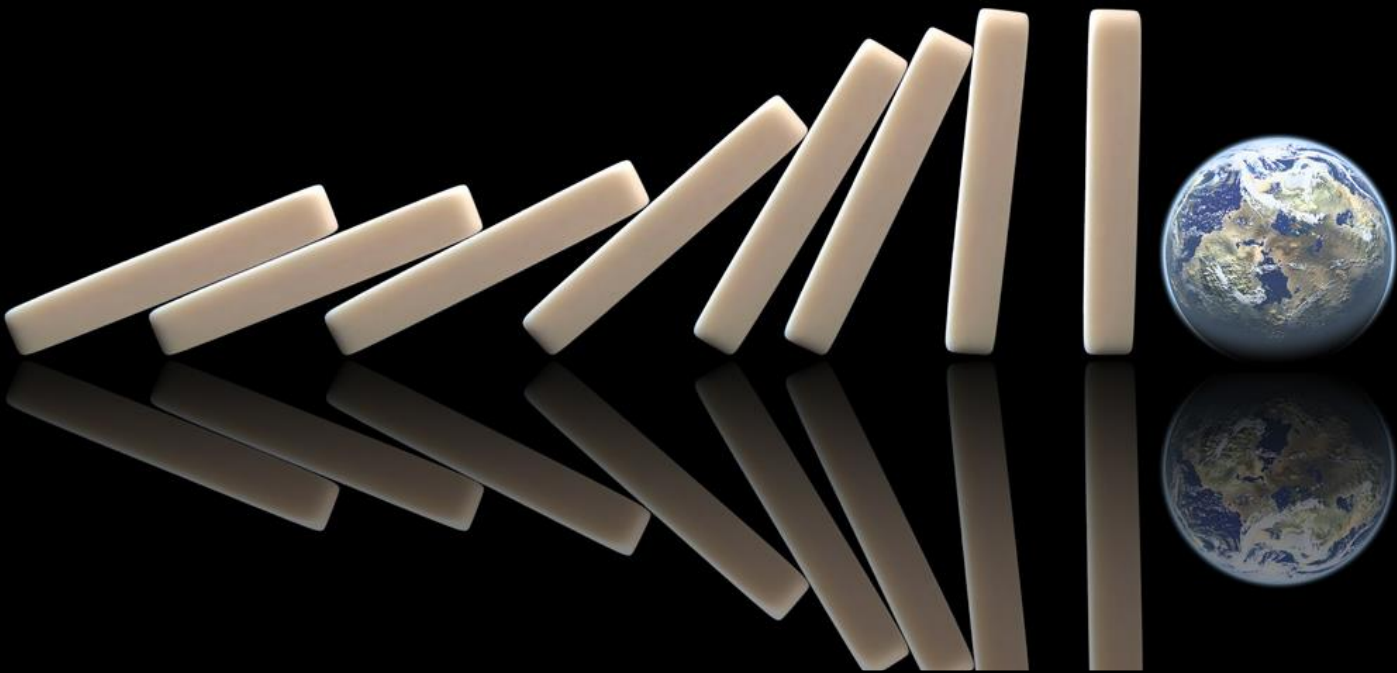


Influencing

Definitions

Actions that seek to have someone change their behaviour, thoughts, feelings, ideas or beliefs

Things we do or don't do, the way we are or are not, that somehow has an impact on how others behave, think, feel, or their ideas



