

Master the 3 Ways to Influence People



Influence is the ability to personally affect the actions, decisions, opinions, or thinking of others.

Ultimately, influence allows you to get things done and achieve desired outcomes.

At a basic level, influence is about compliance – getting someone to do what you want them to do (or at least not to undermine it). But genuine commitment from other people is often required for you to accomplish key goals and tasks.

Influencing People Varies by Role

Early in your career, or in individual contributor roles, influence is about working effectively with people over whom you have no authority. It requires the ability to present logical and compelling arguments and engage in give-and-take.

When leading from the middle, you'll want to focus particularly on developing [the 4 key skills needed to influence others](#).

In senior-level or executive roles, influencing people is more about steering long-range objectives, inspiring and motivating others, and [communicating the vision](#).

But wherever you are in an organization, chances are you'll want to master tactics to influence people, as influence is one of [the 4 core leadership skills needed in every role](#).

"Without the capacity to influence others, your ability to make what you envision a reality remains elusive because, after all, no one can do it alone," notes George Hallenbeck, a lead contributor to our program [Lead 4 Success®](#), which helps leaders develop these 4 key essentials of leadership.

3 Key Influencing Tactics

We've found that influencing tactics fall into 3 categories: logical, emotional, or cooperative appeals. **We call these influencing people using the *head, heart, or hands*.**



3 Tactics to Influence People

Logical Appeals (Head)

Logical appeals tap into people's rational and intellectual positions. You present an argument for the best choice of action based on organizational benefits, personal benefits, or both, appealing to people's minds.

Emotional Appeals (Heart)

Emotional appeals connect your message, goal, or project to individual goals and values. An idea that promotes a person's feelings of well-being, service, or sense of belonging tugs at the heartstrings and has a good chance of gaining support.

Cooperative Appeals (Hands)

Cooperative appeals involve collaboration (*what will you do together?*), consultation (*what ideas do other people have?*), and alliances (*who already supports you or has the credibility you need?*). Working together to accomplish a mutually important goal extends a hand to others in the organization and is an extremely effective way of influencing.

Leaders who effectively use these influencing tactics can achieve their goals and objectives more successfully than leaders who lack that ability, regardless of where they sit in an organization.

Which Influencing Tactics Are Right for You?

Here's how to choose the best influence tactic for your situation. To understand what might work best for a specific task or strategy, consider the following:

- **Assess the situation.** Why are you involved in this work? Why do you need this person's support? What outcomes are you trying to achieve by influencing this person? Be clear about whom you need to influence and what you want to accomplish.
- **Know your audience.** Identify and understand your stakeholders. Each will have special concerns and issues, as well as their own agenda, perspectives, and priorities. Various groups and individuals will require different approaches for

influencing. Tailor your influencing strategy for the particular person – considering individual personalities, goals, and objectives – as well as organizational roles and responsibilities.

- **Review your ability.** What tactics do you use most often? Which seems to be most effective? What new tactics could you try in this situation? Draw on others for advice or coaching, too. For example, if you always focus on the logical appeals, have a co-worker who is a strong collaborator help you think through your collaboration tactics and arguments.
- **Brainstorm your approach.** What tactics would work best? Which logical appeals will be most effective? How could you make an emotional or cooperative appeal? What specifically could you say and do to use each type of tactic? Anticipate possible responses and prepare your reply. What counterarguments could you use? What additional influencing tactics would be helpful?

At first, you might want to try out new influencing tactics in low-risk situations, practicing one-on-one. As you become more versatile and experienced at influencing people, you'll gain confidence in your ability to [use the skill of persuasion](#), particularly in higher-stakes situations.

But also consider changing tactics right away if you have a pressing issue that has stalled due to lack of buy-in or support.

Would a more logical, emotional, or collaborative approach make a difference? If so, go ahead and try out another influencing tactic, from a different angle – and you might find yourself to be more influential than you realized.

Reference

Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/three-ways-to-influence-people/>