

Influencing for Results

Aim

This course aims to provide individuals with the opportunity to explore the different ways people can be influenced and identify ways to develop the skills to influence effectively.

During the session, you will focus on how to build your personal credibility, develop stronger working relationships and explore practical tools and techniques to help when influencing others.

The Influencing for Results course is a blended learning experience comprised of three parts:

- Part 1 provides self-guided learning and individual exercises.
- Part 2 is an online, facilitated session
- Part 3 gives further self-guided learning and action planning

You will need your workbook for all three parts. Some of the activities in Part 1 will directly relate to the exercises and activities in Part 2.

Objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- ✓ review the definitions of influence, power and manipulation
- ✓ identify your circle of influence and know what you can and cannot influence
- ✓ recognise different sources of power and how to use them with integrity
- ✓ identify practical ways to increase your personal influence
- ✓ use a structured six-step process to build a case to influence effectively

What are your objectives for this course?

Part 1: Self-guided learning & pre-work

Influence or Manipulation?

Influence is the act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command.

Power is possession of control, authority or influence over others.

Manipulation is the action of influencing or controlling someone or something to your advantage, often without anyone knowing it.

As the above dictionary definitions illustrate there is a lot of overlap between the common meanings of these words, although it is clear that manipulation has elements of unfairness and a lack of openness within it, whereas influence is associated with the ability to have an effect. Power can have positive or negative connotations for people depending on how they have experienced it being used.

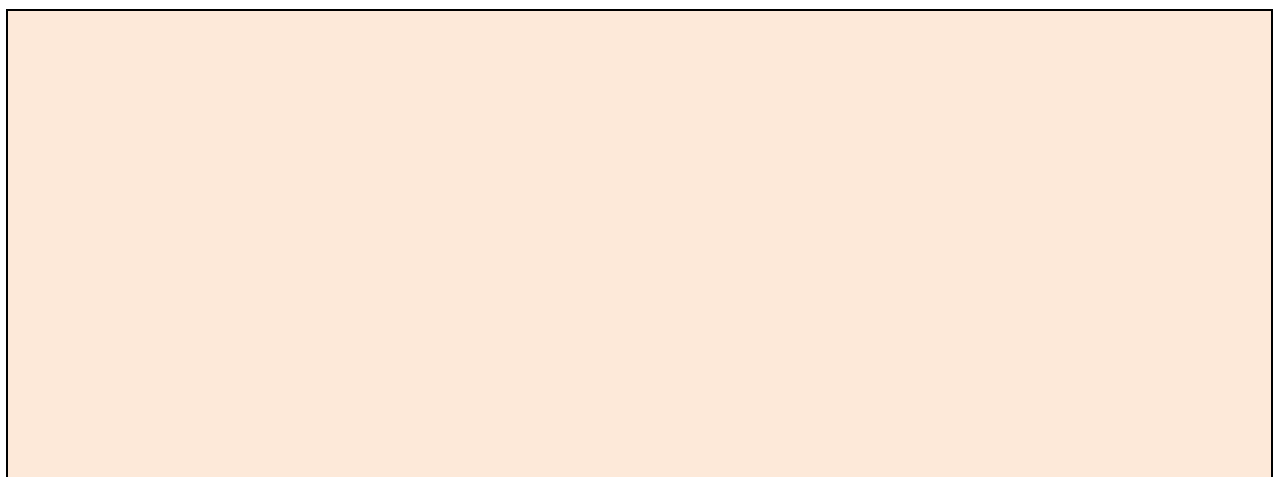
The line between influence and manipulation is often a fine one and although manipulation can produce the desired outcome in the short term it is unlikely to work in the long run. At work we are often influencing the same people time and again and if someone feels that you have tried to manipulate them in the past then the trust between you will be diminished.

The key questions to ask yourself to ensure you are not being manipulative are:

- What is my true intent?
- Does what I am trying to do help or benefit the other person?
- How accurate and truthful is the information I am providing?

