

Skills of impact and influence

Based on an article, "Developing impact and influence", TJ, March 2006, p.48-51



Introduction



Development of impact and influence skills

- Increasingly important for major organizations as well as for trainers and consultants
- Eight factors will be examined



Why is it important?

- The increasing value of the role of an 'expert', who may not have formal position-based power
- The increase in partnership and outsourcing relationships
- The growth of internal service centers

- The acceptance of the internal customer/supplier concept
- The reduction in the shelf life of knowledge
- The recognition that professional relationships require more than just professional skills to influence clients and colleagues



Work Roles

- Explained in rational terms
- But have to achieve results in social, emotional and often irrational environment
- Psychology, social psychology and dynamics of human politics just as important as technical ability



Organizations

- Driving towards rationality through outsourcing, refining of systems, scaling up, and seeking economies of scale

- Need highly skilled confident individuals who can navigate the political and social environment, drawing on their personal and interpersonal skills as much as their professional competencies



The impact and influence programme



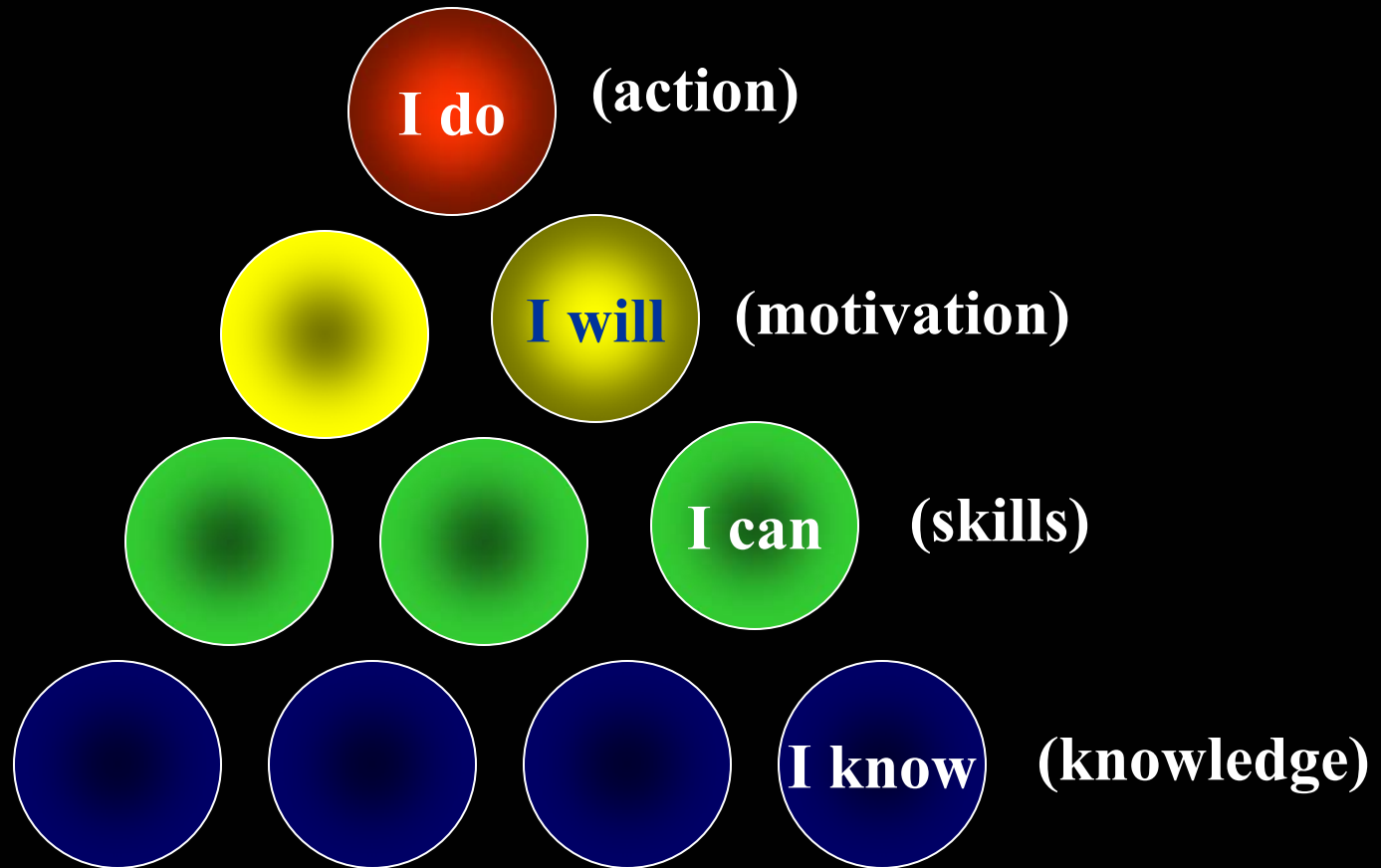
Mid-career Executives

- Reached a “glass ceiling” in their career
- Subject matter expertise took them so far but are being held back by their inability to influence others effectively and to manage politics and confrontation

