



Power and Influence: Getting It - Keeping It

An Online Continuing Education Course for Engineers

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Power and Influence: Getting It -Keeping It



- 2 Credit Hours-

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Overview

"The difference between someone who can get an idea off the ground and accepted in an organization and someone who can't isn't a question of who has the better idea. It's a question of who has political competence. Political competence isn't something you're born with, but a skill you learn. It's an out-in-the-open process of methodically mapping the political terrain, building coalitions, and leading them to get your idea adopted."

Samuel Bacharach, a Cornell University professor (Bacharach, 2005, p. 93)

As the Baby Boomer generation begins leaving the workforce and is replaced by their children, the current job market is seeing large numbers of fearless and ambitious, yet unseasoned twenty-somethings flooding the managerial job market.

These new managers are taking positions traditionally reserved for battle-tested pros who understand from experience the ins and outs of gaining power and influence. An ever-increasing amount of employed 20- to 34-year olds hold management positions. These young, inexperienced managers report difficulties managing "up" – getting their bosses to respect them – as well as managing "down" – getting their older subordinates to respect their position. (Fortune magazine)

This course is written for those new managers (or people who want to be more valued within their organizations) who must learn how to map the political terrain of their workplace.

It will explore the foundations of personal power and influence in the workplace and provide guidelines on developing these skills for career success.



The focus is on acquiring, increasing, and using the small bits of influence and power available to anyone to enhance their career development – not on the types of power leading to illegal actions of powerful officials who abuse their positions.

Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course will:

1. Know the common characteristic shared by individuals seen by others as being most influential
2. Be able to list at least four negative uses of power and influence
3. Be able to list at least six indicators of an individual's possession of power and influence
4. Be able to define the differences between compliance and commitment from others
5. Be able to ask and answer the essential question involved in influencing someone else to act in a desired manner
6. Be able to present an idea with the best possible chance of action by others
7. Be able to explain why you cannot motivate others to do things they may not want to do
8. Help the student be able to identify opportunities to develop positive influence within their current organization
9. Be able to identify the four sources of personal power within an organization.

Intended Audience

This course is designed for students who are in a low level of management and want to learn how to maximize their influence for opportunities of professional growth through helping others become more successful.

Additionally, this course is also useful for students who, although not currently in a management position, want to be as prepared as possible for when the opportunity occurs, or simply want to be as valued within their organizations as possible.

A View of Power

Ninety individuals nominated by their peers as the most influential leaders in our society were interviewed by a leading organizational development guru a few years ago.

After comparing the information gathered from their responses, it became apparent they all shared a single characteristic of power: ***they made others feel powerful!***



They were powerful because they had learned how to build a strong power base in their own institutions or organizations. Their power evolved as they helped peers and subordinates accomplish exceptional tasks. If this were a Star Wars adventure, we would say they were using the “good side of the Force.”

Unfortunately, news of corporate price-fixing and accounting scandals has given the word “power” many unflattering connotations in today’s world. For someone to actively seek it sends out a “danger” signal reminding us of the worst in our fellow man.

Nearly everyone who has spent any time in a large organization, public or private, has stories about conniving bosses, vindictive peers and subordinates, corporate abuses of power, and dirty office politics. It is a difficult concept to embrace for most of us because it is typically associated with some form of domination over others.

The truth is that power and influence do not inherently have the values of good or bad within them: it is the morality of the user that determines their application.



" Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."
[Lord Acton](#), *Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, 1887*

Negative uses of power and influence may include:

- Being insensitive to others, abrasive, and intimidating
- Acting cold, aloof, and arrogant
- Betraying other’s trust
- Intentionally manipulating others or situations