Exercise 1

Reflect on how you are using influence, power and manipulation in your role, and the impact of this approach.



'The moment there is suspicion about a person's motives, everything becomes tainted'

Mahatma Ghandi

Circles of Influence

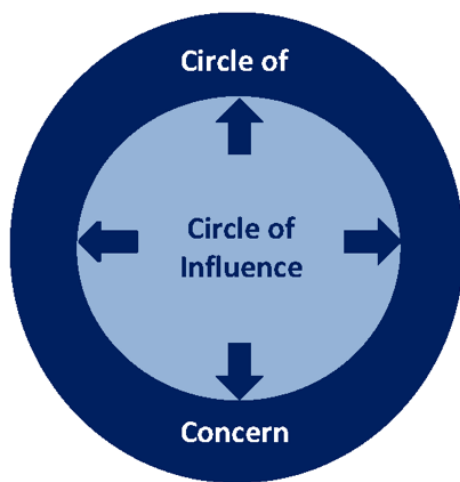
In his book '7 Habits of Highly Effective People', Stephen Covey distinguishes between proactive people who focus on what they can influence and reactive people who focus their energy on things beyond their influence or control.

His model is based on two circles – the first is our circle of concern. This can include a wide range of things such as:

- our health
- family and relationships
- the economy and cost of living
- decisions made by government
- the weather
- how news is reported
- social inequality
- how people choose to interpret our actions
- environmental issues
- crime and terrorism
- physical wellbeing

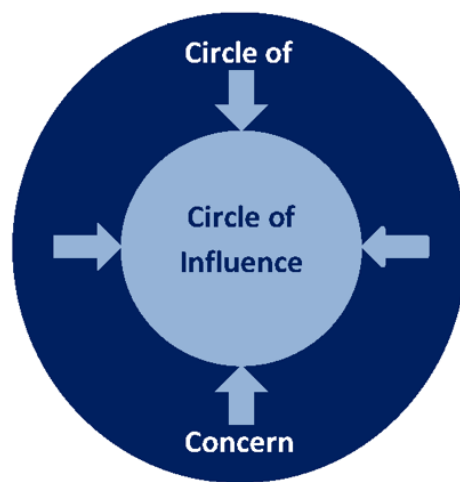
Some of these things are within our control and influence and others are not. When we are working most effectively, we work on the things we can do something about.

The more energy we focus on the things we can influence the more our circle of influence and control increases. Conversely if all our energy goes into things that we cannot change, we develop an attitude of victimisation and blame and our circle of influence shrinks. Spending time in our circle of concern can also add to feelings of stress and helplessness.



Proactive Focus

Positive energy enlarges Circle of Influence



Reactive Focus

Negative energy reduces Circle of Influence

"I am not a product of my circumstances; I am a product of my decisions."

Dr Stephen Covey

Exercise 2

Reflect on the following questions and note your answers below:

- Where are you currently spending the majority of your focus & time? In the circle of concern or influence?
- What can you do today to expand your Circle of Influence to build more positive energy in your life and at work?

Developing your influence

Exercise 3

Reflect on the following questions and note your answers below:

- Are there people that you know who you are more likely to be influenced by than others?
- Do those people share any characteristics or traits, and if so what are they?



Your influencing goals

Exercise 4

It is useful for you to think about what situation you need to influence – this will be the target of your thinking for the session. Write them in the box below.

Try not to write things like “I need to influence people to help me perform better in my role”. That statement is too broad. Think about *specific* situations when you are required to influence a person (or people), and the *specific* outcomes you need to get.

I want to influence the following situation(s):

The people I want to influence are:

Part 2: Facilitated workshop

This part of the workbook will support the facilitated session that makes up Part 2.

Sources of Power

There have been many books written on how to influence and two of the most widely quoted authors are Robert Cialdini and Gary Yukl.

