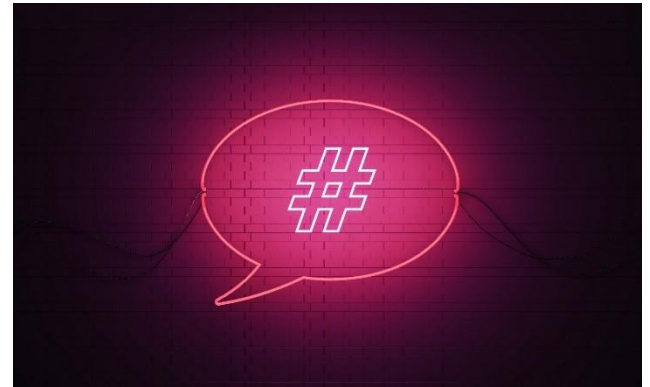




Influencing

We hear all the time about influencers and the way they may have over their followers. They often have a target audience in social media and will influence in a particular area or business. They will create content that engages and is often focused on marketing and earning revenue.



Influencing as a skills, is a range of communication techniques that create a positive change in others. This can be on a one to one basis or a group situation. We influence to create a positive difference in the situation or the relationship. Influencing has a joint outcome and benefits the other person.

Positive Influence

Positive influence is about the application of personal power to bring about a change in others, whether that is individually or in a group. If we influence ,we make a difference to the situation in a way that will build the relationship.

The components of influencing:

- It can focus on the task and or the relationship
- It has to be a two-way process, you need to be open with the person you are communicating with and adapt to them.
- There has to be integrity in the process.

The Influencing Process

Preparation

- Am I clear about my objectives in the influencing situation?
- How do I communicate my objectives to the other people involved?

Acceptance and Action

- How do I gain commitment and if I can't, can I use compliance?
- How do I know what level of acceptance I've got?
- How do I know when it's been done?
- How do I measure the change?
- How soon do I need it to happen?

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Intent and Impact

You have to be clear about the intention in the situation and the desired impact. How is your behaviour going to be received and how do you best adapt the behaviour to gain the right outcome.

What behaviours will distort the impact and what should you avoid, that could produce a negative outcome. Is there a mismatch between my message and the behaviour, that could produce an incongruent communication.



Behaviour

The best way to influence is through both Assertive and Responsive behaviours. To be an effective influencer, you need to know how to deliver influence through the voice and body language as well as what you are going to say.

We can translate these behaviours into types of energy – Assertive = push and, responsive = PULL. In PUSH, we need to push our own energy outwards by using a lot of non-verbal and vocal power. However, there is still the need to take account of the other person's energy. For example, when influencing a very loud or aggressive person in a PUSH style, it would be appropriate to use high energy with lots of non-verbals. IN PULL, we respond and do a lot of reflecting, empathising and gentle open questioning.

Often you might find that one type of energy is more natural to you and the other takes more effort and conscious thinking. A good way to establish your own preference, is to identify people who you enjoy communicating with and how they work with you.

The following aspects are important in taking charge of the space around you:

- **Eye Contact** - This is the heart of influence. If you don't make eye contact you don't usually influence.
- **Body Language** – Using the right gestures and orientations, helps convey our message. Create the right energy and presence.
- **Voice Emphasis** – Use the right tone, intonation and expression. Match the speed of the audience and think about the level of projection. Using silence to influence the audience.

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In the PULL style, it is important that the other person takes charge of the space and so we should simply mirror them. Whilst space itself is particularly important, control of time is equally beneficial in exerting influence. IN PUSH, if we rush what we are saying the other person may get the impression we want to get it over with quickly and so will take us less seriously than we want. In PULL, it is important to choose carefully the timing of our reflections, questions and disclosures to ensure we stay on the other person's agenda.

Effective influence involves congruent use of words, tone and body language. A key secret of effective influence is to really take charge of the space and time around you in PUSH situations. To do this you need to use pitch at a level that matches the needs of the situation and your own need to take control, but also reflects the needs of the other people being influenced. In PUSH, high energy non-verbals and vocal presence will ensure high influence provided they are not overdone.



