Force field analysis

Step-by-step plan for making a force field analysis

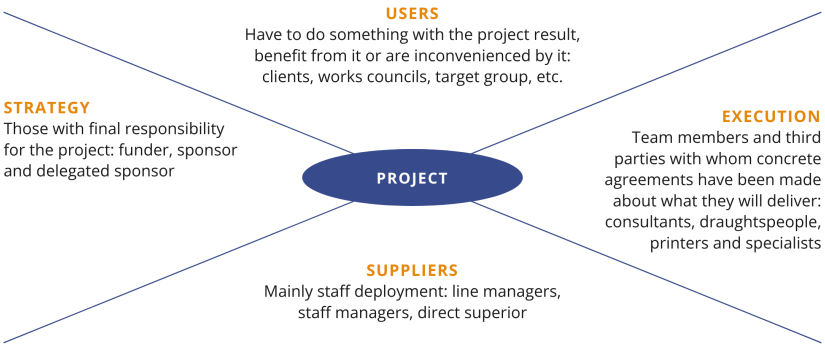
The force field analysis is a form of risk analysis for a project in which the source of information about the risks lies mainly in (groups of) people and their interests – and therefore less in substantive considerations and business setbacks.

PURPOSE	Identifying the risks that lie in the people involved, their attitude and their relationships with each other, and making a plan to avoid, reduce or transfer them.
WHEN	In the initiation phase and the definition phase, for example as part of a Project Startup or in the feedback session of an assignment workshop. If the environment needs more attention later in the project, you can also make one then, for example at a project fresh-up. Do not do it just once: analyse the force field regularly and intervene where necessary.
WITH WHOM	On your own, or together with team members.
HOW LONG	Our sample agenda for a two-day Project Startup allows an hour for it, plus an hour to discuss the risks and actions in plenary.
WHAT YOU NEED	A sheet on which you draw the project map, or the force field analysis canvas, and markers in four colours: green, orange, red and black.

HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

As a facilitator, you will by no means have to deal with this in every Project Startup. There are all kinds of exercises you can think of, from a physical constellation to making a drawing together. In preparation, it is useful to know the basic PDC exercise well.

1. **Draw the lines of the project map on a sheet, with the task – the project – in the centre.** Divide the sheet into four quadrants (see the figure).



2. **Make a list of everyone involved in the project or programme.** People can be involved in various roles. If you like, use the map below as a source of inspiration.

   Tip: try to use the names of the people involved as much as possible, rather than the 'party' or the part of the organisation.

3. **Examine the attitude and behaviour of the people involved.** Use a colour and a smiley to show how you perceive the attitude of each person involved towards your project or programme:

Green: positive, engaged attitude

Orange: ambivalent or neutral

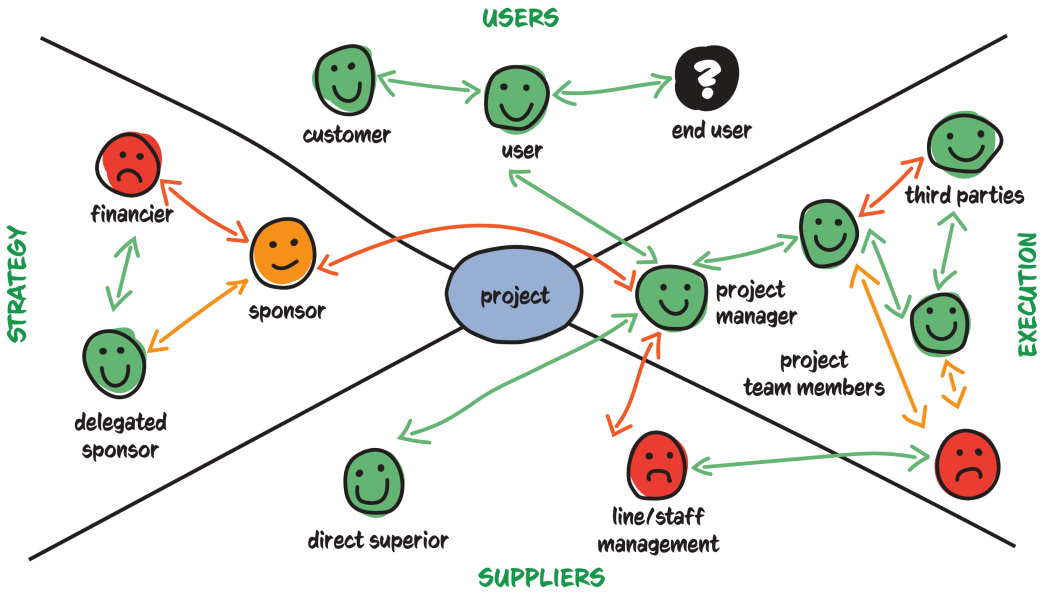
Red: negative or even obstructive

Black: unknown

4 **Place the people involved on the project map.**

> **PLEASE NOTE**
>
> People involved can have a role in several areas (wear several hats) and sometimes even have a different attitude towards the project, depending on the hat they are wearing.

Tip: you can indicate how important the people involved are for the project by placing them closer to the centre. The further away from the centre, the less important.



5 **Show the relationships between the people involved.** Draw lines between the most important relationships in the force field. Indicate what each relationship is like:

Green: positive, good relationship

Orange: some tension in the relationship

Red: tensions between these people

Black: unknown

6 **Identify the risks.** Think about and discuss which risks you perceive in the force field.

> **PLEASE NOTE**
>
> Question marks in a force field can also be a risk.

7 **Make a plan.** Think about and discuss what you can do about these risks to avoid, reduce or transfer them. Think of extra activities, strengthening your communication plan, adjusting the schedule, changing the team composition or the scope, finding another sponsor or even stopping the project. Record the measures in a table with Risk, Measures (activities), Who? and When?, just as in the risk analysis.

Tip: make sure you formulate concrete actions and assign an owner.

TIPS

- If you work with a team, you can discuss the attitude of the people involved in subgroups and then discuss the risks and actions in plenary. That is how it is done in the sample agenda for the two-day Project Startup.

- Add the actions to the schedule.

NOTES