

every  
woman  
WORKBOOK

# EXTENDING YOUR INFLUENCE



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# ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

ESTABLISHED IN 1999 EVERYWOMAN works to advance women in business.

Through out interactions with women in business, we have witnessed the power influence has. It impacts so many things including, whether you get that promotion; win the big contract; who your clients are and how elevated your profile is. It's safe to say, the influence you hold will have a dramatic impact on the trajectory of your career or the success of your business and the experiences you have exposure to. The good news is that you can start extending your sphere of influence right now and you can do it in a structured way that sees you reaching your goals.

Influencing is not one thing it is a number of things. It can be about trying to instigate change, getting people to see a different viewpoint; negotiating to get a deal done or leading with a new vision. Whether you run your own business or work in an organisation, there will be many times in your business day when you need to influence, and influence well.

For most of us, one of the challenges is that often we need to influence people we have no authority over. This means we need to be able to do more than just tell people what instructions to follow, instead we need to build relationships and motivate people to see a situation from our perspective and give them compelling reasons to follow our decision making path.

In this workbook, you will discover tools that will help you build your influencing skills. Importantly, you can use it as a guide to best practice but to become really effective you will need to review, practice and reflect so do make sure you do the exercises. We also recommend you use someone you trust to run things by and practice with. The exercises you are asked to complete, will also help you develop a workable action plan to build essential influencing skills. So let's get started...



# SECTION 1: AN INTRODUCTION



# What is influencing?

**INFLUENCING IS ABOUT GETTING THINGS DONE**, moving things forward, providing direction by using positive interpersonal and communication skills. It is about using your energy to direct change; it is not about forcing people to do what you want.

Influencing plays a key role in individual growth. Women often tell us they will do everything to influence on behalf of their teams, in terms of promotions, pay rises and development. Many also tell us they don't put the same energy and conviction into their own development, salary increases and career plans. It is important that you have the skills and confidence to influence those above you to support your own career progress.

Frequently we need to influence without authority and across boundaries, to other business areas, or business partners. This is where having a range of skills is vital to influencing. These skills will help you encourage people, or to think differently, to trust your judgement, or enable you to make a stand and much more.

It is likely that you spend a large portion of your time influencing and being influenced. When this is done effectively, most people don't label it, they just acknowledge that they are working together towards a common goal.

We influence when we, negotiate holiday time, liaise with clients, win a sales pitch, present, interview, are involved in meetings and when we are making decisions. We're also influencing those around us when we discuss our views and opinions on what happened in the news or what we watched on TV.

## Why is influencing important to you?

### EXERCISE

Think of a few work related examples of where having good influencing skills is imperative.

- 1
- 2
- 3

Using the examples above, rate your influencing skills on a scale of 1-10, think about where you are now and where you would like to be.

1 - I want to work at being a better influencer

10 - I am brilliant at influencing in all aspects of my role

How do you go up the scale? You need to make an action plan in order to make a change. Throughout this workbook, you will get hints, tips and tools on how to build your action plan.

Take some time to reflect on what you want to change in terms of your own influencing style.

SECTION 2:  
WHO AND WHEN  
DO YOU NEED TO  
INFLUENCE?