The Dynamics of Influence

- **2 – way process** - You have to be open to other people's influence if you wish to remain influential with them.
- Much of what influences us, and how we influence others, is outside our awareness, and is built on factors such as **trust, credibility, power** etc.
- **Situational** - I can have a different impact with the same person in a different context depending on how they or I are feeling, the content of what we are discussing etc. No two situations are the same. Therefore it is important to be able to respond in the moment to what is actually happening rather than what you thought might happen or planned.
- **Legitimacy** - How you exercise power will have a huge impact on the relationship. It is a legitimate need for a team member to ask you to agree their leave request in August because their children have their holidays then. It is also legitimate for you to think this may not be a good idea if everyone else in the team is away and there is a continuing demand for your services as a team.
- **Sustainability** - Influence is rarely a one off – it is about building long term and sustainable relationships. Influencing which seems to get a good result at the time but which is not sustained is not effective influencing. For example, if you and a member of your team agree that she will re-do a piece of work and she then fails to deliver, you have failed as an influencer. It will also have had an effect on your relationship with her.
- **Integrity** - Good inter-personal relationships rely on trust, and on people's experience of you over time. If you attempt to influence through coercion or manipulation, you will destroy any trust existing between you and the other person. You may get what you want but it will be at the expense of the long-term relationship.



The 6 Principles of Influence

1

Reciprocation

This is one of the most widespread norms of human culture. It requires us to try and repay in kind what another person has provided. This sense of obligation works well in society because it means we can give something to someone else with confidence that it will not be lost to us.

2

Commitment & Consistencies

We like to be consistent in our words, attitudes, beliefs and desires. By getting someone to make a commitment to something at an early stage, they are more likely to act in line with that commitment later on.

3

Social Proof

One way in which we decide what to believe or how to act in a given situation is to look at what other people are doing, particularly people that we admire or respect. Thus, the more or the better the people who are already complying with a request, the bigger the influence.

1

Liking

People prefer to say yes to individuals they know and like. Likeability may be influenced by physical attractiveness, similarity, and familiarity.

