



How (and How Not) to Influence

You may be surprised by what works and what doesn't.

Gary Yukl*, one of the premier researchers in the field of leader effectiveness, along with his colleagues repeatedly validated in numerous studies the effectiveness of tactics used by people attempting to influence others. Succinctly, his findings conclude there are three effectiveness levels of influence when considering eleven distinct tactics.

Ranked as high in influence effectiveness are:

- Rational Persuasion (use of logic, facts, data)
- Inspirational Appeals (use of emotion and the emotions in others)
- Consultation (seeking the opinions of others)
- Collaboration (working alongside, with others)

Those deemed as moderately effective are:

- Apprising (explaining why it's in someone's best interest to perform)
- Ingratiation (also known as "sucking up")
- Exchange (You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours)
- Personal Appeal (Do me a favor)

Those ranked lowest in effectiveness are:

- Coalitions (getting others to influence the targeted person)
- Legitimizing (Do it because I'm the boss!) (Especially when requests are non-routine)
- Pressure (If you don't do this, you'll be fired)

Yes, all of them will work--even those ranked lowest, but for how long and for what purposes? How motivated would you be to follow someone who consistently threatens, relies solely on his title, or seeks to influence you by getting your coworkers to cajole you? Choose wisely when you attempt to influence.

* Source: Leadership in Organizations, Yukl, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2010