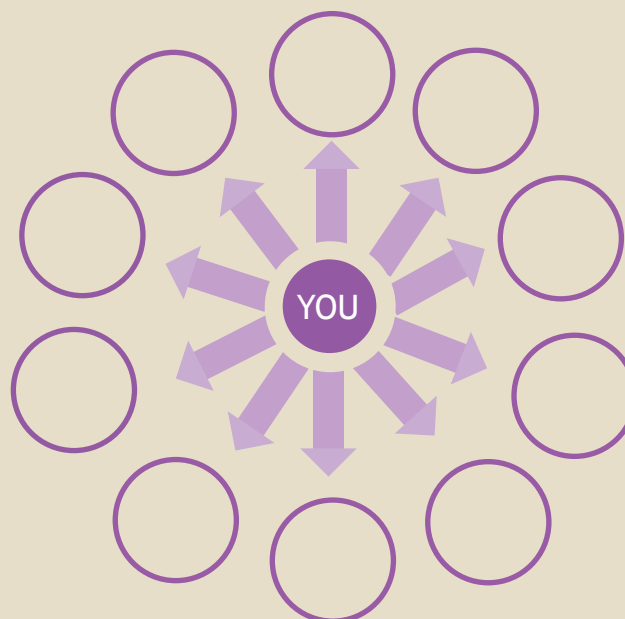
# Your Sphere of Influence

THERE ARE MANY STAKEHOLDERS IN YOUR BUSINESS LIFE that you need to influence on a day-to-day basis, often referred to as your Sphere of Influence.



## EXERCISE

Think about your sphere of influence and create your own diagram - you may even find you need to add a few branches or sub-circles. The key to being successful in business relationships is the ability to influence at all levels and across the board, internally and externally so do bear that in mind.







# When should you influence?

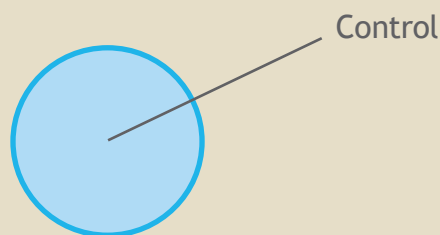
STEVEN COVEY, AUTHOR OF SEVERAL WELL USED BUSINESS BOOKS including 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, created a simple model that will help you work out when you should use influence.

## EXERCISE

Think about and write down the things that sit in each of the following circles.

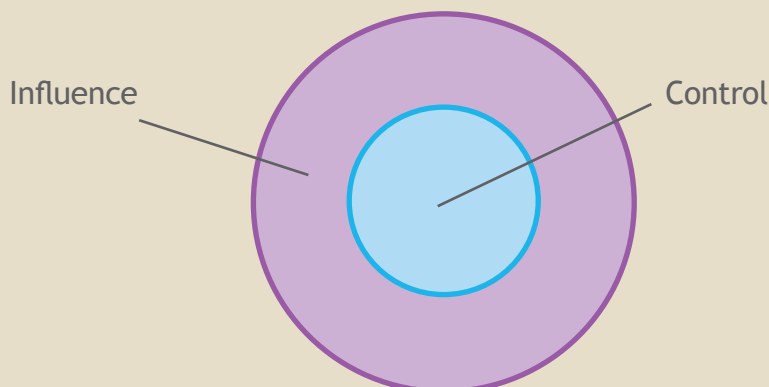
### 1. The circle of control, areas that are completely under your control.

This tends to be quite small, but our own behaviours, beliefs and values sit in this circle.



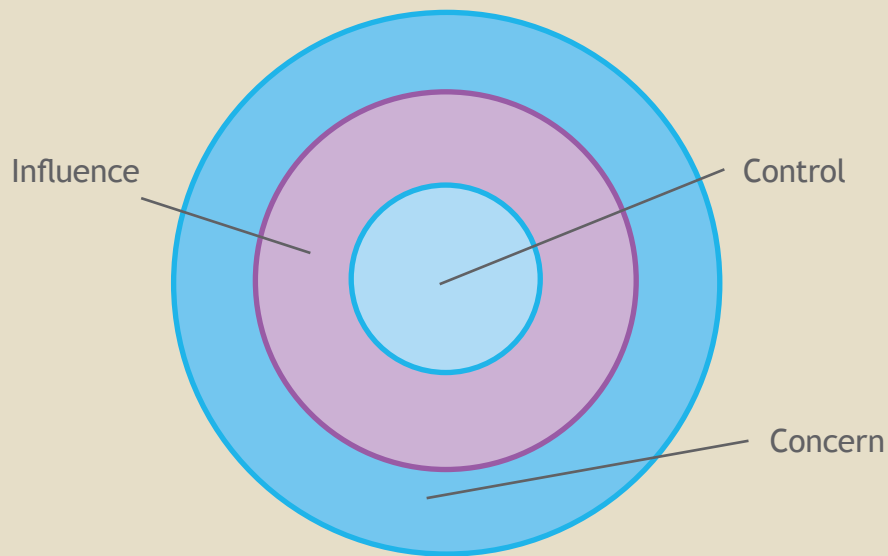
### 2. The circle of influence, areas in your life you have influence over.

