

Currencies of Influence

A number of studies have been conducted to compare the effects of using different sources of influence. Most of these studies have used influence measures based on the power typology proposed by researchers French and Raven. The seven generally accepted sources of influence are Tyrannical, Networking and Alliance, All-Knowing Guru, Informational, Pecking Order, Charismatic and Midas.

Tyrannical Influence: is based on absolute tyrannical control, force and fear. Scoring high in this currency is seen as forcing compliance and obedience to your wishes. Failure to obey usually leads to punishment, such as undesirable work assignments, reprimands, exclusion from opportunities and information, limited mobility and the like. With coercion there is no chance of gaining real commitment from colleagues. Colleagues typically react to coercion with physical withdrawal (absenteeism, quit). Psychological withdrawal (no communicativeness, alcoholism, drugs) or hostility and aggression (theft, slowdowns, sabotage).

Networking and Alliance Influence: is based on contacts (connections) within the organization – or even outside the organization. Scoring high in networking influence forces colleagues to comply since they want to gain the favor or avoid the wrath of your powerful connections. Managers who have connection power can get others to do things because they can promise a link or an “in” with important people.

All-Knowing Guru Influence: is based on providing uncommon expertise, experience, knowledge and so forth. Scoring high in this currency is viewed as having the expertise and technical competence to directly influence the work behavior of less qualified and knowledgeable colleagues. Expertise works because others often need skills and knowledge to expedite their goal attainment.

Informational Influence: is based on possession of or direct access to information that is perceived as valuable and needed by others. Scoring high in information power means you have the capability to work through others by promising access to data, thus letting colleagues in on things.

Pecking Order Influence: is based on an individual's or group's actual position on the organizational chart and its concomitant right to be obeyed. Such a position gives the manager who occupies it control over others because of the chain-of-command nature of the "slot" in the hierarchy. Scoring high in pecking order influence demands compliance since colleagues feel this individual has the right to expect obedience and compliance.

Charismatic Influence: is based on one's personal magnetism, charisma and dynamic personality. Scoring high in charismatic influence means you are generally respected and admired by colleagues. Your dynamic, magnetic personality itself greatly influences others. This currency of influence can take such forms as a sense of high standards, dynamic speaking ability, willingness to sacrifice oneself to principles, and capability for helping ordinary people achieve extraordinary results.

Midas Influence: is based on one's ability to provide both tangible and intangible rewards. A manager perceived as scoring high in Midas influence can motivate others because the prospect of positive recompense is envisioned. Rewards can be tangible, such as salary increases, awards, promotions-- or intangible, such as verbal recognition and praise.