

# 4 Ways to Strengthen Your Ability to Influence Others



To be truly effective – in good times and in times of great challenge – leaders must master the ability to influence others. By definition, influence is the ability to affect the behavior of others in a particular direction, leveraging key tactics that involve, connect, and inspire them.

That’s why we’ve identified “influencing others” as one of the [4 core leadership skills needed in every role](#). (Communicating, learning agility, and self-awareness are the other 3.)

Without the expertise and ability to influence others, the truly important things in work and in life can’t be achieved.

But effective leaders don’t just command; they inspire, persuade, and encourage. Leaders tap the knowledge and skills of a group, point individuals toward a common goal and consensus, and draw out a commitment to achieve results.

## 4 Keys Needed to Influence Others

How do they do that? The best leaders have these 4 key influencing skills:



## Influencing Others: 4 Key Skills

- **Organizational Intelligence:** They understand how to get things done and embrace the reality of working within organizational politics to move teams and important initiatives forward.
- **Team Promotion:** Leaders cut through the noise to authentically and credibly promote themselves – while also promoting what’s good for the entire organization.
- **Trust-Building:** Because leadership often involves guiding people through risk and change, trust is essential.
- **Leveraging Networks:** No leader is an island. They are empowered by their connections with others.

Here’s a look at each of these influencing skills in a little more detail, and how you and your team can use them to influence others.

### 1. Practice “Organizational Intelligence.”

All organizations have 2 sides: the formal structure pictured on the org chart and the informal structure, which more often represents how things really get done. Politically savvy leaders understand both.

Political savvy is both a mindset and a skillset. Savvy leaders view politics as a neutral and necessary part of organizational life that can be used constructively and ethically to advance organizational aims.

For a leader, political savvy in action looks like this:

- Networking to build social capital, including mingling strategically.
- Thinking before responding, considering context and goals before deciding when and how to express their point of view.
- Paying close attention to nonverbal cues, practicing active listening, considering how others might feel, and finding ways to appeal to the common good.
- Leaving people with a good impression, without coming across as “trying too hard.”

Learn the [6 key skills you need to be more politically savvy](#).

## **2. Promote Yourself, Promote Your Team.**

Self-promotion is often seen as bragging or selfishness. But influential leaders know that by promoting themselves authentically, for the right reasons, they can cut through the information that bombards us all each day.

In the hands of an astute leader, self-promotion isn't just a tool to advance one's own career. It can provide visibility and opportunities for their direct reports, generate team and organizational pride, and make capabilities and ideas more visible across the organization – ultimately enhancing collaboration and consensus.

Two self-promotion strategies stand out.

First, **leaders who are good at influencing others find ways to gather an audience.** They may ask more people to be part of a team, initiative, or problem-solving process.

Second, **they find ways to “put on a show” and step into the spotlight** at selected events and meetings, sometimes creating their own events. Learn more about [why you should focus on effective, authentic self-promotion](#).

## **3. Build & Maintain a Foundation of Trust.**

Building and maintaining trust is essential for leading. Without trust, leaders may be able to force people to comply, but they'll never tap the full commitment, capabilities, and creativity the group can offer. Leveraging these assets is invaluable when tackling tough challenges or making strategic change, so trust is vital.

People look for leaders who can appreciate their vulnerability and inspire them, understand them, support them, and guide them through looming chaos. This requires the leader to demonstrate a broad range of expertise and behaviors, some of which might seem contradictory, but when used in an appropriate and timely manner, create conditions that foster trust.

Trust involves a careful balance between pushing people into areas where they're uncomfortable while also listening carefully to their concerns and feedback. Among the many "balancing acts" they must work to maintain, trustworthy leaders negotiate between toughness and empathy as individuals struggle with transition, as well as urgency with patience as change proceeds. Learn more about [how to build leadership trust](#).

#### **4. Leverage Networks.**

Finally, leaders with expertise in influencing others recognize and cultivate the power of networks. Organizations are increasingly dynamic; they morph in size and shape over time. Influential leaders recognize that their personal networks must also be dynamic, and they continually grow and strengthen their networks. They're also strategic about choosing how and when to tap into this network.

#### Reference

Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/4-keys-strengthen-ability-influence-others/>