In PULL the main need is to play down your own energy and match it to the needs of the other person. Here you let them take charge of the space and time and you respond to their energy.

1 Asserting - Definition

Offering advice, recommendations or instructions to another individual in order to help them move forward.

Types

1. Assertive Prescribing – Persuasive Making a proposal and backing it up with reasons. The influence comes from clarity, brevity and logic of your reasoning
2. Personal Prescribing – Assertive Stating clearly and strongly what you want to happen without the need to give any reason. The influence comes from the strength of your own conviction demonstrated through music and dance



2 Directing - Definition

Increasing the awareness of another individual through feedback or probing in order to help them move forward.

Types

1. Evaluating – describing clearly to another person the impact of their behaviour on you. In doing so, you make it clear that you either value the behaviour or you don't
2. Probing – testing the other persons' position by asking direct and focused questions

Since both these behaviours on their own can be experienced as aggressive, they need to be balanced by strong responsive behaviours that affirm the value of the individual being challenged.

3 Enthusing - Definition

Creating a sense of excitement in the other person through creating an attractive picture of some future situation.

Components of the Style

A good level of common ground with the other person around the issue at hand is a precondition for visioning.

The essence of visioning is a high-energy description of some future situation described as if it were happening in the present. It therefore needs to be present tense and full of emotional content such as pictures, sounds, tastes, smells and feelings. These bypass the logical, rational part of the brain and attract us at an emotional and sensual level.

4 Responding - Definition

Being fully present for others in order to understand their ideas, opinions and feelings, and to demonstrate actively that you have done so.

4.2 Components of the Style

There are five main components:



1 Giving Full Attention

Careful, non-evaluative attention and eye contact with the speaker aids him/her to express what they want to say. Confirming nods of the head and confirmatory sounds provide a warm accepting atmosphere for free expression of thoughts, ideas, attitudes and values. Much of the meaning behind a speaker's words will come from facial expression.

2 Reflecting Data Content

This process is like holding up a mirror and reflecting back the ideas and phrases as you hear them. With a slow speaker, it is easy to use a pause after they have been speaking for a little time, to paraphrase what they have said.

With a expressive talker, you may have to interrupt to get the space to reflect. This is acceptable if you signal your intention by phrases such as

“Can I just check that I’ve understood these points?”
“I’m just interrupting to check my understanding”.

The speaker goes on talking and you will reflect from time to time breaking up the information into manageable sections. You would also want to speed up your own reflection.

3 Reflect Feelings

In addition to the thoughts and ideas the speaker is expressing. Sometimes what the speaker is saying and the emotions they are expressing do not seem to match. Reflecting back this inconsistency can help the speaker gain insights. As they become more aware of your sensitivity then personal disclosures are likely to occur. This helps the speaker bring their thoughts, goals and ideas in line with their feelings

4 Summarising

When you have reflected several times and you are beginning to grasp the ideas and thoughts of the speaker, then a summary helps both to review where you have reached. It is a check on your mutual understanding of the message. Think of reflection information and emotions as being the paragraphs and summaries being the chapters.

As the speaker comes to the end of the subject, a final summary is essential to pull together and round off your listening.



5 Interpreting

Sometimes, when you are sure that you are grasping the speaker's ideas and feelings, it is possible to interpret what the speaker is saying. However, beware of negative reactions from the speaker. They may feel you are distorting their message for reasons of your own.

6 Exploring

Sometimes, sensitive questions can encourage the speaker to enlarge on areas of significance for them. Non-verbal cues may indicate an important area for exploration. The key is that it should be the speaker not the influencer who feels that the area is important. Exploring is to help the speaker, not to meet the influencer.

5 Pacing - Definition

Pacing is the offering of relevant facts, thoughts and feelings that you believe will be useful to the other person, once they have offered something to you.

5.1 Components of the Style

A statement or statements disclosing information that is unknown to the other party that will help them understand your position better. A genuine willingness to disclose and an understanding of how much disclosure is appropriate with this person at this time.



Summary

By using the right style of influencing, you will enable growth in relationships and the outcomes for all those involved. This will create positive outcomes for all.