

IMPACT AND INFLUENCE (IMP)

Impact and Influence is the ability to influence, persuade, or convince others to adopt a specific course of action. It involves the use of persuasive techniques, presentations or negotiation skills to achieve desired results.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">preparing for meetings by considering the needs of the audience and tailoring your presentation accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">believing that using a standard influence approach in every situation is the only way to guarantee a consistent message
<ul style="list-style-type: none">considering specific situations, areas of potential resistance and identifying strategies that will achieve the desired outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">trying to convince a group of colleagues by relying exclusively on facts and logic in your arguments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">drawing on a variety of people, including outside experts, to set the stage for getting your ideas accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">working to convince a group of colleagues by relying exclusively on facts and logic in your arguments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">meeting with key decision-makers before an important meeting to solicit input and gain support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">relying solely on decision makers' formal authority to expedite a major decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none">building support for your position over time by developing relationships, testing ideas, and finding allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">being so concerned of the value that you see in your position that you neglect others' concerns or feedback over time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">drawing on a variety of people, including outside experts, to set the stage for getting your ideas accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">working to convince a group of peers by relying exclusively on facts and logic in your arguments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">relating the benefits to audience needs and creating "scenarios" for specific audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">assuming that every audience wants the same thing and never adapting a presentation

Developmental Activities

Level 1-2 Activities

Think about the process of getting to the result, not just the end result.

- Don't let your eagerness to achieve a certain result be a barrier to achieving it.

- When people seem reluctant to buy in to a good idea, then stop thinking about how great the end result will be. Instead, focus on the process, which will put you on the right track of thinking about the people involved and how you need to influence them.

Observe other people who you feel are skilled in influencing others.

- Identify the activities or techniques they use in encouraging people to follow a course of action.
- Ask for their guidance on how you might improve your influencing abilities.

Reflection Tip:

- * Pause to consider the degree of success they managed to achieve with each of their techniques.

Invite your manager to observe you in a meeting or an interaction with a client where you know you will need to be persuasive.

- Get detailed feedback on how you performed in terms of Impact and Influence.
- Ask for his or her observations on how the audience reacted in the meeting.

Ask your manager for an opportunity to lead a special project.

- Prepare a list of impact and influence techniques you would like to practice.
- Practice the new techniques and ask for feedback from the group.
- As you practice the skill you will become more comfortable, so forge ahead!

Ask some of your peers whom you trust and respect to give you feedback on your ability to influence others.

- Use the following guidelines when asking for feedback:
 - ⇒ What have they observed that makes you successful in influencing others (ask them for specific examples).
 - ⇒ What areas do you need to work on?
 - ⇒ What suggestions do they have to help you improve your Impact and Influence with others.

Reflection Tip:

- * Compare his/her feedback with your own sense of the audience's reaction.

Develop your speaking style to better persuade others.

- Record yourself next time you make a presentation to a group. (Be sure to get the group's permission before you tape the session.)
- Review the tape and ask yourself:
 - ⇒ Did the tone and pattern of my voice match my words and the meaning I was attempting to convey?
 - ⇒ Did the pace of my speaking make communication clear?
 - ⇒ Did I use a level of language that was appropriate to my audience (e.g., did I use unnecessary technical jargon that my audience might not have understood?)?
 - ⇒ Could I change what I said and how I said it to have made my presentation more powerful and persuasive?

Reflection Tips:

- * Review what it was that you actually said. Ensure that you were precise and used specific evidence to support your ideas. If you didn't, reflect on what alternative methods could have been used.
- * Ask peers if the idea was clearly presented – ask for their input as to how the concept/ideas could have been made more clear.

Ask some of your peers to give you feedback on your ability to influence others.

- What have they observed that makes you successful in influencing others? (Ask them for specific examples.)
- What areas do you need to work on?
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Level 3-4 Activities

Keep a log of situations where you attempted to persuade someone (a client, staff member, manager) to take a specific course of action (e.g., be more client focused, organize work priorities more efficiently).

- List the techniques that you think were successful.
- Identify those techniques that you think were not useful.
- Incorporate and practice your successful techniques in your next situation.

- Reduce and eliminate those techniques which were not useful. Remember that different strategies will work better with different people, in different contexts.

Reflection Tips:

- * Reflect on why those techniques were not successful with this particular individual.
- * Reflect on whether or not the same technique had the same impact with a different individual.
- * Have you seen someone else successfully use these techniques? If so, reflect on the circumstances surrounding that application.

Form a group with peers to share successful experiences in influencing staff to perform better.

- Identify specific situations and the techniques that lead to successful outcomes.
- Recognize the specific techniques and behaviours others used which resulted in success.
- Prepare ideas or something actionable that can be shared with others. (e.g., a tip sheet).

Practice by looking for opportunities to give speeches and presentations.

- Guest speak at a departmental function or at a national seminar.
- Give an information session on your division to another division.

Keep the following ideas in mind at your next meeting.

- Review the agenda before the meeting. Determine ahead of time what contributions you can make. Write down what your objectives are and what you would like to achieve at the meeting.
- Make sure you understand the perspective of the people you are trying to influence. Consider each of the individuals who will be at the meeting and what their likely responses will be in reaction to your proposals. Where you are lacking information about their reactions, try to find out more about their position and perspective via informal conversations with them.
- Be one of the first people to offer ideas or suggestions. Try to make suggestions more often.
- Observe others in the meeting who are highly influential. Note the behaviours they demonstrate and try out the techniques they use.

- Resist backing down quickly if you are challenged in the meeting. Try restating your position clearly and calmly to ensure others understand your viewpoint.

