

Mobilizers: Who they are and how to spot them

Information courtesy of Gartner

Gartner’s analysis found that any given customer stakeholder likely falls into one of seven distinct profiles. Not all of the profiles are equally useful—some excel at rallying their organizations around a purchase and ultimately driving consensus (the Go-Getter, Teacher, and Skeptic); we refer to these profiles as **Mobilizers**. Mobilizers also serve as a powerful and highly viable channel to facilitate Collective Learning when sellers have little access to customer stakeholders. Others, however, willingly talk to sales reps but can’t actually move a purchase decision forward (the Guide, Friend, and Climber); we call them **Talkers**. Finally, **Blockers** are wired to avoid change and strongly prefer stability over disruption. As a result, they rarely help suppliers, or go out of their way to speak to outside vendors at all. Key advocate/coach traits indicated in **orange**.

What to look for:

HEALTHY SKEPTICISM

A stakeholder who asks challenging, thought-provoking questions indicates they likely have the internal credibility needed to persuade others to act. On the other hand, over-eagerness for a solution is often indicative of someone who likes new ideas but has less internal credibility, as they always bring vendor ideas to their peers.

INTERESTED IN THE GREATER GOOD

Contacts who speak in terms of the company’s benefit are often looked to as credible sources of advice, but those who are only looking for personal gain are often distrusted by others, and not credible carriers of your message.

COMMUNICATION STYLE

While not indicative of Mobilizer potential, a contact’s tendency to speak in terms of facts or stories helps determine what type of Mobilizer a contact is and how a sales rep will need to interact with them.

FOLLOW THROUGH

The final test of Mobilizer potential is whether a contact can follow through on promises; proposing next steps helps gauge the ability and commitment of a Mobilizer to build consensus.

The Seven Types of Stakeholders



THE GO-GETTER

- Champions others’ good ideas
- **Always delivers more than asked**
- Learns from mistakes and moves on



THE FRIEND

- **Readily accessible and enjoys conversations with reps**
- **Often networks reps with colleagues**
- Generous in giving time to reps



THE SKEPTIC

- Perceives unclear projects as risky
- **Prepares influential stakeholders for disruptive ideas**
- Believes changes require small wins first



THE GUIDE

- **Provides information typically unavailable to vendors**
- **Speaks the truth when sharing with vendors**
- Distributes information equally



THE TEACHER

- Often teaches new insights
- **Colleagues and senior executives seek their input**
- Good at convincing others



THE BLOCKER

- Believes stability is a goal in and of itself
- Believes improvement projects are distracting
- Rarely helps vendors



THE CLIMBER

- **Needs to personally gain from projects**
- Wants personal rewards for risks taken
- Likes to tell others about successes

How to identify a true Mobilizer

Star and core performers look for very different cues to determine if they're talking to the right customer stakeholder. Core performers look for contacts who are easily accessible, freely share information, and will benefit from a purchase. Moreover, core reps' natural optimism leads them to overestimate a contact's ability to help them. Consequently, core performers gravitate toward Talkers.

Star performers, on the other hand, instinctively recognize if they're dealing with a Mobilizer or Talker, and quickly decide whether to engage or keep hunting for a better

contact. The good news is that you can teach core performers to emulate these behaviors by helping them identify the key "tells" of Mobilizers.

Star performers use a narrow set of relatively concrete "tells" and signals to separate Mobilizers from Talkers. These tells reveal whether a contact has the credibility and organizational savvy to drive consensus.

Take a look at the chart below for a visual representation of determining these tells.

