

## Influence

### How important is the Ability to Influence?

Most of our communication whether in writing, over the phone or in person involves influencing others or being influenced in some way ourselves. It may be that we need to make or respond to a request, sell an idea, give feedback, make a complaint or develop a relationship. This means that we are frequently in an influencing process when interacting with others. Yet surprisingly, many people do not give as much thought to **how** they will communicate, as to **what** it is they intend to say.

### Influence is Power

Your ability to influence and to be open to influence by others, greatly increases your power to get things done. **Positional Power** alone is limiting, whereas **Personal Power** to influence has *almost no boundaries*. Many prominent people have achieved their reputation – or notoriety – through their ability to influence, rather than through their positional status. Many politicians and leaders further their careers and become well known primarily because of their ability to influence others, for good or ill. *This does not happen by chance.*

### Influence is an Expression of Energy

People will respond, consciously or subconsciously, to the impact that others have on them. If the impact is weak, (possibly because of a lack of the other person giving prior thought to the influencing process), it is easy to ignore or deflect their attempt to influence. However, a strong piece of influence will usually have a clear impact – to the extent that the recipient will either feel 'pushed' (positively or negatively), by the force of a well presented argument, or 'pulled' – feeling inspired and compelled to support the influencer.

#### “It’s not what you say; it’s the way that you say it!”

People are significantly influenced by 'how' they are spoken to. They pick up signals through voice and body language. In fact, up to 90% of a message is conveyed from a mix of the music (the voice) and dance (the body language) that is used and only 10% by the words (the content)!

If you want to persuade someone with logic and reason for example, then the way you look and sound need to be congruent – otherwise you may appear to lack conviction or credibility and the content of your proposition may be easily dismissed or more readily challenged.



Read about the power of body language, non-verbal communication and much more in:

***Stand & Deliver – A Master Class in Making Powerful Presentations*** by Mark and Mary-Jane Barnes (ISBN 978-185252-533-0)

***“Stand & Deliver integrates the essentials of great presentations with up-to-the-minute technology and tools. It is a ‘must read’ for anyone who wants to make powerful, contemporary business presentations.”***

**Wayne Phillips – Defence and Security Lead Microsoft EMEA**

**Step System** has vast experience in the area of communication. With experienced course leaders and coaches, our focused training interventions include:

- Presentation Skills
- Executive Presentation Skills
- Negotiating
- Communication Skills
- Influencing
- Conference Organisation
- Media Training
- 1:1 Public Speaking Coaching
- Conference Facilitation



# Influence

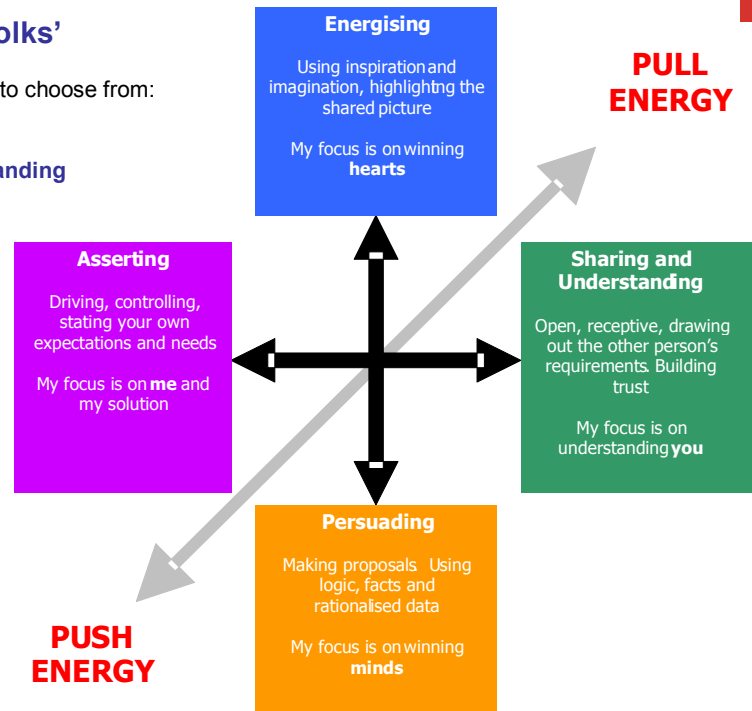
## 'Different Strokes for Different Folks'

There are 4 key influence approaches (styles) to choose from:

- Persuading
- Asserting
- Energising
- Sharing & Understanding

Each of these styles works in a different way and should be selected to suit and achieve the purpose of the influencing. Often, a combination of styles will be needed at different times in the same conversation in order to achieve an influencing objective. An experienced influencer will select the best approach, just as an experienced tennis player might choose to use forehand and backhand, slice or spin to achieve a desired outcome.