These probably range from low to high, in terms of ability to influence and they will change, depending on your stage of life and role in the business. This includes items you can do something about, including your health, relationships, managing clients, workload etc.



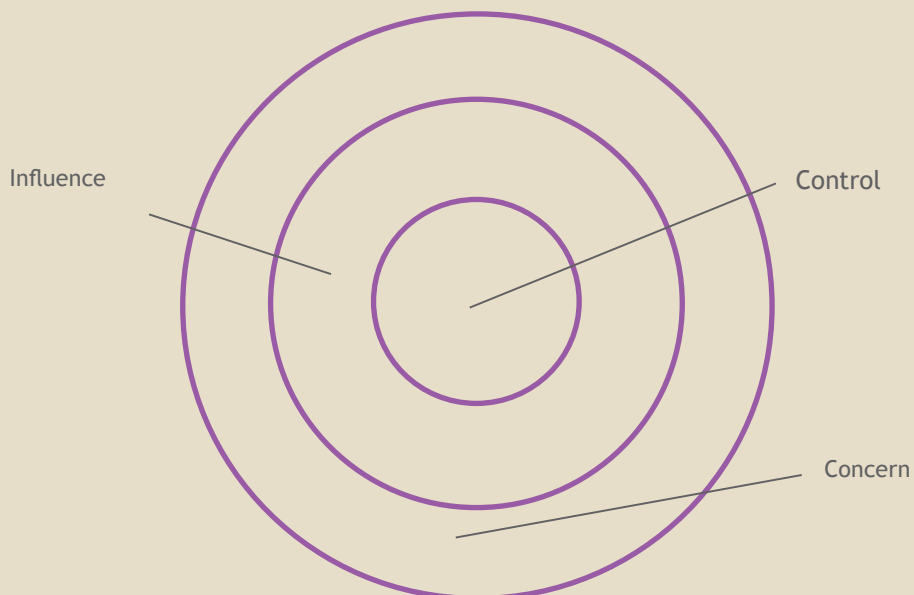
### 3. The circle of concern, taking time to define what is in the circle of concern is really important.

Time spent in this circle is often a poor use of time, and we often find ourselves reacting to things we have no control over, rather than being proactive and expanding our circle of influence. This circle will include items such as the weather, your clients' values or behaviours, certain areas of the business, depending on your role.



## EXERCISE

You can also use this tool to look at WHO you can or should be influencing. Again there are probably very few people who are a hundred percent under your control, but ask yourself who sits in the circle of influence and how you can expand it. Use the names from the Sphere of Influence exercise and put them in the relevant circle.



*"If you wait until you can do everything for everybody, instead of something for someone, you end up not doing anything for anybody."*

MALCOLM BANE

## SECTION 3: KEY INFLUENCING SKILLS





# Key influencing skills

THINK OF SOME EXAMPLES OF WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED, both positively and negatively.

## EXERCISE

Using the examples of when you have been influenced and the skills that were used, take some time to think about and write down what was effective and what was ineffective.

	What was effective?	What was ineffective?
1		
2		
3		
4		

It is most likely you've covered included some of the key skills great influencers use, either consciously or subconsciously. Here are some ways you can build your skills in each area:

### 1. Communication

- Questioning – ask open questions (ones that cannot be answered with a yes or no), probing questions that will help uncover someone's perspective on an issue as this will help you identify what is important to them. Many of these questions start with why, where, who, what.
- Listening – listen to really understand what the other person is saying, engage in active listening and don't interrupt! Active listening involves really paying attention so you can repeat, paraphrase and feedback. Your body language also plays a part in active listening for example it is good to nod every now and then.