Cialdini identifies six ways of getting us to act automatically that sidestep our normal rational decision-making processes and he calls these 'weapons of influence'.

Gary Yukl identifies 11 techniques in his book which he describes as influencing tactics.

Many people feel that there are elements of manipulation in both these approaches, however, despite those reservations it is clear that if we have no power in a situation we will not be able to influence the outcome. Unfortunately, many people see exerting power as a negative thing because they have observed the manipulative application of it rather than it being used positively.

In 1959 French and Raven developed their taxonomy of power sources which over the years has been adapted to the following eight underlying sources of influence.

Positional Power

There are many situations in which the underlying capacity we have to influence comes from the position that we hold. This is sometimes referred to as legitimate power and comes when someone is given a role by their organisation or society that has authority vested in it.

Hazard Power



This capacity to influence involves outlining risks or consequences to someone in order to persuade them to behave in a different way. Examples of this could be explaining to someone the legal implications of a certain action or letting a colleague know that something contravenes university policy. In a few situations it may be the only power that will influence someone, particularly if the action that you want them to take has no perceived benefit to them personally.

Expert Power

Sometimes an individual will be able to influence us because we perceive that they have an expertise in a particular area. This expert power may come from their qualifications, skill or experience.

Connection Power

This source of influence is the power that comes from being connected to someone who can exert influence. This is used quite a lot in organisations where the hierarchy is quite flat - so telling someone that you need information from them for a report you are putting together for the Chief Executive is using the power of connection.



Association Power

We are influenced by those who we associate with certain qualities that attract us. This is the foundation of using celebrities to advertise certain products. If we associate someone with success, expertise, prestige etc and these are qualities we respect or are attracted to then we will be influenced by them.

Reward Power

Influence is exerted through the provision of a tangible reward - this can be financial or a more intrinsic reward such as praise, recognition or visibility. We are influenced by those who can either directly or indirectly provide us with rewards we seek.

Personal Power

We are influenced by certain people simply because we like them or care about them. The way in which we behave and use our interpersonal skills is the foundation of this source of influence. It is our own interactions with people and the relationship we have built with them that creates our power to influence them.

Information Power

Providing the right information to support a case is a very definite source of influence. Statistics, facts and examples can all help to support a position.

The Traits of Influential People

In this section we will look at some of the traits influential people share and explore ways they can be developed.

Credibility

*'We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing,
while others judge us by what we have already done'*
Henry Longfellow



This is about how believable we are to other people. Our credibility comes from three things our reputation, our expertise and our track record with someone.

Application:

- Think about ways to develop your reputation within the organisation and the wider community
- Ensure that your expertise is up to date and that you are constantly growing and developing
- Put processes and systems in place to ensure that you can deliver what you promise on time (or at least tell people if you can't!)

Trustworthiness

When people are asked to define trustworthiness, they use words like honesty, reliability, and integrity and these are fundamental elements to becoming more influential. We are far more likely to listen and give consideration to the views of people that we trust and this means we are more open to be influenced by them.



Application:

- Be clear about what your values are and consistently behave in ways that demonstrate those values
- Check when you are dealing with others that you are open and honest and that your intent is good
- Invest time and energy in building relationships with people

Communication Capability

However self-aware, genuine and honest we are, the ability to get others to follow comes from our capacity to communicate effectively.

**Application:**

- Develop your ability to be at ease with a variety of communication methods
- Hone your communication skills
- Always consider the best way to communicate a message
- Ask for feedback on how your communication is received

Empathy

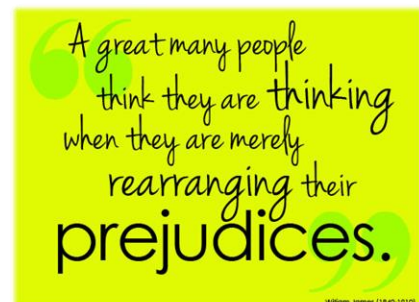
Empathy is the ability to experience the feelings of others and to see a situation from their point of view. This is a key skill as it is important to remember that we will never influence someone from our point of view.