Sometimes in order to influence, it might be important to use either a **PUSH** or **PULL** approach: **PUSH** to get agreement to get something done; **PULL** to build and maintain a positive relationship.



## Choosing Your Energy

### **PUSH ENERGY** Persuading: The Voice of Reason

The impact of persuading someone is greatly increased by making a simple clear proposal, supported by sound logic. There is no point in using a Persuading style if you suspect the other person is **not** open to reason or is likely to take an emotionally or subjective stance; facts rarely change feelings! Act rationally – speak calmly and with conviction, but do not get emotional.

### **PUSH ENERGY** Asserting: Compliance v Commitment

Sometimes, it is important to push for something without using rationale – possibly because the other person is likely to want to debate the issue, whilst you consider it is not open for discussion. Asserting should be used to stand up for your own rights, beliefs and values and you must avoid adding justification, because this has the effect of providing opportunity for the other person to challenge or debate your communication.

**PUSH** influence can lead to resistance and push back. **PULL** Influence aims instead to work **with** the other person's energy and influence someone to 'want to do', as opposed to 'having to do' something. This means that the motivation comes from within the individual, rather than from the perceived external **PUSH** from another person.

### **PULL ENERGY** Sharing and Understanding: The Art of Influential Listening

This style is frequently used in selling, negotiating, appraising performance, coaching and counselling. By using the skills of Sharing and Understanding, the influencer encourages the other person to broaden and deepen their thinking by using clarifying, reflecting and summarising techniques and by occasionally asking questions of the other person.

### **PUSH ENERGY** Energising: Inspiration not Perspiration

This style aims to help the other person to visualise what the future might hold for them, if they choose to pursue a specific course of action. Rather than use the force of persuading, the influencer 'paints a picture', using the 5 senses or a metaphor. The intention of this is to inspire the other person to want to move in that direction. Most people would prefer to tackle a project of their own volition and to feel highly energised – not least because this would give them the self motivation to see it through – even when they hit obstacles on the way!

## Influence



It is important to positively influence people in the areas that matter most. Understanding the business that you are in and focusing on being organised will really give an edge. Read more about how to enhance your personal and team effectiveness in:

**Time to Think — Seize Control of Your Time and Your Life** by Mark Barnes (ISBN 978-1-85252-538-5)

**“Time to Think is thought-provoking and immensely practical. It addresses the challenges of the 24/7 business world, recognising that whilst it is easy to be busy, the real battle is to be effective!”**

**Ian Licence – International HR Director, Legal and General**

**Step System** has vast experience in the areas of personal and team effectiveness, working with businesses across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and with many of Britain’s top sports people. Our experienced course leaders and coaches deliver focused training in:

- **Managing Tasks, Time and People**
- **Keeping the Plates Spinning**
- **From Manager to Coach**
- **Project Management**
- **Lifestyle Management**
- **Mentoring**

Mark’s book, **Living the Dream** is available from the Youth Sport Trust.

**“There are a lot of components that go into making a successful performer. Clear goals, great planning and effective time management are as important as any of them. Take time to work on this book – it will help you to move from ‘good’ to ‘great’ and to reach your potential in every part of your life.”**

**Theo Walcott – Arsenal FC and England**



At **Step System**, we have become known for our interactive and accessible style. We use games and activities to enhance learning and have captured many of the best in:

**Serious Fun – Adding buzz to meetings, training and communications** by Mark Barnes (ISBN 978-185252-537-8)

**“They say that people learn best by ‘doing’, but that can only be true if the ‘doing’ is relevant, focused and enjoyable. The well thought-out interventions in Serious Fun are ‘bang on’ – using them will enable you to engage, educate and entertain – talk about adding value!”**

**Robin Rowland – CEO, Yo! Sushi**

Our experienced course leaders and coaches deliver focused training in:

- **Big Game Facilitation**
- **Team Builds**
- **Outdoor Activity**
- **Customer Service Training**
- **Themed Days**
- **Bespoke Management Development Programmes**

**Step System** undertakes writing commissions to create ‘Hints & Tips’ and ‘Business Nudges’ that are client specific – clients include Costa, NPL, Serco, Barclaycard and Barclaycard International.

Working in conjunction with Graduate Works, we also deliver international **Graduate Development Programmes**.

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To see earlier editions of the Step System Hints & Tips and to access other free downloads, visit: [www.stepsystem.co.uk](http://www.stepsystem.co.uk)

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