- Speaking – watch the tone you use, it can be easy to sound condescending, or contrived without meaning to. Verbally summarise the other person’s ideas so that you can build rapport and show where you are on the same page. Avoid ‘formal speak’ and jargon, you are conversing not commanding.
- Reasoning and analysing – use visual tools and graphs, data, research and storytelling to support your perspective and help communicate your ideas and strategies.
- Non-verbal behaviours – build engagement by using open body language and by being aware of what the other person is thinking by tuning into their non-verbal behaviours.

(See *everywomanNetwork’s Image and Impact workbook* for more on body language)

## 2. Emotional Intelligence

- Self-awareness – be aware of the impression you are making.
- Self-belief – be confident in your opinions, ideas and judgement.
- Perspective shifting – genuinely put yourself in the other person’s shoes and appreciate how they would see the situation. Often writing this down can help you focus on them not you.
- Empathy and building rapport – be authentic in your behaviours and genuinely interested in the other person. Be curious about what makes the other person tick.
- Emotion management – show enthusiasm and passion, be true to yourself and your ideas and keep extreme emotions under wraps. Help reduce emotion in others that might prevent the best solution.

“It is difficult to build common ground when the only person you care about is yourself”

JOHN C. MAXWELL

## 3. Assertiveness

- Persistence – understand that there will always be obstacles in your way, keep on your path (as long as you are clear it is the right path) and be tenacious and determined in your goal.
- Confidence – know what you believe in and have faith that you can achieve it.
- Use power effectively – know your power sources and use them effectively. Do you have experience and expertise that you are not tapping into? Do you use your role and level to effect the change expected of you?

## 4. Visioning

- Know what you want to achieve – explore the best way to share your vision with others and be willing to state your expectations.
- Collaborative thinking – understand what is up for discussion and how both parties can achieve success.
- Understand everyone’s currency:
  - What is important to you? What are you prepared to give up and what is non-negotiable? Don’t allow the other party to make this decision for you. You need to be prepared in advance.
  - What is important to the other party? Where do they have room to manoeuvre in their needs and what is essential to keep the discussion moving?

- Open mindedness - be open about the information you have and you are aware of, and understand there may be discrepancies on how you see the situation. Goal post changing is really another opportunity to get it right!
- Think creatively – the first solution, approach or idea is not always the best one.
- Bridge discussions and opportunities – help facilitate resolution to conflicts, and allow everyone to have their say. Find mutually beneficial goals and targets. Enlist others to help build support and help them to become an advocate for your cause.

## EXERCISE

Based on the above, think about what you need to do more of and what you should do less of to build your influencing skills.

## SECTION 4: YOUR INFLUENCING STYLE





# Your influencing style

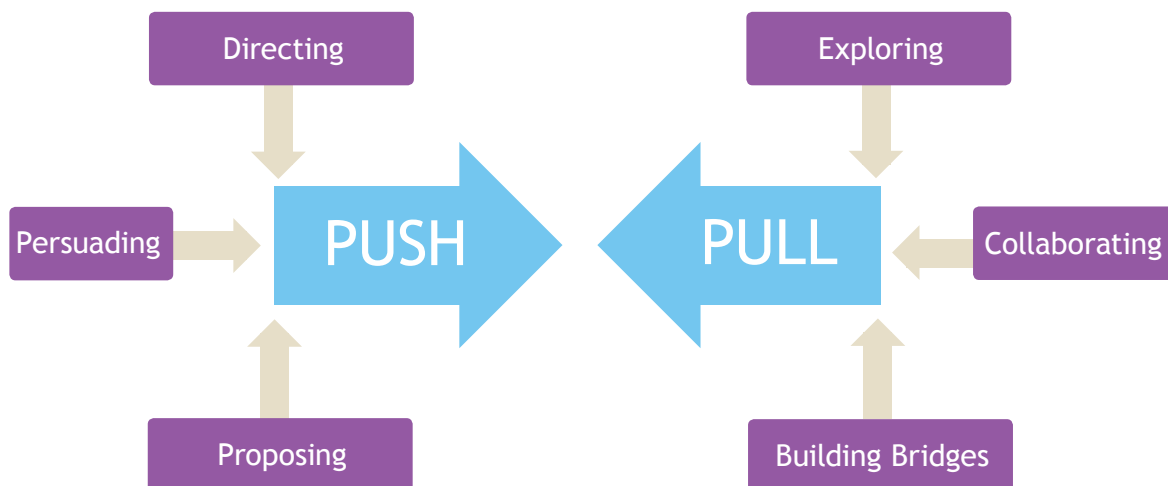
YOU HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE THAT YOU NEED TO INFLUENCE AT VARYING DEGREES OF SENIORITY so it is important you are able adapt your style accordingly, one style does NOT fit all. To get the most out of any situation you need to be sensitive to the situation and what the people involved need.