- Technical competence no longer enough
- Angry and frustrated not understanding why technical and professional skills developed over the years are no longer useful

- Need to tackle personal development and learning at all levels in the model of work-based learning and change

Hale Four-Step Model of Work-Based Learning and Change



Empirical evidence

- Most managers have knowledge of the basic skills of influencing
- Having the knowledge is not the same as applying them in real situations

- For e.g., you might know that creating rapport is key to building relationships and a foundation for influencing others, but knowing does not mean you have the skills of rapport building

- The challenge is to help them move from knowledge to action

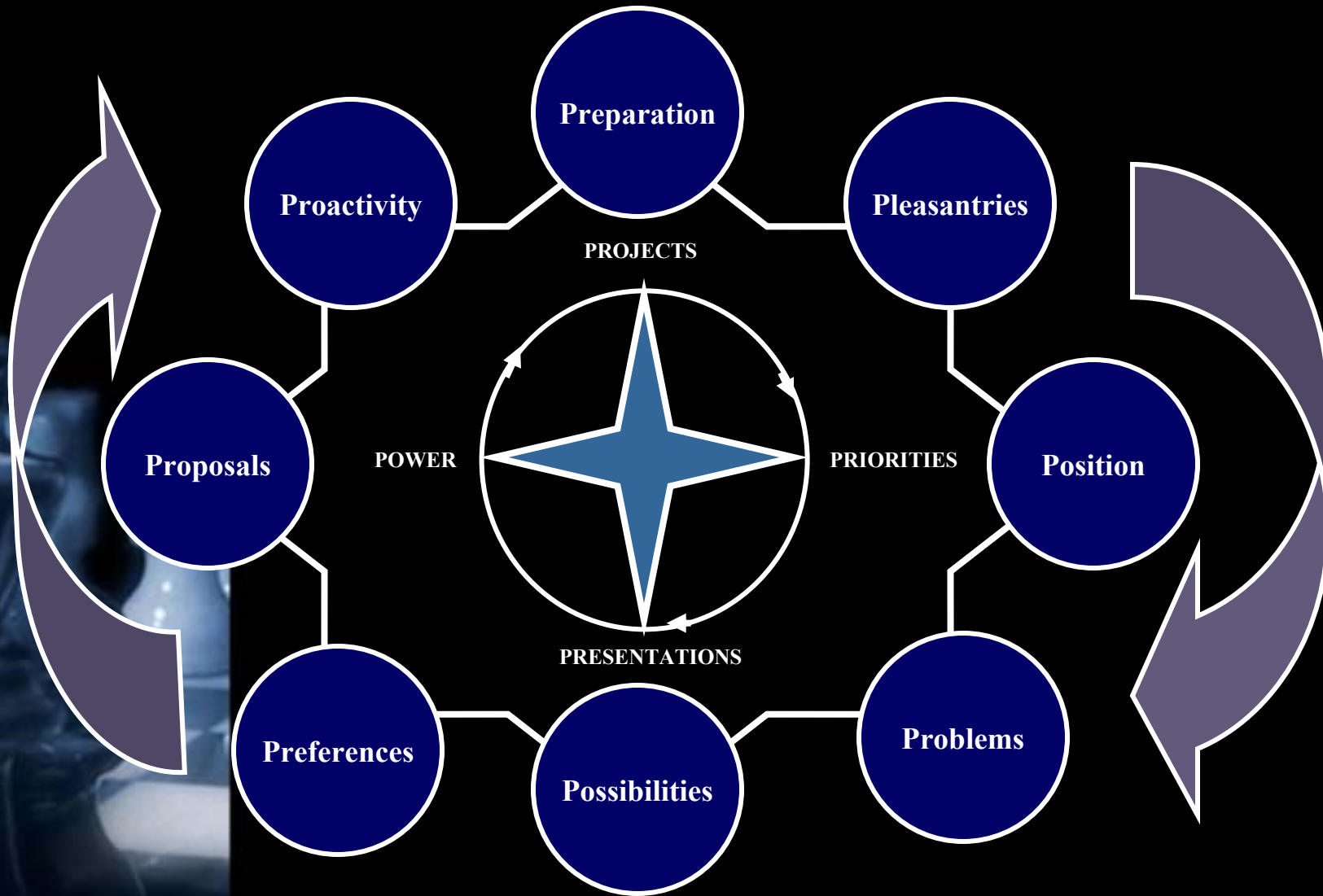
Circle of Influence

- Managers practice skills and feedback provided against skills areas shown in the Circle of Influence (next slide)