Reflection Tip:

- * Note other's reactions to your suggestions. Could these suggestions have been presented differently to have a greater impact?
- * Note also how they react to your suggestions. Follow up with these people, and ask for feedback. Also ask them why they chose the techniques they did.

Be alert for windows of opportunity.

- Whether or not you can persuade others in the organization to take a course of action will depend to a large extent on what else is going on.
- Keep on top of upcoming initiatives, new programs or policy directions.
- Look for windows of opportunity when it is the right time to push for your ideas.
- Conversely, be aware that there are times when you will be unable to persuade others, no matter how good your idea or powers of persuasion.

Analyze your audience before your presentation or meeting (an audience can be one person or a group).

- What are the main questions or concerns your audience has? List these concerns.
- Identify two or three things from your presentation that will most benefit your audience.
- Speak to other people who may know how to get your ideas accepted by your audience.

Reflection Tip:

- * Reflect on the current circumstances impacting your audience. Is the timing appropriate for your presentation once you have considered these external circumstances?

Level 5-6 Activities

Develop your negotiating style with others. Follow this exercise:

- Identify an opportunity to negotiate an issue with someone.
- Consider your usual or typical negotiating style based on one of the categories below (be "brutally honest" with yourself):
 - ⇒ Win/Lose: where you typically see yourself winning and the other party losing in the process;

- ⇒ Lose/Lose: where you typically see both yourself and the other party losing in the process;
- ⇒ Lose/Win: where you typically see yourself losing or giving in during the process;
- ⇒ Win/Win: where you typically see both yourself and the other party being satisfied with the outcome of the process.
- Think about the other party's position. What will his or her key points be? How will you respond?
- Meet with someone whose negotiating skills you would classify as win/win.
 - ⇒ Review the current situation and your typical approach to negotiating with this person.
 - ⇒ Ask this person how you and the other party can move closer to a "win/win" agreement.
 - ⇒ Practice the negotiation.
 - ⇒ Meet with the other person(s) to negotiate.
 - ⇒ Use the feedback you received during your conversation.
 - ⇒ Find a goal which both you and the other person can agree and focus on.
 - ⇒ Maintain the focus on your common objectives.
 - ⇒ Monitor your own thoughts and feelings throughout the discussion. Note the reactions you are having to what the other person says. Use this information to help you manage the negotiation process.

Consider alternative ways of influencing a colleague before you make contact.

- Mentally review relevant background (the individual's past needs, strengths, interests).
- Make sure you understand the perspective of the person you are trying to influence (the issues he or she is facing, the demands placed on him or her by the organization, etc.).
- Write down your objectives and incorporate them into an Action Plan. Consider:
 - ⇒ What is definitely necessary?
 - ⇒ What is the ideal outcome?
 - ⇒ What could be negotiated away?
- Consider the likely responses the person will have to your proposal.
- Think of several alternatives and pick the ones that will work best with this particular person.

- Express positive expectations when you meet, e.g., share your expectations for a positive outcome to the meeting.

Reflection Tips:

- * Ask your peers about where they gather information to better understand others.
- * Reflect after the meeting about how accurate your analyses were. What was accurate, what wasn't? Why? What would you do differently next time?

Prepare for negotiations and test your idea before presenting it.

- Gather information to support your position and think about the impact you need to make to win over the party you are influencing.
- Anticipate the goals of the other party and take the time to work out the appropriate approach or test your idea or response to an issue on a few colleagues first, if you do not know how people will react to a proposal.
- Take note of their response and get a feel for whether they would be supportive of your position.
- Adapt your proposal accordingly based on the feedback you received before going public with your proposal.
- Gear your strategy toward finding a solution that not only satisfies your goals but which also meets the needs of the other party.

When implementing any new strategy or major initiative, consider the impact on all those involved, both internally and externally.

- Identify the individuals or groups impacted and keep them informed.
- Whenever possible, make a personal visit to key influencers and stakeholders and talk to them about:
 - ⇒ the current changes
 - ⇒ the importance of these changes
 - ⇒ what the changes mean to them
 - ⇒ how they can become involved in the transition
- Actively solicit the advice and commitment of the key stakeholders before implementing the new strategy or initiative.
 - ⇒ Remember that different stakeholders will have different issues and needs - once you have the information, take some time to consider the ways in which you can best meet the priority needs of each group, while still maintaining a workable solution or proposal.

- Ask key stakeholders to actively promote the new strategy or initiative on your behalf. Justify your request to them - sell them on the changes so they can sell others.

Reflect on the outcome of your attempts to convince others and influence situations after a project or assignment that didn't go the way you had hoped.

- List the key events where you would have liked things to have gone differently.
- Think of what you said and did to influence each event and the resulting effect that it had.
- Where the resulting effect was successful, be aware of your approach and continue to use it in the future.
- Where the resulting effect was less than successful, think about the people who were involved and what you could have done differently to influence the situation.
- Try to think of similar situations in the past where what you said or did influenced the situation more along the lines of what you were expecting.
- Discuss your observations and insights with someone you trust to gain their perspective and feedback.
- Identify some key learnings from the exercise and commit to incorporating these learnings into future situations where you will need to influence others.
- Constant practice and on-going reflection on what you did will lead you to develop high levels of this competency.

Reflection Tips:

- * Consider who you interacted with. Were there others who should have been involved?
- * Reflect on the particulars of this situation. Are there any external factors that may have impacted the situation? Are there any others that you could have gotten involved in the situation, who would have created more support?
- * Constant practice and on-going reflection on what you did will lead you to develop high levels of this competency.