

Influence (verb) 'to affect or alter by indirect or intangible means'

## HOW CAN YOU INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE AT WORK?

Influence is about moving people: their actions, their opinions, maybe even their beliefs.

Any number of factors can affect your ability to influence at work. Three variables over which you have some degree of control are:

- the needs of the people you are trying to influence
- your relationship with those people
- the capabilities you use to influence.

### Understand the needs of the people you are trying to influence

Neuroscientist David Rock has created a model that helps us understand how people move in response to threat or fulfilment of their needs. Rock identifies five basic needs:

**Status**—our importance to others

**Certainty**—our ability to predict the future

**Autonomy**—our sense of control

**Relatedness**—our sense of safety with others

**Fairness**—our perception of fairness

Identify which of these needs is not being met for people you want to influence. If you are able to meet those needs, you will increase your ability to influence.

## Develop a relationship that supports influence

If you could command people to do exactly what you wanted, you wouldn't need to use influence—you could rely on the uneven power relationship to affect or alter things to suit you. In the 1980's William Oncken Junior described four sources of management authority. His ideas work in the 21st century as models for relationships.

Where you do not have that kind of relationship, or choose not to exert your positional power, you can develop relationships that create the right environment for influence. Such relationships can be built on three things.

### Competence—your expertise

If you are seen as having technical expertise or subject matter knowledge, people are more likely to seek your ideas and follow your advice. Relationships developed on competence enable you to influence ways of thinking and working.

### Personality—your behaviour

If you are easy to work with, people are more likely to spend time working with you. This simple equation gives you more opportunity to influence. Consider people's needs to work out what 'easy to work with' means for them. The basics of being polite, punctual, and positive are solid starting points.

### Character—the authentic you

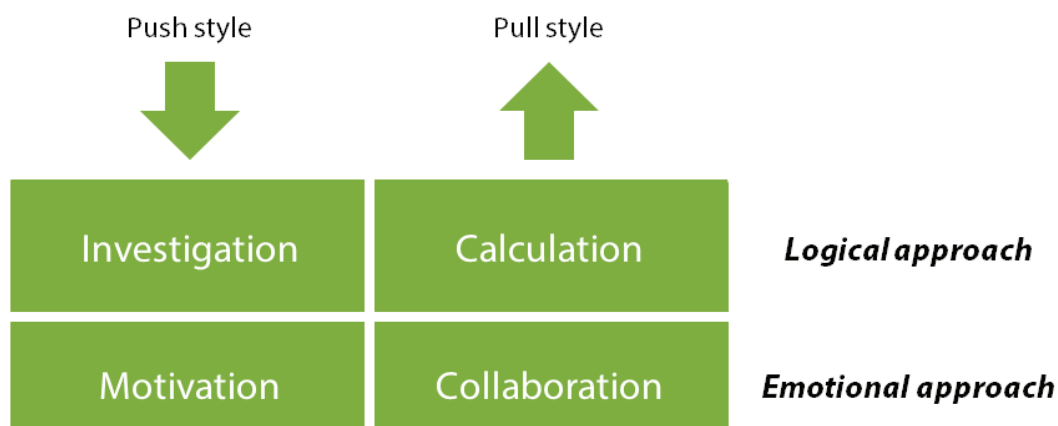
If others see you as a person of integrity, someone who is reliable, honest, loyal, and sincere, they will be—consciously or subconsciously—willing to be influenced by you. Building a relationship on your character is a long game. Once others see your character in action through rough and smooth times, their respect for you means they are more likely to be influenced by you.

## Your influencing capabilities

You've worked out who you want to influence and in what context you influence them. Now you have to think about how you will influence them. Influencing is a skill you can learn like any other, and it may be something you do instinctively. Tim Baker suggests there are two styles and two approaches that combine to form four main styles of influence. Each of these styles is supported by capabilities you can learn to apply appropriately.

You can push, by being assertive and directive, and feeding ideas to a person. Or you can pull, by enabling, seeking information, and letting people develop their own idea.

Your approach to influencing may be grounded in logic, taking a rational view of a situation. Or your approach may be emotional, and will incorporate a vision for the future.



### References

Baker, Tim. *The New Influencing Toolkit: Capabilities for communicating with influence*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015

Oncken Jr., William. "Four Components of Management Authority". *Executive Excellence*. 1985, October.

Rock, David. "Managing with the Brain in Mind". *Strategy and Business*. Autumn 2009, Issue 56.

## Kickstart to Leadership spaces available

We're holding a KickStart to Leadership programme (2 days) on 2 & 3 December.  
And we've got a few spaces available!

To learn more about our KickStart programme go to [www.trainingpractice.co.nz/what-we-do](http://www.trainingpractice.co.nz/what-we-do)  
Get in touch if you want to take advantage of this opportunity.

*Thanks for coming!*

From The Training Practice team—Dinah, Hilary, Kristen, Zac, Sophie, Diana, and Jackson.

Our next Tea & Toast will be on 6 December, when Hilary will give her round up of the year in local and national government.