

How to... influence others

By Audrey Macnaughton, director of HR at Training and Development Consultancy Macnaughton McGregor Ltd.

IN ALL aspects of our lives we need to influence other people. In our private lives we have our own interests to promote or protect and in our working lives we need to work effectively with people who have different goals or priorities.

The benefits of influencing people effectively are enormous. Boosting our influencing skills means that we build and maintain good working relationships, we have objective and constructive discussions rather than emotionally laden arguments and we can come to consensus decisions with others in a calm and adult way.



Audrey Macnaughton

At school we are taught the mechanics of how language is constructed. The learning doesn't stop there. A great deal of benefit can be gained in continuing to work on the finer points of how we interact with others.

First and foremost we need to listen. This may seem strange when we are keen to get our point across but if you listen to someone, and show that you are listening, then you dramatically increase the chance that they will listen to you and take on board your points.

In addition, you will gather lots of information and this can be used to positively introduce your point of view. For example "I totally agree with your point that accuracy is a key issue, as well as that, hitting deadlines is crucial".

During the conversation, keeping a positive rapport will help to keep communication flowing. A key technique with rapport is that of matching. We do it naturally with people we have a great deal of rapport with, just watch couples in a restaurant, mates in the pub or listen to someone unconsciously dropping back to their home accent when they talk to someone from their home town.

To match someone is not copying them completely. It's about picking up on some main clues and falling in line with them. This creates the atmosphere of being like them and therefore understanding them.

Behaviours that you can successfully match:

- The words and phrases that people choose – weave their choice of language or jargon into your conversation and they will feel that you are thinking in the same way.
- Pace of speech – we all have a pace that is our natural speed of talking and you can help to build rapport by adopting the other persons pace.
- Level of detail – some people talk in great detail and others skim over subjects. Become more aware of the other persons preference and by matching the level of detail you are more likely to have a better influence of how the conversation progresses.
- Body language – observe the body language that they use and adjust yours to match. This is a powerful technique in building rapport with others and is worth practicing so that you can do it subtly and effectively.

The more you practice, the more you will become aware of the different rhythms, pace and gestures that you and others have.

Be sure to be subtle when establishing rapport. If the other person is making grand, sweeping gestures, you may choose to make similar, but smaller, less obvious movements. In the beginning it may feel awkward. But the value in learning to achieve and maintain rapport is worth the time and effort it takes to become skilled in this area of communication.

Influencing others is a powerful skill to develop and with practice, these techniques can dramatically increase your success.

If you have the slightest doubt whether it really works... test it. Pick three people with whom you want better communication and actively try a new tack for 10 minutes. Notice the difference it makes.

For more information, contact Macnaughton McGregor Ltd on (0191) 209 3362, email enquiries@2macs.com or log on to www.2macs.com



Barringtons



Respect your clothes & home

The complete valet service for your home & clothes, including:

For homes

- Curtains & upholstery including takedown & rehang service
- Rugs including a repair & refringing service
- Van Collection & Delivery

For clothes

- Dry-cleaning • Laundry
- Repairs & Tailoring Alterations
- Suede, Leather & Waxed Jackets
- Wedding Outfits & Bridal Gowns

www.respectyourclothes.co.uk

Tel: (0191) 274 1272 or (0191) 230 1382

Agents throughout the North East.