2

Authority

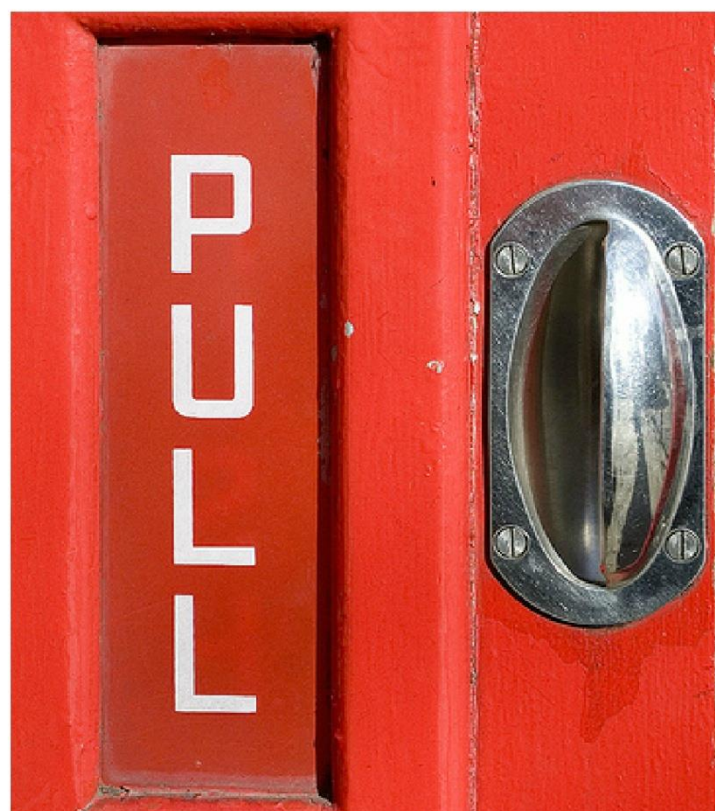
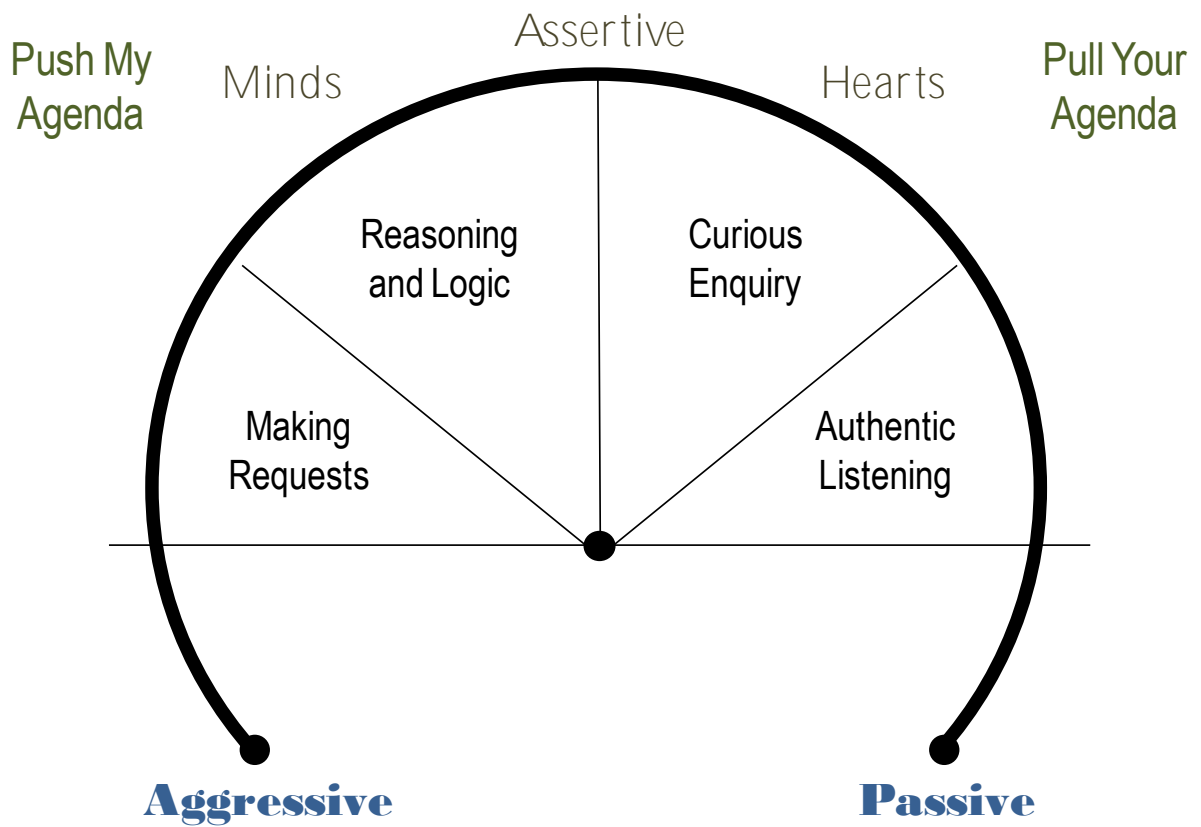
We are socialised to obey authority. This is normally a good strategy with regard to genuine authority, because these people tend to have high levels of knowledge, wisdom and or power.

3

Scarcity

People assign more value to opportunities when they are less available.

Influencing styles



PUSH



Push is a powerful way to lead if you:

- Need others to be clear about your vision, direction, goals, expectations, and standards
- Want to 'set the pace' for others
- Want to make proposals, suggestions, and recommendations; let others know your views, opinions, thoughts, and / or feelings
- Require others to carry out tasks in a particular way – because of legislation, health and safety regulations, organisational protocols and processes, your own requirements
- Need to inject energy into a project, a team, a relationship
- Are under time pressure.

Push behaviours

The behaviours associated with push are expressing views, opinions and proposals clearly and concisely; and making requests.

- Reasoning and logic
- Making requests.

