

Influencing Positive Change Positively

A One Day Seminar/Workshop for Prison Staff

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Definitions of Influence

In a formal organisation there are two kinds of power - positional power and relational power. In most organisations positional power still holds sway. In order to 'get things done' it is much easier, and faster, to exercise positional power, but there is a higher price to pay. The price is the weakening of the relationship where the other easily feels disregarded, dictated to and imposed upon. Trust, motivation and commitment are diminished. On the other hand, someone who exercises relational power understands the underlying and invisible currents which create enriching and effective relationships. They know you cannot 'make' people change, they know they cannot make others 'do' anything, but they can help others to motivate themselves. And they know that authentic power in relationships does not confer rights over others but responsibilities towards others. They therefore recognise that work, and their relationships at work, are opportunities to learn and develop the personal and interpersonal skills of influence.

DEFINITION OF INFLUENCE

How are we to define influence? Webster's Dictionary (third edition) defines it as:

"To affect or alter the conduct, thoughts or character, by indirect or intangible means."

The word comes from the Latin 'influere', meaning 'to flow in'.

We might define influence as:

The ability to affect others' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours without using force or formal authority.

Another more common definition of influencing is:

Getting your own way, especially unobtrusively.

However this suggests a selfish element which the enlightened influencer knows can eventually become a barrier to influence. Most managers do it, or attempt to do it, most of the time, sometimes not so unobtrusively! Many managers seek to get their 'own way' because they think they are right. Some managers realise that 'getting their own way' is not the purpose of their position, and an increasing number now realise there are many varied and subtle ways to get things done through others.

- You can influence others simply by being you. (notice how easily children are influenced by the behaviour of those around them)
- You can influence covertly, behind the scenes.
- You can use more open strategies and tactics.

- You can empower others by giving them responsibility
- You can coach/tutor/train others

Preparing to Influence

Increasingly, today's managers are measured by their ability to influence others at work. Being able to get people to do what you want has a direct effect on:

- The well-being of your staff
- The effectiveness your organization
- And, ultimately, your own destiny

You are probably already successful at influencing others - some of the time. How can you become consistently successful?

Begin by identifying your own strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths.....

Weaknesses.....

Strategies of Influence

Influencing is seldom a simple, open and direct interaction. It is usually more subtle and created to be appropriate to the person, the situation and the required outcome.

Effective influencers are aware that their behaviour is always being noticed by others, even though they are not necessarily trying to influence them. Your words will always be interpreted, however subtle or oblique. In short - whether we mean to influence or not - we are constantly radiating out an influential message to the world.

Subtle and sometimes hidden influence, which is often delicate, slow and on-going, can take many forms including the following:

- Changing an image or behaviour
- Altering attitude
- Networking
- Communicating non-verbally
- Developing and maintaining rapport
- Nurturing relationships
- Counselling others
- Acting as a mentor
- Maintaining customer relations
- Using metaphor and analogy

Which of the above strategies are weak and which are strong in your workplace today?

.....

Which of these strategies do you think is the most needed/appropriate in your workplace?

.....

What Makes an Effective Influencer?

Effective influencers share attitudes and behaviours that ensure consistent success.
Studies have shown that they:

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Implications</u>
<i>Indicate the benefits of their ideas</i>	Practiced communication skills are required
<i>Neutralise resistance, preferably in advance</i>	Able to overcome ones own resistances
<i>Find alternative ways to influence others when one way doesn't work</i>	The willingness to be patient and creative
<i>Listen attentively to what others say</i>	Be genuinely interested
<i>Uncover others values, needs and wants</i>	Being able to recognise others' values is only possible when we are able to recognise our own
<i>Empathise continuously</i>	Be able to remain detached and unaffected by others ;
<i>Create and maintain rapport throughout</i>	Have the motivation to build a relationship
<i>Eliminate weak statements from their language</i>	Be aware of your own language
<i>Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse</i>	Be prepared to invest time and energy in practice

The Aims of Your Influence

Most of the time, you will be seeking these outcomes:

- To maintain and sustain an existing positive relationship
- To gain commitment to your ideas
- To ensure your message is passed on to others
- To motivate others to achieve a certain outcome
- To motivate others to change their behaviour

The Possible Responses

All influence gains some sort of response/reaction. On a scale of 1 to 5, these are the most likely responses you will receive. Which one is the most prominent where you work?

