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CASE STUDY: IMPACTO

BUILDING COMMITMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

A team were working to implement an IT project within a major oil company. Their task was to introduce intelligent monitoring software into the company's data centres in order to provide real-time information about each centre's operation.

At the end of each project phase the team met with the steering group comprising senior stakeholders from the business. The team would present an overview of work done to date and plans for the next phase in order to get the steering group's approval to proceed. So far each end-of-phase review meeting had been pretty tense, with a lot of difficult questions, resistance, and at times hostility from the business leaders who were concerned about the impact of any changes on their business-critical data.

The project team realised that their previous presentations to the steering group had focused on their future plans while the questions and challenges they received were more about the fundamental purpose and priorities behind the project. They needed to address these concerns explicitly, up-front, before they could engage the steering group on anything else. If they did not do this they had very little chance of securing commitment from the group for their plans.

The team took time to restructure their presentation so that it followed the steps instructed by Impacto: purpose, urgency, destination, success path, and commitment. The project team then prepared for the end-of-phase meeting by anticipating the types of questions they were likely to face. By putting themselves in the shoes of the stakeholders, and having a dry-run of the meeting with each team member role-playing the part of a steering group member, they were able to articulate a powerful description of the project's purpose that they believed the stakeholders would share and support.

At the next project review meeting the whole group were able to reach agreement on underlying purpose and have a much more constructive conversation about urgency and priorities.

All of the awkward questions the project would normally be confronted with were already answered in the presentation. At each stage in the story, they established agreement and buy-in, and incorporated the steering group's suggestions, before moving on to the next step. The senior stakeholders were ready to engage in a much more detailed and productive conversation about the project's vision and success path and ready to commit to play their part.