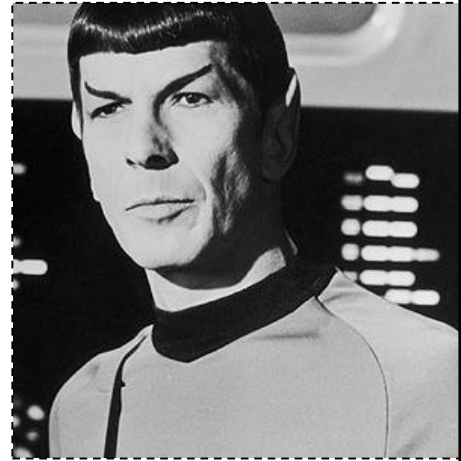
PUSH



Reasoning and Logic

Most people at work employ reason and logic to try to influence each other on a daily basis. The use of facts, logic and reasoning is highly prized in most organisations and is the most common form of influence used. Not everyone however is good at it and many attempts to influence in this way are undermined by half-thought through proposals, fuzzy reasoning and a tendency to go on too long.

This behaviour is about expressing your views, ideas or opinions in a clear and concise way, backed up with two or three reasons. Here is a strategy that will help you express your views more effectively.



- **Signal your intention**

This gets people's attention and signals what you want to do e.g. "I have a proposal."

- **State your view or proposal**

Less is more. Make sure you do this clearly and briefly.

- **Give your reasons**

Keep your reasons to your one or two best ones. If you give all your reasons or too many, you are likely to finish with your weakest and that's the one people will concentrate on. Giving too many reasons is very boring and people will switch off.

- **Proposals first followed by reasons**

It works better if you put your proposal first. If you start by giving your reasons, people may be confused and will focus on your reasons, missing your main proposal.

- **Negative vs. positive reasoning**

This style can use either. You are likely to be more influential however if you try to express your views in a positive rather than a negative way. For example instead of saying "I don't think this is a sensible way forward." Try, "I take another view. I think a more productive approach might be....."

- **Be responsive to other's views**

If you respond to others' views with counter views of your own, this may escalate into an argument and may be experienced as aggressive. A more productive way to respond is to listen to the other person and explore their viewpoint before coming back with your own view. Also it helps to look for where you agree with the other person as well as where you might disagree.

PUSH

Making Requests

Making requests involves stating what you need, want or expect from another person in a clear and unambiguous way.

Many of us find this very difficult. We fear we will come across as aggressive or pushy, or that we will appear selfish and of course we fear rejection. It is however essential sometimes that we make our needs and expectations clear. Much confusion and misunderstanding could be avoided at work and in our personal lives if we simply expressed clearly what we wanted.

Here is a simple protocol for making requests.

- **Use the person's name**

A person's name is to them the most compelling sound in the world. It is almost impossible not to respond to it. By using the person's name at the outset, you will immediately capture their attention. It is also an acknowledgement of their significance.

- **Use the word "I"**

Own your request. Take responsibility for your need, want or expectation. The use of 'I' carries great power and gives personal significance to the request.

- **Be straightforward**

Don't wander around the issue, qualifying it with 'ifs' and 'buts'. Be direct: 'James, I want you to complete the report by next Friday.' Be brief and concise and say exactly what it is that you want.

- **If necessary, explain why**

Very often, simply asking for what you want gets it. Sometimes however you will need to give reasons. "Ann, I want you to stand in for me at the weekly team meeting. The reason for this is that I've been called to an emergency meeting of the project board."

- **Apply the broken record technique**

This is a metaphor for the technique of repeating the same phrases in the face of resistance. You should use it with care since it can seem crude. It is however very effective if you meet with resistance that you feel is not justified. For example:

Manager:	<i>I want you to attend the project meeting tomorrow.</i>
Team member:	<i>I'm sorry, I can't, I'm far too busy.</i>
Manager:	<i>Nevertheless, I want you to attend the meeting.</i>
Team member:	<i>It's impossible. I've got too much to do.</i>
Manager:	<i>I can see you're busy. However, I do want you to attend the meeting.</i>

