing. For example, a report on consumer focus groups that were generally negative toward the company's new ad campaign must take into consideration issues such as how upper management will receive the news and what information will be most helpful to the team working on the campaign moving forward.

According to Paul Anderson, the author of *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, there are three types of stakeholders[1]:

- Direct
- Indirect
- Remote

The **direct stakeholders** are those initially impacted by what you write. For instance, if you are writing about opening a new waste disposal site, the stakeholders clearly include the company you are writing the report for. However, disposal companies that might use this waste site in the future are also considered direct stakeholders because they will be in the same situation as the current company. Their future business will be impacted based on whether your proposal is accepted or declined.

The **indirect stakeholders** are those that are not impacted until a later time. Using the previous example of the waste disposal site, citizens in the area would be indirect stakeholders. The stakeholders don't necessarily need to be people: the nearby ecosystems would be indirect stakeholders of this same proposal. If toxic waste was dumped there, it would harm the animals, rivers, and plant life nearby.

Finally, the **remote stakeholders** are not affected until far into the future. One example, following our hypothetical waste disposal site, is future generations. While it may seem far-fetched, historically, there have been instances where toxic or poisonous materials have been disposed of incorrectly and the run-off that went into lakes and streams caused birth defects. While this is remote, it must be considered when writing a document. This category of remote stakeholders brings to the forefront one major difference between reports and other

types of business communication: reports can have long lifespans and be revisited far into the future.

Practice Question

Chris has completed the report about changing the workday from five days to four days a week. As he does his final read-through before giving Yasmin his findings, Chris wonders who else might see the report. There are some co-workers and even store regulars that may not be excited about the change. As Chris thinks about how the findings might find their way to individuals beyond Yasmin, Chris is thinking about _____.

○ indirect and remote stakeholders

[See this interactive in the course material.](#)

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1. Anderson, Paul V. T*echnical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2007. ↵

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