The Power Skills Playbook

Leading Without Authority in High-Stakes Projects

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- This presentation is for registered attendees of North America LIM 2026.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Map and leverage stakeholder currencies to identify unique motivations and build mutual value across cross-functional teams.
- Deploy advanced persuasion frameworks to overcome stakeholder resistance and secure project commitment without relying on hierarchy.
- Implement practical tools that build psychological safety and drive accountability in high-stakes, matrixed project environments.



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ABOUT ME

Project Leader. Personal Excellence Coach. Innovator.

Adebayo is a globally-experienced project leader and founder of Nakol ProjectPro Consulting, he brings deep expertise and strategic vision; from Senior PM and PMO Lead to building his own consultancy. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Conestoga College, Ontario.

EDUCATION

- B.Eng. Chemical Engineering
- M.Sc. Oil & Gas Engineering
- MBA
- PhD Strategic Leadership*

CAREER

- Senior Project Manager
- Project Consultant
- PMO Lead
- Founder – Nakol ProjectPro

VOLUNTEERING

- VP, Events & Programs
- PMI Lakeshore Ontario

* *In Progress — USA*

Married
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Soccer | Reading | Speaking

Project Management Institute. Northern Alberta

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WELCOME

Strategy stalls where authority ends

In high-stakes projects, the greatest risk is rarely a flawed methodology. It's a leader's inability to influence cross-functional stakeholders, functional managers, and executive sponsors who don't report to them.

Modern leadership isn't defined by the org chart. It's defined by power skills and today you leave with a repeatable playbook to build them.

YOU WILL WALK AWAY WITH

1. **A diagnostic tool**
   Map any stakeholder's hidden motivations and currencies
2. **A tactical playbook**
   Reusable phrases and framing techniques for resistance
3. **A reframing habit**
   Connect any ask to executive priorities, every time

SESSION MAP

How we'll spend our time together

1

0–15 MIN

Pillars of Influence

Framing the psychology: empathy, currency exchange, trust equity.

2

15–35 MIN

Table Activity

Stakeholder Currency Mapping in small groups on a live scenario.

3

35–50 MIN

Scenario Analysis

Tactical communication for real high-pressure conflicts.

4

50–60 MIN

Wrap-up & Q&A

Connecting to PMI's holistic leadership approach.

PART ONE · MINUTES 0–15

The Pillars of Influence

The psychological foundation for leading people who don't report to you.



0–15 MIN • FRAMING

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THE FRAMEWORK

Three pillars of influence without authority

E

Empathy

Seeing the project through each stakeholder's incentives, pressures, and fears not just their job title.

C

Currency Exchange

Every stakeholder trades in something they value: time, visibility, data, political cover. Know their currency.

T

Trust Equity

A reputation account you build in small deposits reliability, discretion, follow-through and draw on under pressure.

PILLAR 1 & 2

Empathy fuels the exchange

E Empathy in practice

Ask before you ask. Understand what a stakeholder is measured on before requesting their time.

Name the pressure. “I know Q3 close is consuming your team :here's the smallest possible ask.”

Listen for the unstated risk. Resistance is often fear of blame, not disagreement with the plan.

C Common stakeholder currencies

- Visibility with leadership
- Protected time / fewer meetings
- Data or early access to information
- Political cover for a risky call
- Credit toward their own goals

PILLAR 3

Trust equity is a balance you build before you need it

DEPOSITS

- Deliver on small commitments, every time
- Share credit publicly and often
- Flag bad news early, not late
- Keep confidences without being asked

WITHDRAWALS

- Asking for an exception to process
- Requesting a stretch resource commitment
- Challenging a sponsor's assumption publicly
- Asking someone to move faster than is safe

READING THE ROOM

Generational dynamics

One size never fits all — use this as a guide, not a stereotype.

Leaders who adapt their engagement style to what genuinely drives each individual consistently outperform those who apply one rigid approach.

Z Gen Z

Digital Natives

COMMUNICATION

Instant, visual

MOTIVATORS

Autonomy, tech-forward

LEADERSHIP EXPECTS

Inclusive, mentoring

M Millennials

Purpose Seekers

COMMUNICATION

Async, preference-driven

MOTIVATORS

Purpose-aligned work

LEADERSHIP EXPECTS

Visible social impact

X Gen X

Bridge Builders

COMMUNICATION

Direct, low-touch

MOTIVATORS

Stability, recognition

LEADERSHIP EXPECTS

Structured, autonomous

B Boomers

Legacy Builders

COMMUNICATION

Formal, face-to-face

MOTIVATORS

Stability, respect

LEADERSHIP EXPECTS

Clear hierarchy

PART TWO · MINUTES 15–35

Table Activity: Stakeholder Currency Mapping

Small groups diagnose a live high-stakes scenario using a structured mapping template.



15–35 MIN • HANDS-ON, TABLE GROUPS

ACTIVITY BRIEF

Your scenario: the chapter summit crunch

Your PMI chapter's annual Project Summit is six weeks out. The volunteer sponsorship chair has gone quiet on a lapsed renewal, the board treasurer won't release the venue deposit, and your incoming president wants to trim the agenda. Nobody on this list reports to you.

IN YOUR TABLE GROUP (20 MIN)

1

Pick two of the stakeholders

Choose from Treasurer, Sponsorship Chair, President-Elect, or add your own from your chapter.

2

Diagnose each one

Use the Currency Map template to surface motivation, pain point, and currency.

3

Draft your ask

Reframe one real request so it trades in their currency, not yours.

