

## Influence & Persuasion: the art of letting them have your way

### Communication Skills & Behaviours of the Best

Confident, assertive, relaxed, open, genuinely interested in others and their interests and issues, curious, good active listener, empathetic, polite, happy, positive, optimistic, friendly, warm, welcoming, inclusive, a sense of humour, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, good body language – posture, gesture, facial expressions, eye contact, voice, well prepared, focussed, flexible and adaptable to different situations, people and their various behavioural styles, genuine, sincere, authentic

#### Emotional Intelligence: Star Performers

*“Be hard on the problem; soft on the people”* (William Ury)

**Self regard:** value yourself and your abilities

**Self actualisation:** always strive to improve yourself and learn new things, set goals

**Stress tolerance:** find ways to manage stress and relax

**Happiness:** find out what makes you happy and focus on those things/people/activities

**Optimism:** recognise your “explanatory style”

- Permanent; pervasive; personal
- temporary; specific; external

**Assertiveness:** learn to express your feelings and state your case confidently but considerately

#### Listening

*“Seek first to understand, then to be understood”* (Stephen Covey)

**Listen with the intention of understanding,** not: responding; refuting; rubbishing

**Give others your full attention:** be fully present

**Listen actively:** eye contact, lean forward, nod, vary facial expressions, repeat back, summarise, reflect their underlying points

**Avoid selective listening:** listen to everything

**Listen for hidden clues:** choice of language; accompanying body language

### Mistakes We Make in Seeking to Influence and Persuade

**The hard sell:** pushy, won't take “no” for an answer, has self-interest at the fore

**The “never sell”:** stuck in the “lunch loop”, develops the relationship but never states their case

**Regarding it as a one-off event:** thinking that you're going to achieve your desired outcome off the back of a single meeting with one person

**Too much logic:** thinking that a bunch of facts and statistics will definitely win them over

**Surface positions:** looking only at surface positions: what people say they want

**Quit too soon:** assuming that an initial rejection equals “no – never, and giving up too soon

**Pessimistic Attitude:** *“if you think you can, or you think you can't: you're right”* (Henry Ford)

**No alternative:** all your eggs in this one basket

**Don't hard sell:** it puts people on the defensive. Listen and try to understand their interests

**But... Sometimes... you do have to ask!** Why are you not asking for what you want?

**It's a process:** time; timing; relationships It's likely to take more than one meeting and with more than one person

**Emotional connection matters:** try to connect at a personal & emotional level

**Underlying interests:** dig down, try to understand why they're taking up their position

**Be persistent:** not pushy. If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again (then quit)

**Be optimistic:** don't catastrophise

**Always have a BATNA:** an alternative plan that doesn't involve them or require their approval

### Factors of Influence

**Likeability:** smile, use names, listen, be interested

**Reciprocity:** do them a favour

**Social Proof:** who/what can you mention to impress

**Consistency & commitment:** get them to confirm

**Authority:** credibility & expertise: get it or buy in

**Scarcity:** don't be too available

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The <b>Four Stages</b> of a Persuasion Meeting					
<p>STAGE 1</p> <p><b>Build Rapport</b></p>	<p><b>Small Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for it: research, ask others, check notes of previous small talk</li> <li>• Choose to be genuinely interested in them</li> <li>• Let them talk about things they're interested in</li> <li>• Emotional connection matters</li> <li>• Likeability is a huge factor of influence</li> </ul>				
<p>STAGE 2</p> <p><b>Listen &amp; Learn:</b></p> <p><b>Uncover Needs</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ask Questions</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p><b>“So what?” questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this taking you anywhere?</li> <li>• Is it interesting for them?</li> </ul> </td> <td> <p><b>What if....?” Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What suggestions could you make?</li> <li>• What alternative approaches could you suggest?</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p><b>What’s up? questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions that get to the heart of their needs, concerns, motivations etc</li> <li>• Questions that seek to understand <i>why</i> they’re taking up a certain position</li> <li>• Questions that demonstrate that you understand it from their perspective</li> <li>• Questions that you’d really love to ask - perhaps you can?</li> </ul> </td> <td> <p><b>“If only.....!” questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would they really like you to do for them?</li> <li>• How could you really help them and make their life easier?</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>“So what?” questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this taking you anywhere?</li> <li>• Is it interesting for them?</li> </ul>	<p><b>What if....?” Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What suggestions could you make?</li> <li>• What alternative approaches could you suggest?</li> </ul>	<p><b>What’s up? questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions that get to the heart of their needs, concerns, motivations etc</li> <li>• Questions that seek to understand <i>why</i> they’re taking up a certain position</li> <li>• Questions that demonstrate that you understand it from their perspective</li> <li>• Questions that you’d really love to ask - perhaps you can?</li> </ul>	<p><b>“If only.....!” questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would they really like you to do for them?</li> <li>• How could you really help them and make their life easier?</li> </ul>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Listen to the Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to understand, not to respond</li> <li>• Be genuinely interested in them</li> <li>• Listen actively: make sure they feel that you really are listening to them</li> <li>• Empathise: try to see it from their point of view</li> <li>• Don't jump in with your own thoughts and requests too soon</li> </ul>					
<p>STAGE 3</p> <p><b>Show &amp; Tell:</b></p> <p><b>Your “Pitch”</b></p>	<p><b>Relevant Features</b></p> <p>(“Features”: facts, numbers, stats, data – about your idea/proposal/suggestion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put yourself in their shoes and ask “So what?” Are these features interesting and relevant to <i>them</i> and <i>their</i> needs?</li> </ul> <p><b>Bespoke Benefits</b></p> <p>(“Benefits”: why would your idea/proposal/suggestion be of benefit to <i>them</i>?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put yourself in their shoes and ask why might they agree to this?</li> </ul>				
<p>STAGE 4</p> <p><b>Close</b></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p><b>Handle Objections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are their objections likely to be?</li> <li>• If you were them, why might you not agree?</li> <li>• How could you best respond?</li> <li>• What further questions could you ask?</li> </ul> </td> <td> <p><b>Get an Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What’s possible? What’s realistic?</li> <li>• What could you reasonably hope for that would advance you, even just a little</li> <li>• Should you actually just ask for what you really want?</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Handle Objections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are their objections likely to be?</li> <li>• If you were them, why might you not agree?</li> <li>• How could you best respond?</li> <li>• What further questions could you ask?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Get an Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What’s possible? What’s realistic?</li> <li>• What could you reasonably hope for that would advance you, even just a little</li> <li>• Should you actually just ask for what you really want?</li> </ul>		
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