



Influencing Short Version

A View from Impact Factory

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Influencing

There is no right way, nor is there only one way to influence. Everything, but everything, is an influencing factor. And we are, all of us, influenced by people, places, events and situations at all times. Sometimes we are affected more or less by these things, but we are continually being influenced by what happens around us.

So, what about the specifics in the workplace? Your job requires you to influence people just about all of the time. It may take the form of gaining support, inspiring others, persuading other people to become your champions, engaging someone's imagination, creating relationships.

Whatever form it takes, being an excellent influencer makes your job easier.

An interesting point about people who use their influencing skills well, is that other people like being around them. There's a kind of exciting buzz, or sense that things happen when they're about.

It's because they don't sit around wishing things were different while moaning there's nothing they can do about it. They don't sit around blaming others or complaining about what needs fixing that will make things better. They see what needs doing and set about getting it done.

Truly excellent influencing skills require a healthy combination of interpersonal, communication, presentation and assertiveness techniques.

It is about adapting and modifying your personal style when you become aware of the affect you are having on other people, while still being true to yourself. Behaviour and attitude change are what's important, not changing who you are or how you feel and think.

You may try to exert your influence through coercion and manipulation. You might even succeed in getting things done; but that isn't really influencing. That's forcing people to do what you want, often against their will. You won't have succeeded in winning support.

Pushing, bullying, bludgeoning or haranguing DO NOT WORK! Like elephants, people will remember the experience.

Indeed, if you force someone to do something you want, without taking their point of view into consideration, then the impression that person is left with is how they will see you **forever**. You're stuck with it, unless you deliberately change what you do in order to be seen differently.

People are far more willing to come halfway (or more) if they feel acknowledged, understood and appreciated. They may even end up doing or agreeing to something they wouldn't previously have done because they feel good about making the choice.

Influencing is about understanding yourself and the effect or impact you have on others. Though it can, on occasion, be one way, the primary relationship is two way, and it is about changing how others perceive you. In other words, the cliché, perception is reality, makes perfect sense in the context of influencing.

It doesn't matter what's going on internally for you – if it isn't perceived by the other person, then it doesn't exist, other than in your mind.

You could be doing the most brilliant presentation you've ever created, but if you haven't brought your

'audience' with you, the brilliance is wasted. And that's about being able to see what's going on for them, which will be different, however much you may have in common.

Influencing can sometimes be looked at as the ability to 'finesse', almost sleight of hand. The other person isn't prodded into seeing your view of the world, but is persuaded, often unconsciously, into understanding it.

Sometimes you can get so used to your own personal style or way of being or pattern of communicating, that you don't think of how it is being received, and you don't think of behaving in any other way.

Influencing is about being able to move things forward, without pushing, forcing or telling others what to do.

Now what we know is that one of the most powerful forces that affect people's behaviour is the avoidance of humiliation. No one wants to embarrass themselves if they can help it. So changing your behaviour entails a certain risk.

But if that behaviour change is deliberate, and you have made an effort to see the world from the other person's point of view, then humiliation can be avoided on both sides.

Whatever the arena you work in influencing is about having the confidence and willingness to use yourself to make things happen. It's also the ability to 'work' a dynamic, whether it's a large group, one to one or over the phone. By 'working' the dynamic, we mean using everything at your disposal, both verbal and non-verbal communication, to create the impact you want, rather than letting things just happen.

If you are interested in talking to us further about our work on Influencing, please phone: 020 7226 1877 or e-mail: enquiries@impactfactory.com