



## Influencing Styles - Push and Pull

### Overview

The purpose of this tool is to illustrate the need for influencing skills in the work environment and to create an awareness of two particular styles of influencing – Push and Pull. It will be useful for individuals who wish to improve their influencing ability or those who are looking to refresh their influencing skills. It requires reading and reflection only. It should be used in conjunction with the **mye-coach** tool – Influencing Styles Questionnaire. You should allow approx 15 minutes for completion.

### Summary

Purpose	This tool will be useful for individuals who wish to improve their influencing ability or those who are looking to refresh their influencing skills. It can be used in conjunction with the <b>mye-coach</b> tool – Influencing Styles Questionnaire.
Output / Benefits	This tool will illustrate the need for influencing skills in the work environment and create awareness of two particular styles of influencing, Push and Pull.
Keywords	Personal Skills, Effective Communication, Influencing Styles, Influencing Others, Stakeholders, Managing Politics, Handout
Type of tool:	Handout
Other Tools Available for the Coachee	Influencing Styles Questionnaire - Diagnostic
Other Tools Available for the Coach	Influencing Styles – Coaching Guide
Time for completion	15 minutes approx

**Introduction**

This handout is designed to help you consider the need for influencing skills in everyday work life and provide information about two particular styles of influencing, Push and Pull.

**What do we mean by influencing?**

Influencing may mean different things to different people. For some it represents persuasion or negotiation, for others it is about getting people to see their point of view or using their authority to get people to do something or change something. In reality it can be all of these things and more. Influencing is not just for people in charge, whatever our role all of us will from time to time need to use influencing skills in our work.

We may need to influence others to

- Get things done
- Resolve problems
- Obtain permission to do something
- Get others to accept our view or ideas

**Using power and authority**

We may be able to bring about the things we want others to do simply by the virtue of our 'power or authority'. For example it is likely that the majority of people will act upon and follow the requests of someone who is in a position of authority such as a judge, policeman or a senior executive in an organisation. There are different types of 'power' and we all have some form of it whatever our role or position.

**Types of Power**

Personal	This comes from our personality, charisma or individual magnetism.
Position	This comes from our position, rank or role.
Expert	This comes from our knowledge, specialism or expertise.
Coercive	This is from exerting pressure, domination or threats.
Moral	This is derived from conduct and habits that are considered 'right', just or virtuous.
Social	This is derived from social or family connections.

## Styles of Influencing

As well as our power base we can use different approaches to persuade others. There are many different styles of influencing and it is important to recognise which styles will work for different situations.

We will look at two different styles and the various types of approach within each.

These two styles are:

### 1. Push

### 2. Pull

## Push Styles

Push is more about moving or forcing someone to a change rather than motivating him or her to want to make the change. Push styles tend to involve logical reasoning, threatening punishment, or offering rewards or incentives. They seek to increase the 'forces' and rationale **for** change. They can often be referred to as the 'stick and carrot' approach. Push styles can be effective in achieving compliance but may not achieve commitment. They may bring about quick results.

## Pull Styles

Pull is generally about motivating the individual to want to change. They tend to involve personal disclosure, involvement and showing the possibilities that will result from change. They tend to work on decreasing the forces or rationale **against** change. Insincere pull styles can however be seen as manipulative and dishonest. Pull styles can be effective in gaining commitment and high quality but they may be slower in achieving results.

There are pros and cons for both Push and Pull styles and it is important to understand the uses of each.

The following tables outline the different types of Push and Pull styles and how they may be useful.

