

The Social and Ethical Accountability Model[©] (SEAM)

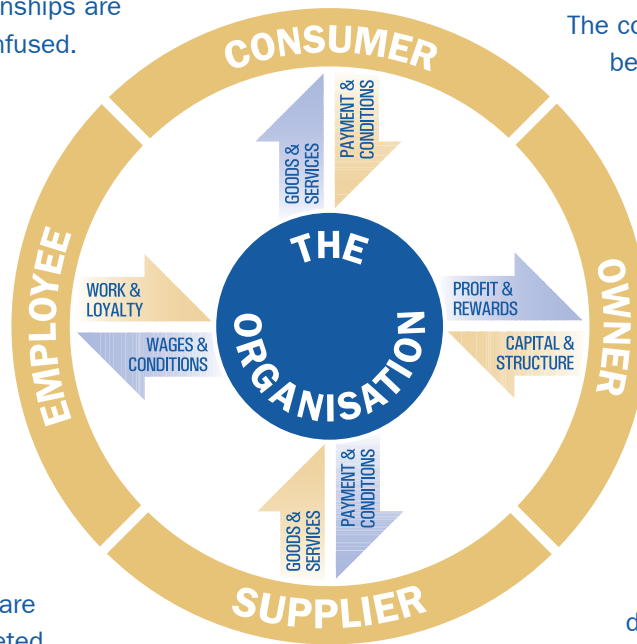
An organisation carrying out its business interacts and forms relationships with other organisations and with people. These relationships are often complex and may be confused.

The type of relationship varies depending on the type of business being carried out. For example, the retailer's relationship with a regular customer will be different to their relationship with say, a visiting tourist.

These relationships can be major or minor, complex or simple, permanent or temporary, and all variations in between. The relationships are two way, and can be multi-faceted.

Four quadrants form the model, into which all internal and external relationships can be placed.

The quadrants are Consumer, Supplier, Employee, and Owner.



The complex nature of the relationships between these quadrants means that a person or organisation can be in one or more of these types of relationships at the one time.

For example, a member of a trading co-operative can be a consumer of goods, a supplier of produce and a part owner of the cooperative.

To enable a greater understanding of the nature of the relationship, a model known as a Relationship Map has been developed. This shows the interaction between the parties, and allows a dissection to occur and the complex streams to be analysed.

The Four Principles of SEAM

The Social and Ethical Accountability Model (SEAM) is based on the following principles.

Identity

Principle 1

THE IDENTITY OF AN ORGANISATION IS DIFFERENT TO THE IDENTITY OF ITS OWNERS.

When more than one person is involved in an organisation, the organisation becomes an entity in its own right, and assumes characteristics that are different to the sum of the individuals.

Values

Principle 2

AN ORGANISATION HAS VALUES, AND THOSE VALUES, THROUGH THE ORGANISATION'S CULTURE, DIRECT ITS BEHAVIOUR.

All organisations have a set of values that drive their behaviour. These values are not always shared and not always documented, but a set of values is always practised.

Impact

Principle 3

AN ORGANISATION IMPACTS SOCIETY (DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY) IN MORE WAYS THAN THROUGH ITS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

While the major impacts of an organisation are often through their products and services, they have many other ways of affecting their relationships with their stakeholders.

Determination

Principle 4

THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS DETERMINE THE NATURE AND SCALE OF AN ORGANISATION'S IMPACT.

Control of an organisation's impact is vested with the key stakeholders by virtue of the decisions they choose to make, choose not to make, or of which they have no knowledge.