Application:

- Practise active listening and summarising
- Develop a bank of insightful questions to help you to explore other people's points of view
- Try to adopt a neutral position and listen to understand not to judge

Open-mindedness

Flexibility and a willingness to embrace change are also traits that are evident in most influential people. It follows that we are far more likely to be influenced by someone that we believe is open to being influenced themselves.



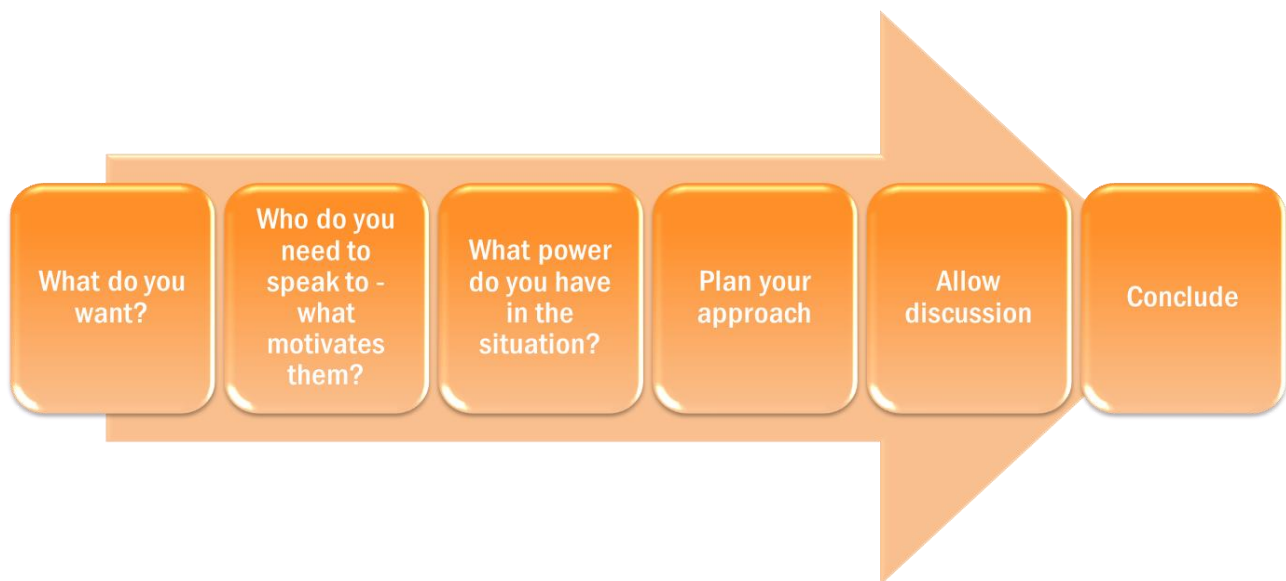
Application:

- Practice seeing things from different perspectives
- 80% of our first thoughts are negative so avoid the trap of responding too quickly to new ideas
- Review where you have developed habits and mindsets that work against you being flexible

A Structured Approach to influencing

Effective influencing is the ability to persuade someone to act or behave differently. It is important to recognise that this is not about being tactical – it is not controlling someone or manipulating their behaviour, it is about getting them to move willingly.

True influence is when we gain support and commitment from others by fully explaining our position and taking time to assess their views and needs. It is the ability to achieve our personal objectives whilst building, or at least maintaining productive working relationships with others.



Step One - What do you want?

When influencing others you need to be clear about what you want – your goal. You did this when you outlined who and what you wanted to influence.

Being more specific about what you want will help you plan the conversation you need to have. What does success look like? Is what I want realistic? In your mind, what is flexible and what is not?

Step Two - Who do you I need to influence?