- 99% of participants motivated to practice the skills they learned, i.e., move to the third level in the hierarchy
- Only 6% move to the highest level of action

- Two dimensions critical for effecting change at the highest level of action: Cognitive awareness and Action Learning

The Hale Circle of Influence



Cognitive Awareness

- Successful influencers manage their cognitive or thinking processes – *skills and competencies were only part of the formula*
- Control their self-talk ahead of and during stressful situations, such as chairing a difficult meeting or confronting an awkward individual

- Not trapped in negative self-talk (*'This is going to be difficult – I am not too good in this sort of high-profile situation'*) but use positive self-talk (*'This will be challenging but I will rise to the challenges well and I am going to learn from this.'*)
- Thinking affects feelings, which in turn affects behaviour

- Need to confront our self-image and beliefs about our capability and comfort zones we have build around ourselves



Work-Based Action Learning

- Participants are not 'taught' the skills of influence, but come with real issues they wanted to tackle in the work place
- After the programme, take action in the workplace and demonstrate a return on investment






***“You cannot influence what you do
not understand”***

- Values are important in the influencing context
- Relationships break down particularly where there is a lack of sensitivity to differences in personal value and beliefs
- Need to identify personal values within oneself and others

Key Factors in the Circle of Influence



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- Identified by the Circle of Influence
 - Can be used as a template to influence others and for reviewing personal effectiveness

- You may have natural strengths in some factors of the circle and areas requiring development which can be addressed through formal training or through personal coaching

- Each influencing situation we face is circumstantial, and influencing is a dynamic process and you need to judge which factors are most important in a specific situation

1. Preparation

- Most neglected factor
- But one of the most powerful factors when seeking to influence others
- Examples of associated skills:
intelligence gathering and effective personal mental preparation



2. Pleasantries

- Rapport-building and management of impressions
- Commonly associated with the start of the influencing process but is key throughout



3. Position

- Reaching a common understanding of the current situation or position through a shared discussion
- Common error – failure to engage the other person in discussion from their perspective



4. Problems

- In coming to agreement about the problems associated with the current situation, you start to build a case for change
- Important to develop an understanding and agreement regarding the problems collaboratively
- *Do not assume that the other person sees things in the same way as you*



5. Possibilities

- Not locking onto one solution and driving for that
- But negotiating around a range of possibilities
- Creating a sense of joint decision-making




6. Preference

- By explaining your preferred course of action,
- You are moving towards the proposals stage,
- Where you seek to gain agreement on specific action that should be taken



7. Proposals

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- Moving beyond the discussion of possibilities and preferences to shaping the actual proposal for action
 - Show assertiveness in stating what you want and to build the proposals collaboratively with the other person
 - Skills of persuasion required, appealing to both logic and emotion
- Need to develop realistic action plans
 - Sometimes the proposal is just to the other person you are influencing, but there may be others
 - Consider who else needs to be influenced and develop proposals considering their perspectives

8. Proactivity

- Influencing means leading the other person to take action and getting a commitment to proactive positive action
- Need follow up to see that action is taken



**Skills of impact and influence
related to Emotional Intelligence
(EQ)**



Emotional Perception

- Successful influencers
- *Communicate their feelings to others,*
- *Recognize the emotions of others, and*
- *Control their emotions*
- Strong EQ can make a difference between success and failure



Successful Influencers

- Move communication beyond transactional exchanges related to technical agenda
- Access the emotional energy of the other person and convey their own emotions in a positive way



Influencing

- More than individual psychology alone,
- It is about social psychology
- The personality and style of the other person are key considerations
- Need to adapt accordingly



Adaptability

- Being able to adapt one's style of influencing to the style of others
- Adapting both to the situation and the personal preferences and values of the person you seek to influence



Summary



Impact and influence skills

- Continue to be determinant of personal success
- Related to EQ
- In addition need to find a practical way of bringing the constructs of EQ alive
- A matter of social psychology and not of psychology alone

