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RESOURCES

Building Your Persuasion Skills & Sphere of Influence

BY JOE D'AMICO

We all know that persuasion in business is a vital career skill. It can get colleagues to hand over the resources you need and prompt vital contacts to return your phone calls. But what exactly is persuasion?

At AMA & MCE we define persuasion as:
“The process of changing or reforming attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviours toward a pre-determined outcome through voluntary compliance.”

Sounds good, right? But how can we take that to the next level?

Here’s how we define influence: “The highest form of persuasion. With influence, people take action because they are inspired by your overall makeup, rather than by your external actions.”

With the right amount of influence, you can inspire colleagues and contacts simply by being who you are and doing what you do. They’re not just responding to a sales pitch or an effort to convince them to take a specific action or buy a particular product.

3 ways to become more influential in the workplace

Can you become more influential and build your sphere of influence in business? Here are some useful tips from Expanding Your Influence:

1. Praise honestly and often.

Praise worthwhile actions every day. Show your colleagues and customers that you genuinely appreciate them. Don’t flatter, but let those around you know that you sincerely value them. The more others feel appreciated by you, the more likely they are to listen to what you have to say.

2. Set expectations.

Assume that others will agree with you in advance. If you’d like to roll out a new project, ask your colleagues when it can be launched, not if it should be launched. If



you’d like to persuade a customer to buy an exciting new product, ask him how many he wants, not if he’s interested at all.

You may end up getting pushback, but by taking the initiative and making your expectations known, you’ll show others that you are decisive and enthusiastic.

Emphasize similarities.

Do you have something in common with a colleague? Like the same sports team that a potential customer does? Don’t be shy about letting him or her know. Although this may seem irrelevant to the situation at hand, people feel more comfortable around those they can identify with.

Don’t overshare, and always respect personal boundaries. But don’t be afraid to ask others about their interests. Even the most different of people have something in common. Find out what that is, express genuine interest, and grow closer to those around you.

About The Author

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