Getting Results Without Authority
Tips, Trends and Technologies

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Using influence is an important business (and life) skill. The success of your projects will depend on your ability to use influence skills when you don't have authority.

To use influence, you must try to understand others' needs and communicate effectively to meet those needs. Below we discuss various strategies to do this. You must decide which strategy is the most useful for each situation.

Influence Strategies:
- Empowerment
- Interpersonal Awareness
- Bargaining
- Relationship Building
- Organizational Awareness
- Common Vision
- Impact Management
- Logical Persuasion
- Coercion

For each strategy, decide if this would be an effective strategy for your own project. Estimate how often you use each of the strategies (High, Medium, or Low).
Dealing with Resistance Some people will resist your requests. They are being asked to do more with less, just as you are.
Some people are reluctant to work with people from other areas or consider special projects to be outside their job descriptions. There are many reasons why someone may resist cooperating.

Your tasks are to:
- Anticipate the sources of resistance
  - Plan how to deal with unexpected resistance rather than reacting to it
- Avoid trying to overcome the resistance
- Ask for more information
- Understand why the person is resisting
  - Be sympathetic and understanding of the other person's situation
- Choose an influence strategy that could work in this situation

Since your role in managing a project or working on the project team is different from your day-to-day duties, you will need to anticipate the resistance you may feel

yourself as well as that you may experience from others. Common areas of resistance are time and resource constraints, role confusion, commitment issues, and personality conflicts.

Time Constraints
Adding a project to your busy schedule is always a challenge. As you discover more about the project and track its progress, you will find that you must make adjustments in your day-to-day work.
- Discuss time conflicts with your manager when you take on the project.
- Decide which of your current tasks and assignments can take a lower priority while the project is in progress.
- As new time constraints come up, reprioritize your assignments.
- Be proactive and seek input from your manager before crises develop.
- Consider using software tools. They can be especially helpful in projecting and tracking the actual time you will need to spend.
- Be understanding and realistic about others' time.
- Seek everyone's input on realistic timeframes for accomplishing tasks.

Resource Constraints
- Find others to assist you with your daily tasks while you work on the project.
- Get the cooperation of your manager or others.
- Much of our discussion of time constraints applies to resource constraints

Role Confusion
When you approach others to get information or ask for cooperation, they may resist, since you are communicating in a way that is different from your day-to-day role.
- Gain cooperation through influence strategies and good communication skills.
- Ask your manager to smooth the way and set up the proper expectations of your project role.

Commitment Issues

Since many of your project teams will not be traditional teams, it is important to use as many team techniques as possible:

Circulate the team contact list, minutes of team meetings, reports, status, and tracking information.

Consistently refer to the group as a "team." Establish a positive expectation.

Consider the most effective influence strategies.

Discuss the situation with your manager, pointing out what you have done to build commitment and asking for assistance.

Personality Conflicts

Are you communicating in the most effective way with each person?

Are there other approaches that you could use to be more effective?

Try role-playing before the next encounter to practice more effective communication.

Establishing and Using Your Authority

Establishing your authority within the project does not rest on your position's power. It rests on the projection of authority that you exercise. Your most powerful tools are being well organized and keeping the project on track.

- Prepare a detailed project plan and make sure everyone knows where he or she fits in.
- Involve the team members in plan development, including scheduling and responsibilities.
- Notice each team member's contribution and avoid giving orders.
- Run efficient and effective meetings.
- Promote good communication.
- Be scrupulous in reporting progress against plan. Manage by facts, not by wishes.
- Be aware of the political issues surrounding the project.
- Review plans with your managers to make sure they are on track, comprehensive, and realistic.
- Keep an eye on the progress of the project so that you always know the status of progress, schedule, and budget.
- Report regularly to all the stakeholders. Make reports factual, succinct, and useful.

Confidence with New Skills

As you begin to develop and use new influence, it is common to feel uncomfortable or to lack confidence.

Follow these simple steps:

1. Find someone with whom you feel comfortable to work with you.
2. Describe the situation and the strategy you plan to use and why you plan to use it.
3. Role play the discussion and ask for feedback on its effectiveness. Improve it.
4. After you feel you can use the strategy, try it.
5. Discuss the results with the person you have been working with in the role playing.
6. Refine your approach for the next time.
7. Try not to be judgmental with yourself. Simply look for ways to improve your skills.

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