5 Total commitment	<i>Terrific idea, wish I'd thought of it. When do we start?</i>
4 General agreement	<i>Not a bad idea. I've got one or two doubts.</i>
3 Compliance	<i>OK- you're the boss. I suppose we'd better start.</i>
2 Open disagreement	<i>This just won't work and here's why.</i>
1 Hidden sabotage	<i>(Thinks) You reckon it'll work; I'll prove you wrong.</i>

Which of the above characterises your workplace culture?

Knowing What You Want

Influencing is all about persuading others to see things your way, resolving disagreement and arriving at agreement. But how do they see things? How far apart are your conflicting viewpoints - or is there some overlap?

- Seeking areas of mutual agreement and amplifying these will help you to minimise points of disagreement.
- By dovetailing your outcomes and recognising the needs of others, you immediately establish rapport. Rapport is the foundation of effective, long-lasting influence

Your Influencing Objectives

Before you decide what is the most appropriate method/approach it is useful to clarify your objectives first. In the context of your current situation in your workplace answer the following questions.

What is a current situation/individual you would like to influence?.....

What is the context? Where, when, with whom?.....

Is the outcome in your hands?.....

What do you really want to achieve?.....

If you were to achieve your outcome. What will it:

Look like?.....

Sound like?.....

Feel like?.....

Seven Steps to Successful Influence

Here are the seven most common steps to effective influential communication. If you can make this pattern second nature it will leave you to concentrate on the detail.

1. Building Rapport

Be on their level; recognise their beliefs and values; match their behaviour patterns and blend your personality characteristics with theirs.

2. Asking Questions

Elicit needs; identify their motives, ascertain attitudes and feelings.

3. Listening actively

Demonstrate that you are listening; listen with all your senses; suspend your judgement.

4. Highlight the Benefits

Summarise how the specific benefits of your proposal/ideas accurately reflects their needs.

5. Move Together towards a decision

Ask questions which will force a decision (or rejection); test interest through hypothetical questions; make positive statements which assume their acceptance.

6. Behave as if You Will Succeed

We are all influenced in some way by other people's behaviour. If they look and sound convincing, we are more likely to be influenced by them. Look and sound the part. Use positive body language to reinforce your message. Underline your message with the appropriate tone.

7. Watch your words

What words do you think would weaken your message and your capacity to influence others

Believe in Yourself

Many people give up far too easily. What if the great explorers, inventors, artists and politicians had thrown in the towel and gone home early? People who persevere recognise that early failure can provide helpful feedback.

Experience + acceptance of failure = defeat and resignation
Experience + review of feedback = learning, choice and growth

However, focusing too much effort on issues over which you have no influence or control can result in feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. The trick is to recognise that this is the case and back out gracefully.

The Internal Blocks and Barriers to Successful Influence

There are many habits which are either attitudes or patterns of behaviour which sabotage our ability to influence others. If we don't recognise and change these habits within ourselves then all the methods and techniques in the world will be largely ineffective.

The Seven Fatal Habits

Seven Fatal Habits	The Response They Invoke	Our Own Emotional State	False Belief Behind Our Behaviour
Controlling	Resistance. Withdrawal of cooperation	Fear	That others should do what I tell them!
Arguing			
Criticising			
Competing			
Complaining			
Condescending			
Manipulating			

The External Blocks and Barriers

Brainstorm the main obstacles which you perceive in the workplace to successfully influence change or actual outcomes. Then take one at a time and create solutions and strategies to overcome these obstacles.

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Blocks, Barriers and Obstacles In the Workplace	Solutions and Strategies
1 Relationships and People	
2 Policies, Rules, Regulations, Procedures	
3 History and Culture	
4 Expectation of Others	
5 Environment	
6 Resources	

Building the Capacity to Influence Others From Inside Out

As we saw in the previous exercise we have learned a number of fatal habits which diminish our capacity to influence. These external behaviours are symptoms of something missing internally.

