



November 2007

# Masterful Mentoring

## ▼ TIP

### Tip of the Month

Take time to consciously recognize how you influence people on a daily basis.

## ▼ INFLUENCING THE RIGHT OUTCOMES

Leadership does not just come from those who have been placed in positions of power. There is increasing recognition for the need to lead from the middle or the back of the pack. It takes a different set of skills to influence others to act on your behalf if you are not the one in charge. To be effective you must have good command of the strategies commonly used to influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of others. In this article, we will explore how to leverage your mentoring relationship to build your influence skills.

### When Might I Need To Influence Others?

Influence is the social lubricant that greases the wheels of progress. Whether you are consciously aware of it or not, you constantly influence others to get something you want or need. Influence takes on many forms and gets applied in many situations, but it becomes vital when you need the support or cooperation of others to accomplish large or complex objectives. Common factors you may need to influence others on include:

- Plans or schedules
- New assignments
- Information
- Goals or agendas
- Specific projects

### Response Options

When attempting to influence the perceptions, attitudes, or behaviors of others, you can expect to receive one of three responses: resistance, compliance, or commitment.

- **Resistance** is when people withstand your influence, which can present itself in several ways: people stall or take no action; people tell you no; or people attempt to subvert or undermine your progress.
- **Compliance** is when you get the required action that you want even though the attitude or opinion of the other person remains neutral or resistant toward you.



## INFLUENCING THE RIGHT OUTCOMES (cont.)

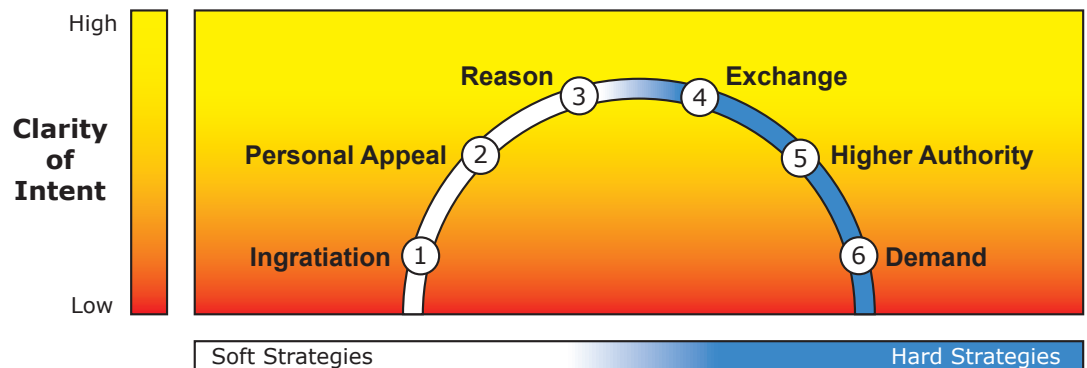
- **Commitment** is when you get full cooperation and agreement with your position and intent from the people you are attempting to influence.

Most of the time you will want commitment from others as you seek to spread your influence; however, there are times when all you need is compliance. If resistance should occur, try to find out who is opposing your will, then seek to gain an appreciation and understanding of their reasoning.

### Influencing Strategies Model

Based on the type of response that you want from others, you will want to apply the proper influence strategy. Note that there are many approaches to explaining the various ways to influence others; the model shown here is both informative and practical from an application perspective.

## INFLUENCING STRATEGIES



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The Influencing Strategies model shows six strategies placed on an arc that relate to the degree of flexibility people will feel in regard to whether or not they yield to or resist your attempt to influence them. These strategies range from soft to hard, with soft tactics allowing people more flexibility and hard tactics allowing less. The six strategies are ingratiation, personal appeals, reason, exchange, higher authority, and demand. The strategies at the top of the arc (reason and exchange) tend to cause less misunderstanding and provide better clarity around your intent than those at the bottom of the arc (ingratiation and demand).

The following table describes each influence strategy, the pros and cons of each, and the degree of risk each poses in relation to having your motives misjudged.

## RESOURCES

Triple Creek offers many free resources on our web site, including booklets, research papers, and an archive of past newsletters.

Visit [www.3creek.com](http://www.3creek.com) for access to these additional mentoring resources.

## Six Influence Strategies

Name	Definition	Pro	Con	Soft or Hard	Degree of Risk*
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Going out of your way to obtain the good graces of those you wish to influence, usually by affirming the person's positive attributes or contributions.	Can be exercised every time you see, hear, or experience the positive attributes or contributions of others.	Can easily be misunderstood as "kissing up" or being phony.	Soft Tactic	High Risk
<b>Personal Appeals</b>	Requests made in the context of a personal relationship (friendship).	Camaraderie is a powerful social bond and making appeals in this context can have a meaningful impact on others.	You risk being viewed as superficial or as a manipulator.	Soft Tactic	Medium Risk
<b>Reason</b>	The act of influencing others by making persuasive rational arguments and appealing to common sense.	If you can logically persuade someone that your perspective is correct, they will usually be more committed to acting on that belief.	You incur a small risk of wasting time if the people you are trying to persuade do not share your values or desired outcomes.	Soft Tactic	Low Risk
<b>Exchange</b>	The act of influencing others by offering some sort of trade or incentive for compliance.	Works regardless of value or priority differences that may exist.	Slight chance that you can create the expectation of continued rewards for cooperation in the future.	Hard Tactic	Low Risk
<b>Higher Authority</b>	Attempting to influence others by first gaining the backing or approval of those in positions of power or enlisting the support of other backers (coalition).	Often easier to get cooperation if you have respected backers or supporters of your agenda.	You risk being judged as powering up or exerting undue sway.	Hard Tactic	Medium Risk
<b>Demand</b>	Imposing your will on others through repeated requests or applying pressure in the form of coercion or threats.	You can get quick compliance.	You run the high risk of creating distrust and resentment in others.	Hard Tactic	High Risk

\* Having the person misjudge your motives; conversely related to clarity of intent.



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## INFLUENCING THE RIGHT OUTCOMES (cont.)

### Guiding Principles

There are no wrong or bad influence strategies. Each influence strategy has its proper use given the situation you find yourself in. Several guiding principles can help you as you work to get the results you desire.

- Use reason whenever you have the time. You have the highest likelihood of gaining true commitment from others when you take the time to share not just what you want, but explain why it's important or helpful for them to commit.
- If all you need is compliance, do not push for commitment.
- If you have to use a hard strategy, consider tempering it by also applying a soft strategy. For instance, if you have to demand, then also explain why you need the person's cooperation.
- Be authentic and genuine. Whenever influencing others, be careful not to distort or hide your motives and intentions.
- Be careful not to overuse any one strategy with the exception of reason.

Influencing others is more art than science and requires a great deal of expertise and tact to work properly. Because of the uncertain nature of influencing others, it makes a great development area to explore within the context of a trusting mentoring relationship. You can leverage the understanding and experience of your mentoring partner to gain a deeper understanding and greater command of the practice of influencing others.

### Practice Exercise

The following exercise can help you increase your ability to influence others.

1. Identify a current situation in which you could influence others in a significant way.
2. Discuss with your mentoring partner the opportunity you identified, paying particular attention to how you have attempted to influence others in similar circumstances previously.
3. With your mentoring partner's input, decide which influence strategies you will apply.
4. Role-play with your partner how you will apply these strategies.
5. Set a date to review with your partner your progress on actually applying influence strategies on the identified situation.