Although there are many influencing approaches, there are two basic styles that incorporate the essential behaviours needed to influence effectively. These are called **Push and Pull influencing styles**.

**Push** influencing involves moving someone to change, by focusing on one's own agenda, and persuading others to hear and see your opinions and expectations. Sometimes this style can involve applying pressure or incentives and can be seen as a 'carrot and stick' approach.

**Pull** influencing works by motivating the other party to want to change by listening, exploring different perspectives and working together.

Both styles, when used in the right instance can be effective, and it is essential you don't over-rely on using one (probably your most comfortable style). That's why you need to look at the situation and what the people involved need, and work out the right style to employ.



## 1. Push Style

When you use the Push style you tend to...

- Put forward ideas and state expectations up front
- Have a logical train of thought to show your rationale
- Fight your corner and defend ideas with passion and energy
- Anticipate objections and have many arguments lined up to use to counter others ideas
- Be creative with ways you can back up your thoughts and ideas

This style works well if you need to gain compliance and when there is an obvious best way. This can be achieved fairly quickly but you may not achieve full commitment across the board.

## 2. Pull style

When you use the Pull style you tend to...

- Encourage others to voice their thoughts and opinions
- Listen actively and try and encompass other arguments and ideas into your solution
- Be open about sharing your feelings and concerns, and open to helping others get their voice heard
- Naturally shift perspective to ensure all sides are given a voice
- Understand that your idea is not always the right or only valid one

This style can be useful for getting buy-in and motivating people to be part of the desired change, however, it may be slower in getting to the end result because of the time required to properly explore opinions, ideas and perspectives.

## EXERCISE

Look back at the list of people you are keen to influence more effectively and complete the following:

Name	What style are you using?	How could you adjust the style to suit the situation?	What skills do you need to develop to move this forward?

**SECTION 5:  
BUILDING YOUR  
INFLUENCE**



# Building your influence

NOW THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF HOW, WHY AND WHEN YOU NEED TO INFLUENCE, let's pull it together by looking at ways you can extend the Sphere of Influence you have.

## 1. Be visible

Make your voice heard through the variety of channels that are important to you and your business these may include: internal websites, facebook, LinkedIn twitter, internal and external comms. Don't be a reactive follower i.e. saying 'good post', 'I agree' etc... be visible with an opinion, story or experience that is relative.

## 2. Be an expert

Figure out your area of expertise and how to share knowledge. Once people trust you know what you are talking about, you will be able to influence them with your message.

## 3. Be a listener

'Seek first to understand' is vital to influencing. Listen to what others are saying (and not saying) and respect their right to be heard.

## 4. Be a challenger

Challenge your own thinking and the thinking of other people. Understand that to achieve the right solution, ideas, opinions and sometimes even facts need to be challenged.

## 5. Be a problem solver

Look at influencing as trying to solve a problem. Use different styles and tools depending on the issue at hand. Don't waste time in your circle of concern, think about where you can influence and focus on action.

## 6. Be present

In our 24/7 world it is easy to be distracted. Give the people and the situation your full attention and make it the most important undertaking at that moment in time. Respect the time others are offering.