Inner Basis of Outer Influence	Negative Belief About self and What it Makes Us Do	Positive Belief About Self	Method to Translate Belief into Experience
Self Image	I'm not a nice person Sabotage our dreams and aspirations and makes us want others to be/do the same	I am capable of being positive, caring and honest.	Visualisation
Self Esteem/Worth			
Self Respect			
Self Motivation			
Self responsibility			

“I know I do not see the world the way it truly is - I know I see the world the way I am”

Identifying Values

In order to influence without others feeling we are just interfering it is useful to, and often essential, to know the others values and needs. Before we can do that we first need to know our own values and needs.

Values

Reputation love caring justice learning beauty success my
children's respect making the world a better place family name integrity
religion money creativity talent intelligence admiration of others
fairness freedom excellence security revolution vitality wisdom
humour joy happiness fun fulfillment personal honour status
character friendship ability to nurture youth professional generosity truth
uniqueness service harmony using my abilities

1. Identify 5 or 6 key values for you in the list above.
2. Now ask yourself "what is important to me about all these values?"
(The answer that comes to mind will be a value that is even more important. Knowing your important, core values is a crucial aspect of self-understanding. Realise how your values have been motivating you, your achievements, your actions.)

QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY VALUES

Level 1 Questions

These are questions to obtain basic facts and information (who, where, what, why, when, how, etc.)

- What do you do?
- Tell me about your job?
- How do you like your job?
- What kind of products are you interested in?

Level 2 Questions

These are questions to identify values, interests and feelings, the standards of performance that the person you want to influence will use to make decisions. The objective here is to identify the ultimate values of the person; where does the inner drive come from which determines that the person has a particular interest and is attracted to certain roles and activities.

- How do you feel about?
- What's important to you about.....?
- What do you value in a job/boss/employee?
- If you had to choose between X and Y which one would you pick?
- What does mean to you?

Why is that important to you?

Why do you feel like that?

Why does that concern you?

Empathic Inquiry

Investing in understanding before being understood

Without empathy, people may use their emotional intelligence in manipulative and self-interested ways. The ability to read non-verbal indicators, to disclose strategically, and to probe into the other's personal life, can be used in a malevolent way, to 'weaken the other person' and to gain power. Real empathy genuinely wants to build trust, be sensitive, understand and be of assistance to the other person in helping them to clarify and manage their own emotional state.

Apathy - implies lack of involvement. You are emotionally distant and lacking in concern. Apathy is often a symptom of burnout. We distance ourselves because we don't have the energy for emotional involvement. Apathy can also result in dumping work on people (rather than actively delegating). When managers appear apathetic, they are seen as ignoring, distant, untrustworthy and unhelpful. Apathetic employees tend to be reactive and unable to show initiative or flexibility.

Sympathy - implies feeling for, as in 'I feel sorry for him'. It can be perceived as patronising. If you become sympathetic you may lose objectivity and become too involved. This is often a fear when people think about empathy - will they get too involved? In this sense, empathy does involve risk? How close do you get?

Empathy - implies navigating a difficult path between over- and under involvement. There are no hard rules. We need to use our intuition, and occasionally helicopter out, to stand back outside the relationship and ask ourselves what's happening.

The Skills Of Empathy

- Listening
- Questioning
- Reflecting

Elements of Non-judgemental Listening.

The following list of elements of good listening is not an exhaustive list, but comprises the key features described by a sample of experienced counselors.

1. *Clear your head.* You can't listen empathically if you're preoccupied with your own thoughts and anxieties. Focus on the other person.

You can do this by going through a symbolic corridor zone. This is a thought or activity that enables you to mark the transition from an internal focus to a focus on the other person. It could be a deep breathing exercise, or clearing your desk.

2. *Look towards the other person* in a relaxed (not staring) way. Lean slightly forwards, as appropriate, to reduce the physical distance and to communicate interest.
3. *Relax while you listen.* Thinking of the next question will stop you listening to the last answer.
4. *Silence is important.* People sometimes need time to think things through. You will show them that you trust them by not interrupting.
5. *Don't interrupt* unless asking for clarification. Don't rush to fill the speaker's pauses.
6. *Avoid pre-judging,* stereotyping, jumping to conclusions, assuming you understand. Avoid saying, "I know exactly what you mean".
7. *Avoid daydreaming.* Concentrate. Don't 'tune-out'.
8. *Use acknowledgement* responses such as nodding, 'hmm's', 'I see', and smiling. The message you are giving is, "I'm with you. Carry on".
9. *Position yourself at an angle.* Direct face to face can be viewed as confrontational. Respect the proximity zone: that is the distance at which the other person feels comfortable.
10. *Non-verbal pacing and mirroring.* When two people have developed good rapport, they will tend to mirror each other's posture and gestures. Their heads and bodies move in synchrony with a subtle rhythm. Listeners can ask themselves 'Am I showing sufficient interest in the way my posture and movement reflects the other person?'