The next step is about identifying the people that you will need something from to make the change happen and exploring their view of the situation.

Stakeholder Analysis Exercise

This exercise is useful if the issue that you are trying to change involves influencing a number of different groups or people.

For this exercise a stakeholder can be defined as any group or individual that will need to be influenced to effect the change that you are trying to make.

Stakeholder	What I need or expect from them in relation to this issue	What I think their current perspective is on the issue	Do I think their attitude is positive or negative	Action I need to take

Being clear about what you want, and what you don't want, will help you plan what can be flexible in achieving your influencing goals

Step Three - What power do you have in the situation?

Once we have considered the views of others we need to assess whether we have any power to influence in this situation.

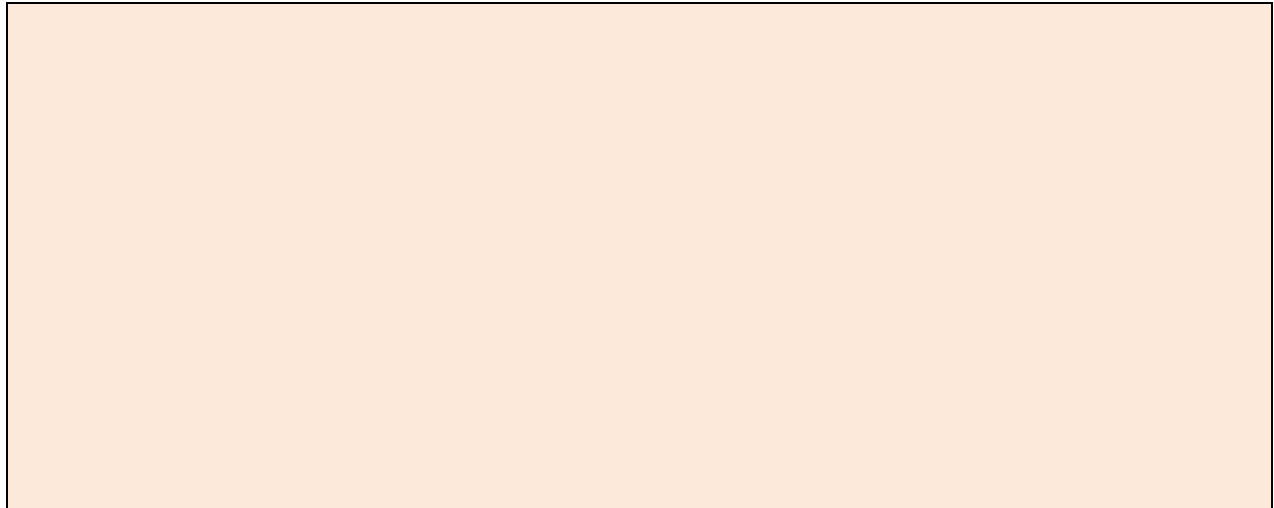
Two key things to remember here are:

- Power used appropriately is a strong aid to influence and results in commitment, cooperation and acceptance. ^[1]_[SEP]
- Power used inappropriately usually fosters resentment and makes people resistant to being influenced – it may result in compliance, but this is not the same as truly influencing.

Exercise

Go back to your influencing objective and ask yourself these three questions:

- Which powers do I have available to me in this situation?
- Which one is the most appropriate to use with this group or individual?
- If I currently do not have any power with this group or individual, which source could I develop?



Step Four - Plan your approach

When influencing others it is important that you plan your approach in some way, how much planning will depend on the situation. Either way, you will need to consider all the points covered so far in your approach. Your argument will need to be:

Compelling

This relates to knowing the motivations of others and explaining the benefits to the person that you're communicating with. A compelling argument speaks to their motivations.

Credible

Be sure to give information that is not only correct and reliable, but is relevant to the power base that you will draw from appropriate to the situation. Is your influence power based on clear information, or is your credibility based on your relationship with the person you are influencing?

