

5
TIPS



How to influence

Five easy ways to increase your ability to influence.

A key ingredient that stops people changing is the inherent resistance to being changed. So if we are going to influence them we have to show that the change is going to be in their own interest. We will fail to be a strong influencer if we are just seeking to force the other party to change, so here are 5 ways to increase your ability to influence.

1

Get their perspective. Your view of the world is unimportant when it comes to influencing, what you need to do is really understand the view of the other party. What are their fears, concerns, apprehensions regarding the change? Taking this approach will also help them to feel listened to, and that their opinion is valued. At all cost avoid trying to sell in your proposals, instead focus on how they feel about the situation.

2

Acknowledge their perspective. You may not agree with their assumptions or share their fears and concerns, but you can acknowledge how they feel. Let them know that you understand their point of view and that it is a valid view. Part of the reason people resist being changed is that they never feel validated or acknowledged. Forgo this step at your peril.

3

Focus on their interests. Once you have understood what it is that they are concerned about, you can begin to help them get a new perspective. Because you have acknowledged their view point they will already be more willing to listen. As you tell them about your perspective seek to reduce their fears by focusing on what matters to them. Graphically paint a picture of the envisaged outcome, and how it would be beneficial to their situation.

4

Take into account their readiness to change. Some people are more open than others to change, some move quickly whilst others need time to accept something different. Understand that not everyone will move at the same rate, and recognise that you will sometimes need to use time in your influencing toolkit. A series of such conversations may be necessary to bring about the new perspective and embrace the change.

5

Exercise patience. Remember that a change for them may require an element of 'saving face' especially if a significant U-turn is required. Assist them in building the new justification in their minds.



Adopting these five approaches will aid others in their ability to embrace the changes that you are trying to influence. With care you can reduce their resistance and help them to feel that they are not being changed, but choosing their own alternate route. Master influencers will leave the individual feeling that the idea is their own, which they are now totally committed to.