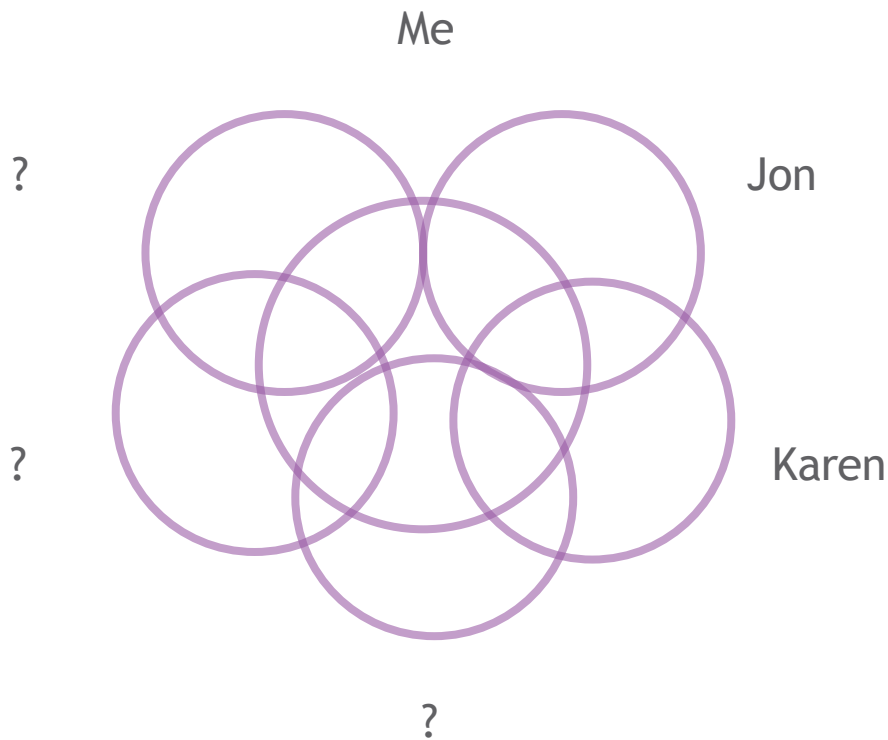
## 7. Be connected

Tell people about those who have helped and supported you and think about who you can connect. You don't necessarily need to be involved in every relationship, but by connecting two people who could benefit from each other, you are building your own influence.



## 8. Create a circle of champions.

Think about who is 'on your team'. Who are those people who would be an advocate for you and back you up in almost any situation? Who are the people that will talk positively about you even when you are not around? Who would be in your circle of champions?



Who would put you in their circle of champions?

If you are struggling with this, see our workbooks on networking and making an impact.

### EXERCISE

Look at the ways you can extend your Sphere of Influence.

The areas I am confident I am effective in already are:

- 
- 
-

The areas where I could be a better influencer are:

- 
- 
- 

How am I going to work on this?

Who can help me?

How will I know I have made a change - what does success look like?

You should now feel more confident about the skills you need to develop and tap into to get the most out of any situation where you need to influence. Try incorporating the habits and tips mentioned in this workbook into your working and leadership style and you will begin to notice a difference in your business relationships.

**Begin by:**

Identifying where and when you need to influence. Think of specific examples of where you would like a more successful result in your various business roles.

**Then:**

Recognise the need to build skills in specific areas. For influencing, the key is to be confident in your approach and relationship building, so put yourself out there to stretch your comfort zone.

**Finally:**

Understand when and how to adjust your influencing style to suit the situation and results needed. Reflect on best practice and make a note of what works and what doesn't in your approach.

Recognise what you can do specifically, don't just think about it, make a plan and put it into action.

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This workbook has been produced and edited by everywoman, with content commissioned from associate expert Sara Parsons. It is part of the everywoman portfolio of resources that have been specially created to support and develop women as they advance their careers and businesses.

## everywoman Expert



Sara Parsons has been an everywoman Associate for 10 years and has worked in the field of Personal Development globally for 16 with clients such as; Paramount Pictures, The RSA, Ipsos MORI, RNLI, Oxford University Press. She holds an honours business degree and is a qualified expert in many professional assessments including Belbin and MBTI - the Myers-Briggs profile. Sara is passionate about inspiring and supporting women to reach into the potential they often don't know they possess.

## Further reading

- John C Maxwell – Everyone Communicates, Few Connect
- Terry Gillen – Agreed! Improve your powers of influence
- Suzanne Turner - Tools for Success

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