

Institute for Public Relations Top Three Paper of Practical Significance Award

**Introducing Cross-Impact Analysis as a Methodology to Understand Stakeholders'
Reciprocal Influences**

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Abstract

One of the key factors for successful public relations programs is the correct definition and segmentation of stakeholders. Over the years, scholars and practitioners have developed a series of approaches to segment stakeholders and publics. One of the main limitations of such models is that they do not allow for the assessment of the way in which stakeholders influence one another—an aspect recognized as central by many scholars. Using an illustration, we introduce cross-impact analysis (CIA) as a methodology that can be applied to the understanding of stakeholders' likelihood to influence one another. We argue that CIA can be used by public relations practitioners together with traditional segmentation techniques and represents a useful and novel way of understanding the complexity of organizations' environment.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Publics, Cross-Impact Analysis, Influence, Relationships, Segmentation.