

CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE

Our capacity to influence changes with different situations – research has shown a number of underlying sources. All of the sources of power detailed below can be used to successfully influence, however the key is choosing the most appropriate one for the situation you are dealing with. Effective influencing is the judicious application of our power.

Reward

This is where you have the opportunity to influence others because you can offer rewards or benefits to them. This can be financial rewards or more intrinsic rewards such as praise, recognition or visibility.

Coercive

This capacity to influence involves outlining risks or consequences to someone in order to persuade them to behave in a different way. These may be legislative or relate to policy and procedure.

Position

This is commonly termed authority – all work organisations vest some degree of authority in particular positions which can legitimately be used to influence.

Expert Power

Sometimes you will be able to influence someone because they perceive that you have an expertise in a particular area. This expert power may come from qualifications, skill or experience.

Association Power

We are influenced by those who we associate with certain qualities or achievements that we would like to replicate. This is the foundation of using celebrities to advertise certain products. If we associate someone with success, expertise, prestige etc and these are qualities we respect or are attracted to then we will be influenced by them.

Personal

This relates to our capacity to influence being primarily as a result of how the other person feels about us – this can be because they like you, respect you or feel that they owe you something from the past. This is the power of simply being you and the way that you build relationships. The way in which we behave and use our interpersonal skills is the foundation of this source of influence. It is our own

interactions with people and the relationship we have built with them that creates our power to influence them.

Information

This is where your capacity to influence others and situations is based on what you know. If we have compelling evidence to support a case then is a very definite source of influence. The emphasis must be on gaining the right information and using it appropriately.

Connection

This capacity to influence is not so much about *what* you know but more about *who* you know. Your capacity to influence may be based on the fact that you have an extensive network of connections or contacts or that you know someone with influence.

It is important when trying to influence the outcome of a situation to review this list and decide:

- a. Which capacities to influence do I have?
- b. Which one would be most likely to be effective with the individual or group I am trying to influence?