4

Report back

One spokesperson shares your sharpest reframe with the room.

THE TEMPLATE

Stakeholder Currency Map

Take this reusable diagnostic back to your next project.

Stakeholder	Hidden Motivation	Pain Point	Their Currency	Your Reframed Ask
President-Elect-*Example*	A smooth, low-risk transition	Fears inheriting a messy launch	Taking decisive action early	“This keeps your first event on-brand, not risky”
Board Treasurer				
Sponsorship Chair (Volunteer)				
(Add your own)				

THE TEMPLATE

Stakeholder Currency Map

Take this reusable diagnostic back to your next project.

Stakeholder	Hidden Motivation	Pain Point	Their Currency	Your Reframed Ask
President-Elect	A smooth, low-risk transition	Fears inheriting a messy launch	Taking decisive action early	“This keeps your first event on-brand, not risky”
Board Treasurer	Protecting chapter reserves	Approving spend with no ROI story	Fiscal accountability	Phase the deposit to registration milestones
Sponsorship Chair (Volunteer)	Limited unpaid time, no conflict	Chasing a cold sponsor lead alone	A ready-made script	Hand them a done-for-you renewal email
(Add your own)				

PART THREE · MINUTES 35–50

Real-World Scenario Analysis

Anonymized, high-pressure conflicts where formal authority was absent and what worked.



35–50 MIN • TACTICAL COMMUNICATION

EVALUATE THE STYLE

Three persuasion styles under pressure

P Push

Data, deadlines, and direct asks.
Fast — but can trigger resistance when trust is thin.

L Pull

Questions and shared discovery.
Builds ownership — but slower under time pressure.

A Anchor

Framing the ask against a shared priority both sides already care about.

PAIR & DISCUSS (10 MIN)

Review your anonymized scenario card. Which style was used? Would a different style have changed the outcome? Note the exact phrase that moved or stalled the conversation.

Scenario Card 1 - The Silent Sponsor

Situation	A VP sponsor stops responding two weeks before a compliance deadline.
What was said	*"Following up, I need your sign-off by Friday." No reply.*

REVEAL	*"Your board update on the 15th references this milestone. I want to make sure the number in your slide is one you are comfortable defending."* ***Result:*** *Reply came within the hour.*

What style was used, and why?

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SCENARIO CARDS

Scenario Card 1- The Silent Sponsor

A VP sponsor stops responding two weeks before a compliance deadline.

What was said: *"Following up , I need your sign-off by Friday."* No reply.

Your reframe: _____

Reveal: "Your board update on the 15th references this milestone , I want to make sure the number in your slide is one you're comfortable defending." Reply came within the hour.

Style used: Anchor — ties the ask to something the sponsor is already exposed on.

SCENARIO CARDS

Scenario Card 2 - The Deprioritized Deliverable

Situation	A matrixed team member keeps slipping your task behind their manager's asks.
What was said	*"This is overdue again." Nothing changes.*
REVEAL	*"I know your manager's asks come first. Can I get five minutes with both of you so I stop competing with a priority I can't see?"*

What style was used, and why?

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Scenario Card 2- The Deprioritized Deliverable

A matrixed team members keeps slipping your task behind their manager's asks.

What was said: *"This is overdue again."* Nothing Changes.

Your reframe: _____

Reveal: "I know { manager}'s asks come first- can I get five minutes with both of you so I stop competing with a priority I can't see?"

Style used: Pull — invites shared discovery instead of pressing on the deadline.

SCENARIO CARDS

Scenario Card 3 - The Committee Veto

Situation	A cross-functional steering committee member keeps raising objections in meetings without proposing alternatives, stalling a decision the whole room needs.
What was said	*"Do you have concerns with the plan?" More objections, no path forward.*

REVEAL	*"Let's park the concerns list and each name the one risk we're not willing to accept - then we build around those."* ***Result:*** *The committee converged in one more meeting.*

What style was used, and why?

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Scenario Card 3- The Committee Veto

A cross-functional steering committee member keeps raising objections in meetings without proposing alternatives, stalling a decision the whole room needs.

What was said: *”Do you have concerns with the plan?”* More objections, no path forward.
Your reframe: _____

Reveal: ” Let's park the concerns list and each name the one risk we're not willing to accept — then we build around those." Committee converged in one more meeting.

Style used: Push — direct, structured, but reframes the format rather than the content, so it doesn’t trigger the resistance a flat “just decide” would..

THE REFRAME

Translate your goal into their priority

BEFORE — YOUR LANGUAGE

“I need two of your engineers for three weeks to finish the migration on schedule.”

Speaks to YOUR deadline. Easy to say no to.

AFTER — REFRAMED

“A three-week loan now protects the compliance deadline your team is accountable for at the board review.”

Speaks to THEIR exposure. Hard to say no to.

BRINGING IT HOME

Power skills are PMI's holistic leadership in action

These pillars map directly onto the Power Skills side of PMI's Talent Triangle — the leadership capability that turns technical delivery into organizational impact.

1

Map before you ask

Run a Currency Map on your highest-stakes stakeholder this week.

2

Bank trust deliberately

Make one visible deposit before you need a withdrawal.

3

Reframe every request

State the ask in terms of their exposure, not your deadline.

OPEN Q&A

What's the highest-stakes relationship on your current project where you have no formal authority?

Thank you

Lead the room you don't manage.

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The Power Skills Playbook: Leading Without Authority in High-Stakes Projects

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Thank You

Let's Keep the Conversation Going



Connect on LinkedIn

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Q&A

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