**Push Styles**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Uses</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>FORCE</b>	'Do X or the consequences will be...' Threat of punishment, costs, damage. <u>Power Source:</u> Position, moral, expert, coercive.	Turnaround situations. Where there is no option. Where individuals are in danger or at risk.	Effective but short-lived. May produce resentment, lack of commitment. People can become dependent and unimaginative or they may fight back (sometimes covertly).
<b>RULES AND STANDARDS</b>	'It is a rule that you must do X'. Establishing and enforcing a regulatory framework e.g. rules, procedures, standards, principles, contracts, agreements. <u>Power Source:</u> Position, personal, expert.	Where there is a risk to staff, clients or the organisations business if things are not done in a certain way.	Efficient. Relies on a perceived right to institute and enforce rules. Can result in mindless rule following without real thought for consequences, alternatives or challenging change.
<b>EXCHANGE</b>	'Do X and I'll give you Y'. Bargaining, negotiating, bribing. Use of sweets, money, promotion, friendship, favour, inclusion. <u>Power Source:</u> All sources.	Where there is opportunity to negotiate or 'trade'.	Effective short term, but rewards get progressively less desired and the price of agreement tends to increase.
<b>PERSUASION</b>	'It is logical for you to do X'. Argument based on information, logic and reason. <u>Power Source:</u> Expert, Personal.	When in an advisory or specialist position.	Requires credibility. Fails if there is a conflict of interest. Requires low emotion. Potential for blame/creating a 'scapegoat' if it does not work out. One person's logic is another person's prejudice.
<b>ASSERTION</b>	'I would like you to do X'. Statement of personal wishes in a non-aggressive manner acknowledging the other person's rights, wishes or viewpoint. <u>Power Source:</u> Personal, Position	When there is a clear course of action easily identifiable by both parties. When there is a good relationship or when there is obvious rank/hierarchy.	Effective in achieving compliance but not commitment. If influencer compromises then it can become negotiation or joint problem solving.

**Pull Styles**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Uses</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>PERSONAL MAGNETISM</b>	Using charm, personality, personal attractiveness, enthusiasm, trust, love, respect. <u>Power Source:</u> Personal, moral, social.	Where there is scope for individuals to choose to follow you. In fluid or open situations.	Liable to produce dependency. Committed while personal needs are met. Can feel let down when influencer is not there.
<b>VISIONING</b>	Using language and imagery to 'paint a picture others can see'. Identifying common purpose, areas of agreement, shared goals. <u>Power Source:</u> Personal, moral, position, expert.	Where there is a clear idea for the future e.g. Luther King: 'I have a dream'.	Effective – adds meaning and purpose for others, draws people together, motivates and inspires. Picture must reflect shared values to be effective.
<b>BRIDGING</b>	Listening to, involving and supporting others. Finding connections with others where you can join your energy with theirs. <u>Power Source:</u> Personal	Where there is scope for exploration, time to achieve change. In consulting or counselling situations.	Usually used to support other styles e.g. Persuasion. Some people, who will not be pushed, will talk themselves into changing their position when Bridging is used.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>	Adjusting the environment (physical and psychological) to encourage the desired behaviour e.g. target setting, praising, involving, consulting, facilitating, harmonising. Also seating patterns, temperature, use of noise and so on. <u>Power Source:</u> Any	Where there is a clear desired outcome and time and resources are available.	Effective in supporting the other influencing styles. Unlikely to succeed on its own.

<p><b>JOINT PROBLEM SOLVING</b></p>	<p>Working together to define the problem, the goals and the best solution. Power Source: Personal, Expert</p>	<p>Where time and energy and motivation to change exists.</p>	<p>Highly effective. Requires high trust and skill. Can lead to best decision and high commitment. Can be more time consuming and uses more emotional and physical energy.</p>
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**Which Style is most Effective?**

There is no right or wrong, both styles have some use and will be appropriate for different circumstances, but it is fair to say that Pull, when combined with the minimum amount of Push needed to achieve compliance, are most effective in developing commitment and attitude change.

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## Summary

- We all may need to develop influencing skills whatever our role or position
- Everyone has a source or sources of 'power or authority' and these will have an impact on our approach and ability to influence
- There are various styles of influencing, however Push and Pull are the two main styles
- Push styles are generally about 'moving' a person to another viewpoint or position
- Pull styles are generally more about motivating a person to see the possibilities of changing to another viewpoint or position
- Push and Pull styles have many different uses, however in general terms a combination of the two will be most effective.

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