

Ten Top Tips for Being Influential

Strengthen your influence factor by using these tips to have more leverage with your colleagues, boss, children, friends or anyone else.

1. **Keep your mouth shut!** It might seem a bit counter-intuitive but if you can keep your mouth shut and your ears open you'll show respect and understanding and your listener is much more likely to listen to what you've got to say in return. "The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer." ~ Henry David Thoreau.
2. **Be aware of your non-verbal language.** You can tell when someone is not really paying attention to you, can't you? Others have the same sensory apparatus as you do, and they can also tell when someone has 'switched off.' Physiological changes that indicate you've switched off or tuned out include, eyes glazing over, folded arms and crossed legs, turning away, butting in, leaning back. If you want people to be alert and engaged when they listen to you, make sure you afford them the same courtesy. Listen with your eyes and body as well as your ears.
3. **Give the Big Picture first.** Roughly 60% of the population prefer to gain an overview of any information and don't need or want lots of detail. Giving too much detail will send most listeners into overwhelm and cause them to tune out or become irritated.
4. **Ask how much detail they want.** After you've given an overview, ask what other - or more detailed - information the person requires. Then provide that information. If you personally like detail, then ask questions to ensure you have as much detail as you need.
5. **Watch their behaviour to Define Their Values.** People behave in accordance with their values. So, for example, if a person is always on time and comments negatively whenever someone is late, there's a good chance that they value their own and others' time and see it as a way of showing respect. If you want to be influential with this person, you'd better be punctual!
6. **Use His Values to Motivate Him.** You'll be more influential if you can show how doing what you suggest fits with a person's values. For instance, if you discover a member of your team values fun, team work and helping people, give him a task that encompasses those values to keep him motivated.

7. **Appeal to the Senses.** We have five senses and the more of these you can incorporate into your message the more influential you will be. While it's not always possible to include taste and smell, if you can show an image or a product, talk about it and allow your listener to touch or use the product, you're already appealing to 3 senses, making your message more memorable.
8. **Use sensory Language.** You can make your language richer and more influential by using visual, auditory (hearing) and kinesthetic (feeling) words. For example, "I don't know how you feel about this new project, but it looks clear to me that it's going to be both exciting and fun. I want to hear what you think about it so we make sure we're all tuned in to the same wavelength."
9. **Be Congruent.** Being congruent means that what you say, matches your behaviour and the language you use. Everything you say and do carries a message. Sometimes the verbal and non-verbal messages differ. For example, if you tell your team (or your children) that you trust them, but always check up on them, the verbal message will be lost because the non-verbal message will come across more strongly.
10. **Set An Example.** Do what you say you're going to do, when you say you're going to do it or let people know well ahead of time if circumstances change. Simple. Being influential is based on trust. If you do what you say you're going to do, you lay a foundation of trust that you can build upon to be more influential.

These tips were provided by [Stephanie Philp](#), the author of [A Useful Guide to Being Influential](#).

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