Understandable

You will need to be clear in what you need from the situation. This requires you to be clear in what you want and not giving mixed messages. Your words, language and non-verbal communication need to be consistent.

Read the article [here](#) that discusses the appropriate use of data, and importantly analysis, that both help to build strong argument.

Think about all these factors in **planning your approach**. Use the template on the next page to structure your influencing conversation.

Your approach

Introduce the issue

What you want, and how you would like to work jointly on the situation

Acknowledge the perspectives of those concerned

This means your own, the people you are communicating to, as well as other stakeholders

Outline the agenda

Tell them what you want to discuss and the points you want to make

Provide the rationale for your case

Outline the arguments you have, use benefits, drawing and meeting their motivations

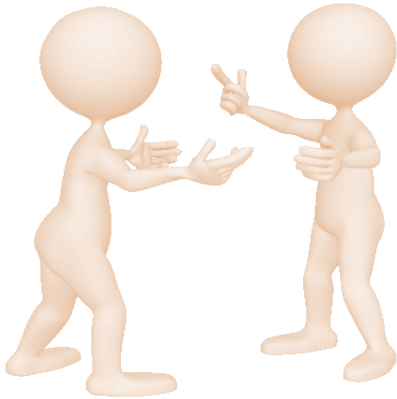
Step Five - Allow discussion

Once you have planned your approach, it's time for you to start your conversations.

You need to be open and prepared to discuss the situation and not demand agreement. This may mean understanding the concerns of others, and even compromising too.

Remember:

- ✓ Let the other person speak
- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Understand their concerns
- ✓ Look for common ground – compromise
- ✓ Draw them out through questioning



Be sure not to:

- X Interrupt
- X Get defensive
- X Switch off
- X Be repetitive
- X Give up

Remember, you will have played through your side of the discussion and have been aware of your needs probably for far longer than the person you're having the discussion with.

Give people time to absorb what you're saying to them.

Step Six - Conclude

After your influencing discussion, there will be several outcomes. They may be familiar following your learning around negotiation. Each has next steps so that you are able to move forward.



Agreement

- Summarise agreement
- Decide next steps
- Confirm in writing if appropriate



Partial agreement

- Summarise partial agreements
- Decide follow up actions
- Decide on dates for follow up discussion



No agreement

- State your wish to pursue further if appropriate
- Agree on further consultation
- Keep open to further discussion

Reflecting on your learning

In the session you will have an opportunity to reflect on your learning so far. Use the spaces below to make any notes of your thoughts.

- ✓ What are your two or three key learning points from today?

- ✓ What will you take and use immediately?

- ✓ What opportunities do you have to put your new skills into practice?



Part 3: Action planning and additional resources

Influencing Action Plan

- 1) List the people that you want to influence (this was one of the first things you did in this course).

- 2) Write down what you want (remember, this is your goal), and is it reasonable? Is there any flexibility in what you want?

- 3) List what (or who) your sources of influence are in this situation? If you need to call on someone else, consider 2) in relation to them as well.

Use this action plan to record your next steps.

	Action Required	Description	Due date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			



You have now completed all parts of the course!

Want to know more?

Here are some suggestions for further reading:

- **Developing Your Influencing Skills: How to Influence People by Increasing Your Credibility, Trustworthiness and Communication Skills**, Deborah Dalley and Lois Burton, (Universe of Learning Ltd, 2017)
- **Persuasion – The Art of Influencing People**, James Borg (Pearson Education 2004)
- **Everything is Negotiable**, Gavin Kennedy (Random House Business Books, 4th Edition, 2008)
- **Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In**, Roger Fisher and William Ury (Random House Business Books, 2nd Edition, 2008)
- **Getting Past No: Negotiating with Difficult People**, William Ury (Random House Business Books, 1999)
- **Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion**, Robert Cialdini (Harper Collins, 2007)

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