



Leadership & the Power of Influence

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"Leadership is influence"

- John C. Maxwell, New York Times Best Selling author

One of my clients recently shared with me her frustration on being passed over for a promotion in her hoped-for ascent up the corporate ladder. A very capable executive, she is well liked and would appear to have all the requisite experience for a more senior management position. So, why didn't it happen?

In my experience advising and coaching leaders, I have learned that the most successful executives lead through the power of influence. They inspire others to willingly implement their ideas. They have high-stakes influence conversations with their superiors, peers, direct reports and stakeholders. They maximize their probability of success by setting out specific goals for these conversations. There is no substitute for a thoroughly planned approach - including anticipating possible objections and rehearsing messages to be delivered in a concise and effective manner.

Too many leaders, however, rush into important meetings under-prepared. Some lack the skills and the confidence to present their ideas convincingly. Such interactions are unproductive, if not counter-productive and as such their leadership can be perceived as wanting.

It is difficult to achieve success when leaders struggle to successfully engage and influence stakeholders. Such was the case with my client. There is a science as well as an art to effectively influence people. It entails having the right conversations with the right person to achieve the right result. In working with clients, I employ the following proven six-step methodology:

Action Step	Rationale	Key Mistakes
1. Set a clear goal.	Influence starts with a clear goal.	Gut instinct instead of a clear, considered goal; proposing a goal that is too ambitious for one meeting; proposing the wrong goal for the situation.
2. Assess the situation.	Assess how the other person is thinking about the situation.	Failure to consider ALL of the reasons, incentives, and factors that can influence the other person; failing to consider the other person's motivations and constraints.
3. Choose the right approach.	Different approaches are effective in different situations.	There are at least FOUR strategies that work in different situations, yet most leaders rely on only one.
4. Structure the approach.	Plan carefully the best approach, including anticipating objections.	Many leaders wing it, without planning the best opening, responses to objections and how to deal with new information.
5. Plan for the worst.	Have an exit plan.	Staying in a meeting that is going poorly, instead of taking a break; failing to plan for the unanticipated.
6. Rehearse	Tedious, but worth it.	Rehearsing with a coach can improve results exponentially; failing to rehearse reduces the chances for a positive outcome.

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Six-step Methodology

During the follow-up with my clients, we review the outcomes of their meetings. Were the goals achieved? If not, why not? What were the lessons learned? What are the appropriate next steps?

This methodology enables leaders to be more effective in achieving their goals by successfully influencing stakeholders. It is also an excellent framework to enhance their leadership presence: that elusive wow factor that is the combination of personal and interpersonal skills. In politics, it's called charisma. Leadership presence is how executives and aspiring executives present themselves to others and how others perceive them. It gives their careers that extra impetus towards success.

To learn more about this methodology, and how I can help you achieve your goals by influencing others, please contact info@bonarinstitute.com.