PULL



Influencing through 'Pull'

Pull is a powerful way to influence if you:

- Need to understand others' agenda, views, opinions, feelings
- Want other people to drive through and implement a change that you have designed or want them to create the change with you. Pull engages people's hearts and energy as well as minds in change, and builds joint solutions
- Want the other person to find a solution and access their own resources – to deepen their own understanding of their issue and solve it rather than you solve it for them. They work really well in coaching conversations
- Don't know the answer. Most problems or challenges posed are not simple otherwise someone would have solved them. Pull allows you to understand the current situation in depth (facts, thoughts, feelings), agree what the desired future position is and how to get there
- Want to build relationships – most people respond well to us being genuinely curious about them and their situation.

Pull behaviours

The two central behaviours are listening and asking pull questions – questions which don't lead others or provide the answer. For example 'what have you done already?' is a pull question and 'have you spoken to your manager?' is a push question.

- Authentic Listening
- Curious Inquiry
- Pull questions



PULL



Authentic Listening

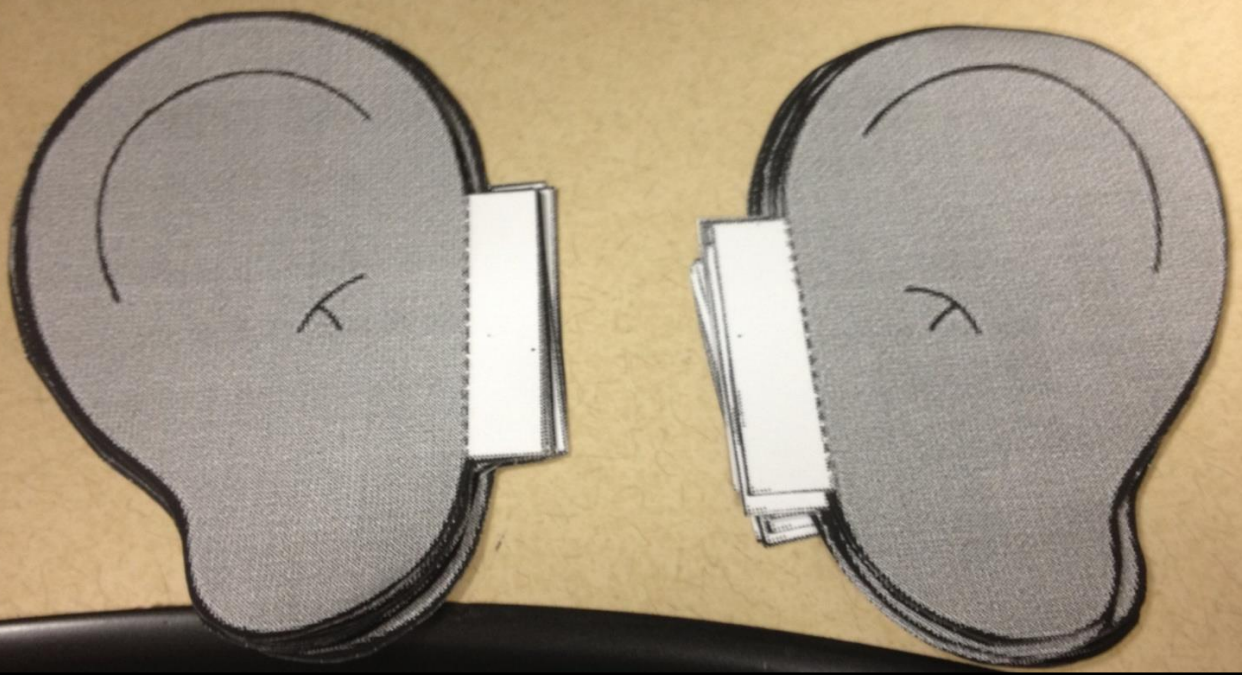
The components of authentic listening

Actively listening to another person is vital if you are to fully understand their situation and perspective. It also demonstrates understanding and empathy, and promotes cooperation. It does not necessarily convey agreement. It demands energy and discipline and is active. It is a learned skill and requires practice. It is a key skill in building and sustaining good relationships. It involves:

- Giving full attention
- Listening to the whole message – the words, music and dance
- Reflecting data
- Reflecting feelings
- Clarifying by asking questions
- Keeping an open mind
- Summarising
- Encouraging

It's hard work so:

- Prepare yourself to listen and be interested
- Sit where you can see the speaker
- Avoid distractions - divert the phone, put up a "do not disturb" notice
- Seek important themes in what the person is saying
- Suspend judgement
- Practise



PULL



Listening and power

One of the barriers to listening is that in organisations we can equate speaking with power, action, and being influential and in contrast regard listening as a passive, compliant activity. It is interesting to reflect on your own experience of how you are listened to and the impact this has had on your relationships.

Listening and self-awareness

Listening to others is key to building effective, long-term relationships. Listening to ourselves provides us with useful information about what matters to us, how we feel, and our thoughts. Listening can help us to reflect and make more conscious choices about how we respond. Listening is a highly subjective process. It is interesting to notice what and who we listen to, and our own personal barriers to listening.



PULL



Listening intensively and actively

The following suggestions are specifically for when you wish to listen intensively and actively. Particularly when you wish to:

- Help the other person reach a decision or explore options.
- Create a more neutral and supportive atmosphere when strong emotions are involved.
- Get a clearer understanding of the other person's perspective.

The advantage of these suggestions, however unnatural they may feel when first used, is that the other person almost always appreciates them. They almost always improve a difficult situation and require only a little self-discipline to put into effect.

- Listen particularly for indications of how the person feels about what they are talking about.
- Avoid taking the person on to your own agenda. Don't go on to your thoughts or feelings or situations where you imagine you have had similar experiences.
- Avoid telling the person that you understand or know how they feel.
- Don't tell the other person what to do unless it is absolutely necessary.

Instead

- Check your understanding by using phrases such as "It seems to me you're saying...(reflect back data or feelings)". "So, let me just check I've understood you.....(summarise key points)".
- Ask open, exploring questions such as "How did you feel about that?". "What options have you considered?"
- Help them with their own problem solving process with helpful questions such as; "What would be the best/worst outcome for you?" "What would happen if you did/didn't?" "How would you feel if you took that option?" "What are the plusses and minuses for you?"



PULL



Curious Inquiry

Curious inquiry is an essential part of influencing. Skilled listeners are able to ask questions that naturally seem to arise from what the other person is talking about. They are alert and curious. Alert to staying on the other person's agenda and curious about how the other person sees the world and in particular, the situation they are describing.

Curious inquiry is about the skilled use of questions. Asking skilful questions is another powerful "pull" lever. Skill in influencing needs skill in knowing what sort of questions to ask.

This kind of questioning is not about interrogating or putting the other person on the spot. Questioning here is of quite a different nature. It's about deepening our understanding of the other person's position.

There are certain questions that are more or less guaranteed to get people talking and to help you deepen your understanding of their viewpoint. They tend to be open questions, are fundamentally exploratory and can be very catalytic. They are characterised by the fact that they always arise and remain on the other person's agenda. Here are some examples:

- What's your view?
- How do you feel about that?
- What are your concerns?
- What's preventing you from moving forward?
- What would help?
- What are the plusses/minuses for you?
- What would happen if you did?
- What would happen if you didn't?
- What have you tried already?
- What options have you considered?
- What would you prefer?
- What happened?
- What do you need now?
- Of all the things you've mentioned, which is most important to you?
- In an ideal world, what would you want to happen?
- What will tell you you've succeeded?
- What would you like to happen next?
- What do you want to get from this meeting?
- How much energy have you got for this?
- What would success look like for you in this situation?