Appendix

Skills and Attitudes of Influencing

SKILLS

Certain key skills, as listed below, are essential for influencing.

- *Listening.* Probably the most important skill for any effective influencer. Listening is a complex two-way process involving asking the right questions (which indicates that you are, in fact, listening), summarising, testing, understanding and displaying supportive listening body language (for example, head nodding and eye contact).
- *Probing.* This means getting to the heart of the issue). Asking the right questions by probing deeper and deeper into the issue in order to get the full picture is vital. Only having part of the story is often what lets influencers down.
- *Verbal fluency.* The ability to put forward a lucid and clear case with confidence and flair is a great advantage to any influencer. This also involves showing commitment, enthusiasm and total involvement in the issue.
- *Rapport building.* Getting on to the same wavelength as those you are attempting to influence is a key skill in avoiding misinterpretations. Good listening behaviour and the ability to empathise are vital in developing this skill.

- *Awareness of body language.* This means being aware of the non-verbal messages you are projecting to others as well as having an understanding of others' body language and its meaning. It means ensuring our words and body language are synchronised in order to give congruent messages.
- *Visioning.* This means looking to the future, painting a picture of what you visualise the outcome to be and inspiring others with your articulation of that vision. Visioning at this level is about communicating your commitment and establishing common ground.
- *Preparation.* The ability to plan and prepare your approach and case. The key here is to recognise that preparation is not just the words you will use but also the process you will go through and the way you will go about it.
- *Linking and building.* In other words, establishing common ground and linking your ideas to those of others, building on what others say rather than simply disagreeing.
- *Reframing.* This means having the ability to look at an issue from different perspectives, and not just from one's own narrow perspective.

ATTITUDES

Much as skills are important, alone they are not enough. A number of key attitudes are vital for successful influencing, as listed below.

- *Patience.* It is said that patience is a virtue, but for effective influencing it is a necessity! Influencing does not happen overnight; where people and their emotions are involved, time and timing must also play its part.
- *Flexibility.* Having the flexibility to adapt and adjust your approach, language and even possibly your views will help you not only to influence in the long run but also to develop several of the other attitudes for influencing.
- *Trust.* Developing and building trust is vital for long-term influencing. We will all have been manipulated at some time in our lives, and within our relationships trust tends to be the first thing to leave and the last thing to come back.
- *Confidence.* This relates to confidence in your knowledge, in your approach, in your commitment and the way you display that confidence.
- *Credibility.* This is about the reputation you have developed within your personal arena (business or otherwise). In the main it involves the behaviour you use with and towards others and is generally based on their perceptions of you.
- *Openness.* Being open to the ideas of others and being open to influence yourself can be extremely beneficial when it comes to influencing others.
- *Consistency.* Not necessarily in approach but in terms of behaviour and personality consistency. Consistency is important in gaining credibility in the eyes of others.
- *Courage.* Having the courage to speak up and out for your beliefs and ideas, taking a calculated risk, and trying out new ways of doing things, all demonstrate courage.
- *Self-knowledge.* Awareness of our own strengths, weaknesses, beliefs and values are invaluable for effective influencing. This alone will often determine the approach you take

and skills you use when attempting to influence others. This self-knowledge must be tested and held up to the mirror.

As Robert Burns said in his poem, 'To a Louse' (1786): *Oh what power the gift could give us. To see ourselves as others see us.*

- *Enthusiasm.* Although not sufficient alone, often enthusiasm can be the catalyst that gains others' attention and interest.

Take one of the above attitudes or skills per day and consciously practice it.

"Instead of using authority or manipulation to get someone to do something, influencing helps people to realise that there is genuine advantage to them in moving in the direction you want. Influencing creates buy-in and less resistance long term. It engenders creativity, and co-operation rather than obedience and potential resistance.

"Nicola Thomas, Marketing Director Christian Salvesen